

AN OVERVIEW OF GROUP QUARTERS ENUMERATION

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1. Introduction

While the vast majority of Americans live in houses, apartments, mobile homes and the like, collectively known as 'housing units,' several million people in the United States live in group situations known as 'group quarters' (GQs).

Group quarters are the living quarters at 'Special Places' such as:

- Colleges and Universities
- Prisons and Jails
- Nursing Homes
- Juvenile Institutions
- Hospitals (long-term care)
- Military Bases
- Homeless Shelters
- Group Homes (for the physically and mentally challenged)
- Civilian and Military Ships
- Workers' Dormitories
- Monasteries and Convents

and other miscellaneous group living situations.

In general, the Special Places are the larger institutions containing GQs; the GQs are the places where people spend their nights. For example, universities and military bases are Special Places; dormitories and barracks are GQs. Many Special Places consist of nothing more than a single GQ, such as a homeless shelter or a group home.

In Census 2000, we enumerated 7,778,633 people at 190,673 GQs in 98,943 Special Places in the United States proper. (There was also a small GQ population in Puerto Rico.)

2. GQ Enumeration

a. Building the Address List

From 1996 through 1998, the Census Bureau's

Population Division did extensive research to identify prospective Special Places, combing reference materials and inventories compiled by trade associations, private concerns, the Census Bureau (including the Special Place inventory from the 1990 Census), and other governmental agencies.

In early 1999, this work was supplemented with Special Places and GQs discovered in the course of the address list operations conducted in preparation for the enumeration of housing units.

For each prospective Special Place, we needed to verify that it had group quarters, and ascertain whether it had housing units on the premises; then, for each GQ, find out:

- where the GQ was
- what type of GQ it was
- approximately how many people would be living there at Census time
- if there were times when enumeration wouldn't be possible
- if the GQ contained any family-style housing units.

The Facility Questionnaire operation was our means to gather this information. In 1999, we tried to contact each Special Place, first by computer-assisted telephone interview (CATI), and then by personal visit where necessary. The Facility Questionnaire operation was the largest part of our address list development.

Between the Facility Questionnaire operation and GQ enumeration, we conducted other operations to verify and supplement the address list:

- Special Place Local Update of Census Addresses (SP LUCA)
- Local Knowledge Update
- Special Place Advance Visit

The SP LUCA operation allowed local governments to examine and add to our list of Special Places and GQs. In Local Knowledge Update, enumerators in each Local Census

Office (LCO) were instructed to do so as well. Special Place Advance Visit enumerators visited Special Places already on the address list in February and March 2000 to verify and correct the information we had for each of the GQs at those Special Places.

The Census Bureau is conducting a study to evaluate how successful we were in compiling an exhaustive list of Special Places and GQs for Census 2000.

b. Enumeration of Group Quarters

Enumerators received a computer-generated control form for each GQ. This form listed the name, address, the control ID of the GQ (the GQID), and its expected population. The enumerator was also provided with the questionnaires to enumerate the GQ residents.

Enumerators distributed the blank Census questionnaires to the GQ residents, who were asked to fill them out. The enumerator would assist the residents in filling out the questionnaires when they required assistance. (In some instances, the questionnaires were filled out with information from the GQ's administrative records.) People counted at certain kinds of GQs (primarily military bases, group homes, and residential care facilities) could list a 'usual home elsewhere'; that is, they could state on their questionnaire that their primary residence was not the GQ but a housing unit, and they could write in the address.

The enumerator would collect the questionnaires, review them for completeness, copy the GQID into the appropriate box on each Census questionnaire, write down the number of completed questionnaires on the control sheet, and return everything to the LCO in a large envelope.

c. Post-Enumeration Processing

The count of the completed questionnaires for each GQ was recorded at five points along their route through post-enumeration processing:

- By the enumerator, immediately after enumeration
- By the LCO staff, when the GQ is checked in from the field

- By the LCO staff, when the GQ is checked out to be sent to the National Processing Center in Jeffersonville, IN
- By the National Processing Center staff, when the GQ questionnaires and control sheet are received from the LCO
- By the data capture system, when the questionnaires are scanned and turned into electronic images.

After data capture, we separated out the records of the persons reporting a usual home elsewhere. We placed them in an existing Census housing unit if they could be matched to one, or added a new housing unit containing that person to the master address file where the existence of such a housing unit could be verified.

3. **The GQ Universe of Census 2000**

As mentioned earlier, we enumerated 7,778,633 people at 190,673 GQs.

The GQ enumeration operations actually counted approximately 8.5 million people, but persons initially counted at military bases and other GQs who reported a usual home elsewhere reduced the final GQ count to 7.78 million.

Demographic Characteristics of the GQ Population

**Group Quarters Population:
Breakdown by Gender**

	Institutional	Noninstitutional	Total
Men	2,534,064	1,968,136	4,502,200
Women	1,524,975	1,751,458	3,276,433
Total	4,059,039	3,719,594	7,778,633

By gender, the GQ population breaks down as roughly 58 percent male and 42 percent female. The predominance of males is primarily driven by the size of the overwhelmingly male prison population, which is part of the institutional GQ population.

**Group Quarters Population:
Breakdown by Age**

	Institutional	Noninstitutional	Total
0-17	158,118	164,793	322,911
18-29	811,103	2,535,463	3,346,566
30-49	1,173,940	481,791	1,655,731
50+	1,915,878	537,547	2,453,425
Total	4,059,039	3,719,594	7,778,633

The irregular distribution of ages in the GQ population is indicative of the reality that the GQ population is not a unity, but rather several discrete populations. Colleges and universities and military bases have young populations. The prison population is primarily young to middle-aged; the nursing home population is of course quite old.

4. Challenges Faced by GQ Enumeration

a. Address List Building

One major problem we encountered in our drive for thoroughness in address list building was that our research frequently located the same Special Place in several different reference sources. There was no efficient way to unduplicate the multiple listings by computer, and we lacked the resources for a clerical unduplication. As a result, we contacted many Special Places more than once, which strained our relations with the contact persons at the affected Special Places and added to the workload in the field.

Another problem was that we were only set up to gather information from Special Place contact persons by telephone or personal visit. This worked well for small Special Places, but for large Special Places such as universities or military bases with dozens or even hundreds of GQs, the ability to accept faxed or emailed lists of GQs would have been helpful.

Yet another challenge was geocoding - identifying exactly where a GQ was located in a Census block. While one might think it would be fairly intuitive to place a spot on a map to accurately identify where a building was located in a block, we've learned from

experience that it often isn't so. Detailed instructions on how to 'map spot' a building had mixed success as well. Perhaps we will be able to use Global Positioning System (GPS) technology to solve this problem in the next Census.

b. Enumeration

Enumerators ran into a considerable number of problems at the time of enumeration. Many of those attempting to enumerate college dorms had problems with access: on a number of occasions, administrators worried about privacy issues wouldn't let enumerators in dorms to deliver questionnaires to the students residing there. Enumerators sometimes had to resort to setting up a table in a dining hall. Needless to say, this resulted in a hit-or-miss enumeration where this problem was encountered.

At a fairly small number of GQs, enumerators were refused access altogether. In some instances (such as group homes) but not all, this was because the contact person had received a housing unit questionnaire in the mail, and had listed all the GQ residents on that form.

c. T-Night Enumeration

T-Night is a one-night operation that enumerates people living or staying in campgrounds, RV parks, marinas, fairs, carnivals, racetracks, and similar places, who have no usual home elsewhere. Identifiable groups we enumerate in this operation include the workers at racetracks and carnivals, along with their families, and people who live full-time in RVs, houseboats, and so forth. Their residences are considered housing units, and they were enumerated on housing unit questionnaires.

Some problems we encountered with T-Night in Census 2000 were of our own making. One such obstacle was the decision not to include T-Night in the Special Place Advance Visit operation, which meant that we had no current information about the likely workload that a particular T-Night location might involve. This caused local offices to assign too many enumerators to some locations, while assigning too few to others. Another such problem was the decision to schedule T-Night for a Friday

night, when campgrounds have weekend campers, and carnival workers are busy.

Training GQ enumerators in the use of housing unit questionnaires involved several extra hours of training time for a one-day operation. And, as briefly discussed in the next section, the use of housing unit questionnaires in a GQ operation presented difficulties for the control system. We need to address the question of whether T-Night should remain a GQ operation, or whether it should be handled as part of housing unit enumeration in 2010.

d. The Control System

The control system was designed to keep track of GQs, but not the individual Census questionnaires submitted by the GQ residents. The individual questionnaires were linked to the GQs only by the GQID that the enumerators hand-transcribed on each questionnaire.

Approximately 55,000 GQ questionnaires could not be identified with a GQ because no GQID was written on the form, or because the ID written there could not be matched to a GQ. We were able to match nearly 86,000 GQ questionnaires with invalid GQIDs to GQs, when a computer edit proved the erroneous IDs to be transpositions, shifts, and other minor changes to valid GQIDs. A control system that tracks individual forms and reliably maintains their linkage to a GQ would be a very desirable improvement for 2010.

Housing units on the premises of Special Places and at T-Night locations also presented a problem for the control system, which provided no way to identify which housing unit questionnaire was associated with which GQ. We hope to obtain partial data by linking ID numbers from different Census databases.

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.