

BE COUNTED CAMPAIGN FOR CENSUS 2000

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Abstract:

The 1990 Census included the "Were You Counted?" program, which allowed people who believed they had not been included in the Census to fill out a form and be included in the Census. As a result of this program, an estimated 260,000 persons were added to the Census (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1993). The equivalent of this program in Census 2000 is the "Be Counted" campaign. The Be Counted program provides a means for people to be included in Census 2000 who may not have received a Census questionnaire or believe they were not included on one. The program also provides an opportunity for people who have no usual address on Census Day to be counted in the Census. The Be Counted forms were available in English, Spanish, Chinese, Korean, Tagalog, and Vietnamese. This paper examines how the Be Counted program was implemented, how it was used, and the coverage gains that resulted from it in Census 2000.

Introduction:

During Census 2000, the Census Bureau attempted to enumerate the population by counting the number of people at each housing unit. They wanted to provide a means for those who felt like they had been missed in the count to be included in the Census, by the entire housing unit or person(s) at the housing unit being missed. Also they wanted to provide an opportunity for people with no usual residence (NUR) to be included in the Census. These were the purposes of the Be Counted Campaign. This paper will evaluate the impact of this program on the coverage of Census 2000.

Background:

The Be Counted Program provided a means for people to be included in Census 2000 who may not have received a Census questionnaire or believe they were not included on one. The program also provided an opportunity for people who have NUR on Census Day to be counted in the Census.

The Be Counted Forms (BCFs) were not intended to replace the addressed Census questionnaire, but to aid in enumerating areas that the Census Bureau had identified might be more difficult to enumerate. The BCFs were made available in these areas to improve the coverage.

The BCFs were available to the public at distribution sites shortly before Census Day, April 1, and were removed from the sites before the start of Nonresponse Followup. Respondents could also provide a BCF over the phone if they called the Telephone Questionnaire Assistance (TQA) number.

The BCF contained the mail short form questions, a question indicating whether the form is being completed for the respondent's whole household (WHH) or partial house hold (PHH), and several additional questions asking for address information. The address was needed for the process of placing the respondents' address into the Census Bureau's geography designations, called geocoding.

The processing of these forms was as follows:

- The addresses on the BCFs were matched to the addresses on the Census address file and also sent to geocoding.

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This paper reports the results of research and analysis undertaken by Census Bureau staff. It has undergone a Census Bureau review more limited in scope than that given to official Census Bureau publications. This report is released to inform interested parties of ongoing research and to encourage discussion of work in progress.

- If the BCFs were matched and geocoded to an existing Census Address File ID, then the BCF return was added to that IDs return information.
- If the BCF address did not match the Census address file addresses but was geocoded, then the BCF address was sent to Field Verification (FV). This consisted of an enumerator visiting the address and determining the status of the address: verified, delete, and duplicate.
- If these BCF addresses were verified, they were added to the Census address file. The addresses that are listed as deleted or a duplicate are not included in the Census.
- If the BCF address could not be geocoded, regardless of whether it matched or not, it was not included in the Census.

Results:

During the Census, 804,939 BCFs were returned to the Census Bureau. This includes forms enumerating whole households, partial households, persons with no usual residence and forms given over the telephone. Table A contains a break down of these forms.

Table A. Break Down of BCFs by Source

	Frequency	Percent
Mail	605,164	75.2
WHH	489,563	(80.9)
PHH	51,315	(8.5)
Blank	64,289	(10.6)
TQA	199,775	24.8
WHH	194,072	(97.1)
PHH	5,703	(2.9)
Blank	0	(0)
Total	804,939	100

The majority of BCFs returned to the Census Bureau were Mail forms, which is what was expected. Also the number of WHH BCFs compared to the PHH BCFs is significantly more. This would mean that the majority of BCFs that were returned to the Census bureau were attempting to enumerate entire housing units that potentially had been missed during the Census' conventional enumeration

The BCFs were received at the Census National Processing Center and processed on a flow basis until the cut off for FV. The forms were sent though processing, which was outlined in the background section. Table B contains the outcome of the processing of the forms follows in the table below.

Table B. Processing Outcome of the BCFs

	Frequency	Percent
In Census Processing	605,905	50.7
FV Non-Verified	103,591	12.9
Did Not Geocode	178,768	22.2
Homeless Case	15,410	1.9
Group Quarters	1,144	0.1
Total	904,818	100

Some of the BCFs included in the table above were turned over to other Census operations for processing. One instance of this is when the BCFs were matched to group housing units enumerated using Group Quarters operation. These forms are the fifth item in Table B. The second instance, Homeless cases, item four, are turned over to the Service Based enumeration processing. These BCFs will not be dealt with in this report.

The BCFs that matched to addresses on Census Address File or were verified were included in this operation, 605,905 forms, will continue to be addressed in this report. There were 1,645,598 people enumerated on these forms. These forms were added to the return records of each corresponding ID of their housing unit. During Census processing, it was determined that 256,370 BCF contained persons not enumerated on other forms. This means that 560,880 persons were enumerated solely on a BCF. Table C summarizes the tenure for these BCFs.

Table C. Tenure of BCF persons

	Frequency	Percent	Census %
Owner	125,313	55.0	66.2
Renter	102,659	45.0	33.8
Total	227,972	100	100

When looking at tenure, 8,510 of the responses for this particular question were improperly marked or the question was left blank. The renters' percent is higher for the BCFs compared to the overall Census numbers. This is important because renters have been undercounted in past censuses.

The following tables summarize the demographics of the people on the BCFs; sex (Table C), age (Table D), Hispanic origin (Table E), race (Table F), and tenure (Table G).

Table D. Sex of BCF persons

Sex	Frequency	Percent	Census %
Male	270,681	49.0	49.1
Female	281,510	51.0	50.9
Total	552,191	100	100

When looking at sex, 8,689 of the responses for this particular question were improperly marked or the question was left blank. When comparing the percentages for both men and women from both the BCFs and from the overall Census, it does not appear that there is really any difference between the two form types.

Table E. Age of BCF persons

Age Group	Frequency	Percent	Census %
0 - 4 yrs	37,961	7.1	6.8
5 - 9 yrs	42,497	7.9	7.3
10 - 14 yrs	37,791	7.1	7.3
15 - 19 yrs	36,618	6.8	7.2
20 - 24 yrs	40,477	7.6	6.7
25 - 34 yrs	80,819	15.1	14.2
35 - 44 yrs	76,466	14.3	16.0
45 - 54 yrs	60,279	11.3	13.4
55 - 59 yrs	24,065	4.5	4.8
60 - 64 yrs	22,550	4.2	3.8
65 - 74 yrs	42,646	8.0	6.5
75 - 84 yrs	25,348	4.7	4.4
85 + yrs	7,113	1.3	1.5
Total	534,630	100	100

When looking at age, 26,250 of the responses for this particular field were ages that were considered invalid or the field was left blank. But comparing the percentages from the BCFs and comparing the overall percent observed in the Census, it becomes clear that the younger age groups had a slightly higher percent in the age groups. This is an important fact, because these age groups have been under counted in past censuses.

Table F. Hispanic Origin of BCF Persons

	Frequency	Percent	Census %
Not Spanish/Hispanic/Latino	386,457	73.8	87.5
Mexican/Mexican American/Chicano	84,517	16.1	7.3
Puerto Rican	14,007	2.7	1.2
Cuban	3,909	0.7	0.4
Other Spanish/Hispanic/Latino	34,665	6.6	3.6
Total	523,555	100	100

When looking at Hispanic origin, 37,325 of the responses for this particular question were improperly marked or the question was left blank. Considering the Hispanic groups, the percent for the BCFs are higher for every group as compared to the overall Census numbers. This is significant because these groups have been undercounted in past censuses.

Table G. Race

	Frequency	Percent	Census %
White	320,704	63.3	75.5
Black, African American	95,698	18.9	12.3
American Indian, Alaskan Native	6,120	1.2	0.9
Asian	31,892	6.3	3.6
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	1,333	0.3	0.1
Some Other Race	38,918	7.7	5.5
Two or More Races	12,324	2.4	2.4
Total	506,989	100	100

When looking at race, 53,891 of the responses for this particular question were improperly marked or the question as left blank. Minority groups were of interest for this program. This would include every group except for white, or Caucasian. For these groups the percent for the BCFs was higher than the overall Census numbers over all groups. This is important to note because these groups are undercounted in the census.

Of those people enumerated on the BCFs, some were possibly enumerated on other types of forms through other operations or even possibly on another form. In order to understand the effect the Be Counted campaign affected the Coverage of Census 2000, it is necessary to look at how many people were added to the Census only through a BCF. This number is 560,880. These people would have been missed if not for the Be Counted Campaign.

Conclusions:

The goals for the Be Counted Campaign were as follows:

- Count people who did not receive a form
- Count people missed on a Census form
- Count people with no usual residence
- Provide BCFs to population groups, which have been undercounted in the census.

When looking at the first two goals and the WHH and PHH BCF in Table A, the Census bureau was able to count some of both types of people who were missed by the census.

When looking at the third goal and item four of Table B, the Census bureau was able to count some of the nations homeless population through this program.

When looking at the fourth goal and the groups undercounted from Tables C and E - G, the Census Bureau was able to count a higher percentage of the groups that have been undercounted in past censuses.

Another point to consider is that the 560,880 people counted solely through BCFs only represent 0.2 percent of the entire population enumerated in the Census. While this number is small, it is important to remember these are people who would have been left out of the Census. It is also important to consider that the Be Counted Campaign is considered a coverage improvement operation, meaning it is meant to add people to the existing count of the population. A 0.2 percent coverage gain is not considered small for this type of operation.

All things considered, it is the authors opinion that the Be Counted Campaign was a success.

References:

U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1993, *Census of Population and Housing Evaluation and Research Reports: Programs to Improve Coverage in the 1990 Census*.