



Highlights of [GAO-06-444T](#), testimony before the Committee on Government Reform, Subcommittee on Federalism and the Census

Why GAO Did This Study

The Census Bureau plans to increase its use of automation to conduct the 2010 Decennial Census. Two key acquisitions are the Decennial Response Integration System (DRIS) and the Field Data Collection Automation program (FDCA). DRIS is expected to standardize and integrate data from census forms and other response modes. FDCA is expected to provide automation support for field data collection activities. Last year, you asked GAO to assess the status, plans, and management capabilities of both of these projects. In January 2006, GAO briefed the subcommittee staff on the results of that work. At your request, this testimony summarizes key findings from that briefing, including the status and management capabilities of each project.

What GAO Recommends

GAO recommends that the Census Director ensure that the bureau completes key activities needed to effectively manage its acquisitions. In commenting on a draft of GAO's briefing, bureau officials generally agreed with the recommendations and noted that time and budget constraints had driven the bureau to proceed with its acquisitions before all of the recommended activities had been completed. Officials stated that they plan to complete these activities as soon as possible.

www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-06-444T.

To view the full product, including the scope and methodology, click on the link above. For more information, contact David A. Powner at (202) 512-9286 or pownerd@gao.gov.

CENSUS BUREAU

Important Activities for Improving Management of Key 2010 Decennial Acquisitions Remain to be Done

What GAO Found

The Census Bureau has initiated efforts to acquire DRIS and FDCA, key systems it needs to perform the 2010 Decennial Census. It awarded a contract for DRIS in October 2005; the system is currently in a design and development phase. The bureau expects to award a contract for FDCA development in March 2006. While both projects' life cycle cost estimates are currently considered procurement sensitive, together they are expected to make up a large portion of the \$1.8 billion program to develop, test, and implement decennial census systems. Both acquisitions involve ambitious schedules in order to be able to deliver the needed functionality to support a planned 2008 census dress rehearsal and the eventual 2010 census activities.

While both project offices have implemented initial acquisition management activities, neither has the full set of capabilities they need to effectively manage the acquisitions (see table below). Specifically, the DRIS project completed its solicitation activities and the FDCA project has completed most of its solicitation activities. However, activities in other management areas have been initiated but not completed. For example, the DRIS project office has established baseline requirements for the acquisition, but the bureau has not yet validated them or implemented a process for managing the requirements. Also, while the FDCA project office has initiated efforts to oversee the contractor's performance, such as requiring earned value management reporting (a project management tool that integrates cost, schedule, and scope of work to aid project planning and control) and hiring staff with contracting experience, it has not yet determined which performance measures it will use to track the contractor and its own internal project office performance. Until these and other basic contract management activities are fully implemented, both projects face increased risks that the systems will experience cost overruns, schedule delays, and performance shortfalls.

Status of Acquisition Management Activities for Key Decennial Systems

Capability	DRIS	FDCA
Project and acquisition planning	○	○
Solicitation (the process leading up to selecting a contractor)	●	● ¹
Requirements development and management	○	○
Risk management	○	○
Contract tracking and oversight/project monitoring and control	○	○
Process and product quality assurance	○	○
Executive oversight/governance	○	○

● Key activities completed
 ○ Initiated, but key activities remain to be completed

Source: GAO analysis.

¹The contract is expected to be awarded in March 2006.