

**NWX-US-DEPT OF COMMERCE**  
**Transcription of News Briefing by U.S. Census Bureau to Provide Updates on 2020 Census Operations**

**October 21, 2020**  
**2:00 pm ET**

**Speakers:**

**Albert E. Fontenot, Jr. Associate Director for Decennial Programs, US. Census Bureau**  
**Tim Olson, Associate Director for Field Operations, U.S. Census Bureau**  
**Michael C. Cook, Sr., Chief, Public Information Office, U.S. Census Bureau (moderator)**

Phone Operator: Welcome and thank you for standing by. All lines have been placed in a listen only mode for today's presentations until the Q&A, which will be held at the end of the conference. In order to ask your question and be placed into the queue, please press Star 1 on your telephone keypad.

The call is being recorded. If you have any objections, you may disconnect at this time.

I will now introduce your conference host, Mr. Michael Cook. Sir, you may begin.

Michael Cook: Hello, everyone, and thank you for joining us via teleconference this afternoon for our briefing to provide you updates on the 2020 census operations. I am Michael Cook, Chief of the Public Information Office of the US Census Bureau.

Today's briefing has been convened to provide the media with updates on the 2020 census. As you may know, we finished data collection for the 2020 census back on October 15. We're now working hard to deliver complete and accurate state population counts as close to the December 31, 2020 statutory deadline as possible.

Our first look at the data as you know when we released it on October 19, we published our total responses on a daily basis, and they showed that we accounted for 99.98% of all addresses in the nation. Mr. Al Fontenot will provide further details on this in a few minutes.

We also learned that the internet provided to be the easiest and preferred option for self-responding. More than half the country, 67% of households responded to the 2020 census on their own. Since we began data collection back in March, the Census Bureau released the 2020 census completion rates for the nation.

All 50 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico every day, just like we did during the 2010 census. It was a priority to keep you the public up to date with our latest numbers and our response rate map proved to be a great tool for our data users.

Here to answer your questions today, we have Tim Olson, the Associate Director for Field Operations and Mr. Al Fontenot, the Associate Director for Decennial Operations. These individuals were involved in the planning, the managing and the day-to-day execution for the 2020 census.

After they provide their updates, we will open the phone lines for questions. Please be prepared to provide the operator with your name and outlet. Without further delay. I'd like to introduce Mr. Al Fontenot. Al.

Al Fontenot: Thank you, Michael. Good afternoon. It is my pleasure to be able to provide you with an update on where we are in our road to successfully completing the 2020 decennial census. To emphasize what I'm saying, the census is not over. We have much work to do to complete the census and I will talk about those operations a little later.

But we have completed the data collection operations of the census and I want to provide you with a review of the census today. Some of the information I'm giving you Michael, kind of gave you a preview.

We've resolved approximately 152 million addresses, this compares to resolving 132 million addresses by the end of the 2010 census. Let me stop for a second and explain what we mean when we say an address is resolved. I might add that occasionally we've used the expression work completed. Those mean the same thing.

Every address in the country is captured in a census master address file, or MAF, through work done throughout the decade by our geography division in coordination with local governments through programs like LUCA -- the local update of census addresses -- the United States Postal Service's sequence delivery file and other resources for geographic and spatial information.

The addresses are verified during our address canvassing operation using geospatial aerial imagery and on the ground canvassing activities by census listers. When we receive self-response from the housing units, it's matched with our master address file. All addresses that do not respond are included in

our non-response follow up workload in (sensitive) fields to be resolved by census enumerators. There's that word again resolved.

Every non-responding address is visited and identified as non-existent, not a housing unit -- for example, a business would not be a housing unit -- a vacant housing unit or an occupied housing unit. All occupied housing units have a census enumerator attempting to make contact with the occupants and complete a census interview.

If a household doesn't respond, after three repeated visits, we try to get information on the household from a knowledgeable source, such as a landlord, a neighbor, the mailman. This is called a proxy response. The process I have defined is the same process the Census Bureau has used in each decade.

In 2020, one of the key innovation areas that was designed to help collect data when people do not respond, the sort of use of high-quality administrative records, that is information that people have already given to the federal government. Those include Internal Revenue Service records, Medicare Medicaid records, Social Security Administration information and information from the 2010 census.

If we do not get a response from a household, and we have high quality, administrative records that can provide the same information for that address, we use those data sources to enumerate those addresses. I'll give you some metrics on these and talk about them in the context of the 2010 census in a few minutes.

But now, I would like to go back to my high-level overview. As I said, we've resolved approximately 152 million total addresses and achieved a resolution

rate of 99.98%. This is very similar to the resolution rate at the end of the 2010 census using the same definitions and the same criteria, it was 99.8%.

*(Note: During this portion of the news conference, Al Fontenot accidentally said 99.99% but meant 99.98% which is highlighted in yellow.)*

In 2010, we did not track or measure resolution rate by state. But in 2020, all 50 states plus DC and Puerto Rico achieve a resolution rate of 99% or higher. We began with providing respondents the option to respond to the 2020 census using a mail in paper form just like in 2010.

We added enhanced telephone option with 10 census questionnaire assistance centers that provided the capability to take interviews in English and in the next 12 most spoken languages in the country, plus the TTY capability for those with hearing impairment.

We then introduced the capability for respondents to respond online using our internet self-response option. There were significant concerns, we heard from a lot of critics that our internet response option would fail, and we would become healthcare.gov 2. I'm happy to say that our internet self-response option successfully managed our highest traffic demand and operated successfully throughout the census without one second of downtime.

One of the most important statistics that we would like to report is 67% of the housing units in the nation, that's over two-thirds of the nation self-responded to the census, that's over 99 million self-responses. This exceeded our expected rate of 65.6% and the 2010 final rate of 66.5%. Of those 99 million self-responses over 79 million responded that 79.86% of self-responses came through our internet choice.

Over 18 million. that's 18.3% of self-responses chose to use a paper form and mail it in, and 1.8 million, approximately 1.85% called in their response. We looked at the self-response at the state level. Thirteen states had a self-response rate at or above 70%. Forty-seven states had a self-response rate at or above 60%.

In 2010, we did measure self-response rates by state and 28 states exceeded or met their 2010 final self-response rates. The strong self-response rates meant that the number of addresses that we had to enumerate, and non-response follow up for less than a third of the nation, 33% of the addresses.

This was good because data collection was completed in an extremely challenging environment involving a global pandemic which delayed our initial startup with some of our key operations that made it difficult to recruit some of our traditionally excellent staff, such as retired persons and senior citizens who had a greater risk in the pandemic and therefore were not necessarily willing to come out and knock on doors and talk to strangers.

The pandemic also introduced the requirement to acquire and deploy to our field staff over 42 million pieces of personal protective equipment. We were faced with the worst hurricane season on recent record in the Gulf Coast states, faced catastrophic wildfires and air quality issues in the western states, and civil unrest around the country.

In spite of these issues, the persistence and determination of our field staff and the effective planning by field management, enabled us to have the people in the right places at the right time to conduct a successful non- response follow up operation.

Non-response follow up was aided by automation and the increased use of technology such as the use of case routing optimization software. In other words, instead of an enumerator, determining on their own how they were going to work the cases, the computer figured what is the most efficient route to work their case assignment and put the cases in that order and assigned them cases that they could get to at the best time of day to enumerate that particular household based on other statistics the Census Bureau had on those addresses.

We had assignment management software that gave people assignments that fit their availability instead of like in 2010, people just got a number of assignments and worked them at their convenience.

We asked our enumerators when will you be available to work? And then, we assigned them cases that fit that timeline in the case management software. The use of iPhone 8s to find housing units, it had a mapping function, to collect enumeration data, to receive and transmit assignments, and to complete and submit payroll. (I accidentally hit a button so re-inserted this sentence)

As a result of all these technology innovations, we're able to achieve a numerator productivity numbers of 1.92 cases per hour, versus a 2010 number in an all paper environment of 1.01 cases per hour. The field assignment workload of over 60 million addresses includes 6 million addresses that were self-responded to after an unsuccessful enumerator visit and enumerator left a notice of visit inviting occupants to self-respond, and an indication that if you didn't self respond, the enumerator would come back to complete the interview. (\*Note: Al Fontenot mistakenly said 9 million during the live news conference but should have said 6 million which is highlighted in yellow.)

So, 6 million people responded at that point out of those 64 million addresses that were part of the field workload. The field workload also included a series of types of quality controls as the three interviews as its field verification, and other visits that we do to affirm the quality of the data we're collection, collecting. (\*Note: Al Fontenot mistakenly said 9 million during the live news conference but should have said 6 million which is highlighted in yellow.)

The majority of occupied housing units in an NRFU operation were completed by a census taker interviewing a member of the household and the balance were conducted with proxy responders or by using high quality administrative records.

Some of the questions that have been asked include how much of the enumeration was done by proxy? As of October 16, when we completed field operations, approximately 24.1% of all enumerated occupied housing units were enumerated using information from a proxy.

This compares to 23.8% final proxy number in the 2010 census. The reason that I qualified the statement with the current number in 2020 versus the final number in 2010, is because during unduplication process, we generally find some proxy responses are the same as some self-responses.

A landlord may do a proxy, the person may go ahead and submit their response online, and some self-responses show up for the same addresses and that can result in lowering our final proxy rate for 2020. So, at 24.1 we expect it to finish there or lower compared to 23.8 in 2010.'

While the four key innovation areas for the 2020 census involved using high quality administrative records to augment enumeration. I discussed admin records earlier when I was describing what are the components of response,



but as of October 16, approximately 5.6% of addresses nationwide have been completed using high quality administrative records. That is 13.9% of the NRFU workload, that is much lower than are expected 22.5% of cases with high quality administrative records that could have been used if the first visit was not a successful enumeration or a self-response was not received on that address.

Although everyone pays attention to self-response rates at NRFU, we successfully conducted a series of operations that are important to ensuring that everyone is counted in the census. We began 2020 by enumerating 34,000 housing units in remote Alaska. We launched our update leave operation as our first venture into the field after the COVID shutdown and we began by staging it into states with lower levels of COVID.

There are 13 states in the first round, and we continued to review detailed weekly situation reviews and release into more and more states. It enabled us to validate geo map spots, deliver paper questionnaires and invitations to self-respond to over 6.8 million addresses that do not get regular delivery from the United States Postal Service.

Update leave is designed to deliver what we call our highest priced mailing. A census person will come and drop off your questionnaire and your invitation personally. We were able to complete that operation in spite of the COVID shutdowns.

After consultation with various stakeholders and service providers on the best time to enumerate people experiencing homelessness, that enumeration normally takes place the night of April 1, and it's an operation that takes place over a couple of days around census day. But on April 1, we were on COVID shutdown throughout the nation and it was not possible to conduct it.

So, we had a conference with a number of service providers with stakeholders to work out the best time and they suggested the time in late September which would match very closely to the places people may be in the homeless community in terms of migration patterns, and would match up to their ability to provide assistance to us because we're very dependent on the assistance of some of the service providers connecting with our homeless count.

We were able to conduct the enumeration in over 53,000 service-based locations, including approximately 37,000 targeted non-sheltered outdoor locations. That's places like under a viaduct, in a park, a place on the beach, places where people may be camping, and they are living there in a temporary basis because they're experiencing homelessness at that time.

To give you a comparison, we have - we found in our pre-service based enumeration telephone work that substantially more locations had opened around the country by the time we were doing this in September of 2020, than there were in 2010.

For example, 18,900 SBE's were enumerated in 2010 versus 53,000 in 2020 and 8,792 TNSOLs or targeted non-sheltered outdoor locations were enumerated in 2010 versus 37,000 in 2020. Over 215,000 group quarters facilities were successfully enumerated, many by successfully utilizing our electronics record option instead of risking exposure of their staff, or our staff.

Now that compares to 166,827 group quarters that were enumerated in 2010. All of these operations while they are complete and comprehensive in terms of data collection, are not the end of the census, we now begin a complex and comprehensive series of operations to convert check and validate the field data collected and turn it into the final apportionment numbers.

We have received questions on how we were able to complete our processing at a reduced timeline of two and a half months down from the four to five months in the initial plan.

Number one, 10 years ago, was the last time we conducted this back in operation. Technology has advanced significantly over the last 10 years. We scheduled it just like we had in 2010 and 2000. We did not take into consideration our scheduling planning, computers are faster, technology is faster, and a lot of the processes can happen faster.

We looked at that, tested it and factored that into our new calculations. We also optimized staff and computing resources to be operational computing resources 24/7, and staff seven days a week including weekends and holidays. We streamlined and limited processes to focus only on apportionment separating and deferring redistricting processing.

This is an important point because that's a chunk of time because you're dealing with making sure the information is correct in 50 buckets when you're doing apportionment. When you're doing redistricting, it has to be correct in every congressional district, and by every census block, and it's much more complex and takes time. We pulled that out of the operation to get to apportionment.

We identified any processes that could start earlier run in parallel, or be eliminated and when we did that, the only step we eliminated was a redundant check of the master address file that we felt was expendable given multiple quality checks already built into the process and the quality of our master address file this decade.

All the rest of the steps remained in the process with shorter calendar timeframes attributed to weekend and holiday and faster computing and that helps mitigate the reduction in dates of our original plan.

Does this have risk? Yes, it probably has some risk because it assumes that reasonably smooth sequence of processing events will occur. If they are not reasonably smooth, they will require us to take additional time. We are closely managing the process and the risk, and our attention continues to be to deliver an accurate defensible 2020 census count as close to the statutory deadlines as possible. At this point, I would like to turn it over to Tim Olson.

Tim Olson: Al, thank you so much, and to everybody on the call. It is fantastic to be with you today for this press briefing, particularly since data collection is now finished.

And I just have to tell you, it feels great and I've got a lot of information to share with you. My purpose on this call is to really provide just some additional information and context related to the completion of non-response follow up, along with sharing with you some of the challenges and the successes that we achieved during this process.

Let me start by simply stating, conducting a census is always challenging. We hire hundreds of thousands of temporary employees in a compressed period of time, we deliver on demanding operational schedules, and we deal with the heightened scrutiny shared by the press, stakeholders and the public.

Now, for those of us who work on the census, this is our world, and it is one that we thrive in. We might be crazy, but we thrive in it and most of us simply can't wait until the next census comes along. At least in prior censuses, that was always the case, we'll see post 2020.

This is my fourth census and I am by no means an exception to this pervasive sense of culture, that demands of ourselves as a team that we count everyone and I do mean everyone that we do so accurately, and that we do it on time. This is our culture, and this is how we operate.

But I have to tell you, we never expected to conduct a national census, with a challenge that entered our world as ferociously as they did during the 2020 experience. Every hurricane forecast said that we should expect multiple and major impact storms along both the Atlantic and Gulf Coast. Now, as you know, this forecast became reality and we now use the Greek alphabet to name hurricanes, since the regular naming convention list has already been exhausted.

We've dealt with a wildfire season that is arguably one of the worst on record in the Western United States, creating atmospheric conditions so severe that the air quality in at least one Western city was measured as the worst in the world. And we've also experienced major civil unrest that gripped our nation in every state and nearly every city while we were conducting census field operations.

And it goes without saying that the biggest challenge of this census, the coronavirus pandemic, a virus that has effectively shut down our society for months on end, hit us just as census field operations had started in March.

This pandemic changed how all of us live our lives and how all of us do our work and this meant that without question, the 2020 census had to adapt and change as well.

During the census, we had to work extra hard to recruit the necessary number of applicants during what at the time of recruiting was a 50-year unemployment low. We had to hire and train many, many more people that plan to simply maintain an adequate number of field staff during field operations.

We had to quickly figure out how do we acquire 42 million items of personal protective equipment such as face masks and hand sanitizer, so that we could adequately protect our employees and the public that we made contact with.

We also had to redesign our field training program to minimize in person contact and we had to revise operational schedules on numerous occasions, to respond to the changing conditions on the ground. Yet, in spite of these unplanned and unprecedented challenges, we completed the full enumeration of our nation's population this past Thursday, October 15.

And based on preliminary indicators, I believe we did a really, really, really good job. Let me share with you some numbers that may be important to you as each of you go through the process of reporting on this story in the coming days.

I'm going to go through these numbers in a way that I hope you can capture, because there's a lot of details in here, so please bear with me. Let me just provide the beginning framework of our census experience. We ended up with 399,790 census organizational partners which far exceeded our goal of 300,000 partners. As a point of reference in 2010, there were 257,000 partner organizations.

We ended up recruiting 3.1 million applicants to be considered for temporary census jobs. This also exceeded our goal by nearly half a million applicants.

Over the course of this past year we hired 528,500 people to work in temporary census jobs throughout the nation.

This included employees who were office supervisors and support staff in each of the 248 area census offices. This included 14,000 census field supervisors who trained and oversaw the work of census takers. This also included 435,000 people who worked during our largest field operation non-response follow up, though admittedly, not all at the same time.

And as a reference at the very height of conducting non-response follow up, and I'm using the date of August 28th, we had 235,595, enumerators, who were actively working in the field, knocking on doors.

Now, AI mentioned the productivity rate of our census takers, achieved cumulatively a productivity rate of 1.92 cases or addresses per hour. This far exceeded the 1.55 projection. This was absolutely due in large part to the use of technology that was designed and deployed to the 2020 census, a major innovation over past paper-based censuses. AI mentioned this, but I'll just repeat it because I think it's important for comparison, the productivity rate in 2010 was 1.01 cases per hour when everything was paper based.

So, in short, the productivity rate of field staff in 2020 was literally nearly double that achieved during the 2010 census. Let me talk specifically about the non-response follow up workload. There were approximately a little more than 64 million addresses in the total workload, and this included many, many components.

The most obvious component was addresses that we had not yet received a self-response from, it also included re-interview cases that checked the quality of enumeration efforts by census takers, it also included self response quality

assurance cases, and it included field verification cases of self-responses that came in without a census ID that required boots on the ground verification to ascertain if the address actually existed and where it was explicitly located on the ground.

Of this total non-response follow up workload, including all of these components I just described, census takers resolved 99.93% of all of those addresses in the total non-response universe over a 68-day period. Let me give you some comparisons, during 2010, the similar comparable field staff completed the enumeration of 47.2 million non-response follow up addresses in 69 days using a paper-based methodology.

Within the NRFU workload, the non-response follow up workload of occupied addresses 55.5% were completed through in person interviews, 20.4% were completed through high quality administrative records, after initial contact attempts did not result in an interview. And at a national basis of all addresses, not just those and non-response that equates to 5.6% of the nation's addresses were enumerated with administrative records.

And here's the metrics that I think is so critically important. In 2020, 24.1%, of the non-response, follow up occupied addresses were enumerated with proxy interviews. And for comparison, in 2010, that same percentage was 23.8%. So, in short and in my world, the proxy rate in 2020, basically was the same or very, very close to the same as in 2010.

In closing, let me just say that conducting this census with all of its compounding complications has been without question, the greatest challenge any of us who manage censuses has ever encountered in our lives.



Yet, we became incredibly agile in our plan, we drove to done with a passion that we count everyone accurately and on time. And throughout, we've been incredibly open and transparent with our progress, recording every single day as a self response rate at all levels of geography, the completion rate for each of the 248 area census offices every single day, and the overall enumeration rate at the national and state levels.

In short, you have lived with us through this decennial census experience every single day with the most current and relevant data, so that as you have reported on the census, you have known how things were really going on with real data and real facts.

Now that data collection is finished, we have a very strong sense that all of the early performance metrics we've shared indicates that a very good census, if not an accurate census, was conducted during an unbelievably trying time for our nation.

On a very personal note, this experience has left me so indelibly proud of the work of the hundreds and thousands of census employees, and the literally nearly 400,000 census partners throughout the nation that truly made this census happen. I look forward to your questions.

Michael Cook: Thank you, Tim. And thank you AI for those comments and that commentary. But before we begin taking questions, I'd like to remind those, that if you visit [census.gov](https://www.census.gov), and in particular our newsroom, you'll be able to access news releases, and also electronic press kits that have been prepared for today's operation in addition to the 2020 Census, operational 2020 Census frequently asked questions and electronic press kit that we've just started earlier this week, late last Friday, actually, in particular, to ensure that you stay abreast of and are kept up to date on all of the 2020 Census completion rates, upcoming

results, and our response deadline, to name a few of the topics that are covered.

So, before we begin with our questions, I would just like to remind everyone to please state, your name and your organization. Clearly, in the interest of time today, the first conference will only be taking one question per call. I will allow a qualifying, if you need to have a question or an answer qualified, you can but not two questions, because we actually have a hard stop at three o'clock today.

So, I just wanted to make sure that everybody understood that, and I asked for your patience and to contact the Public Information Office [pio@census.gov](mailto:pio@census.gov) as well as 301-763-3030 if you have additional questions. And to also please note that we will not be taking any questions today about any ongoing or pending litigation around the 2020 Census.

This is merely any questions that you might have about the topics that have been discussed thus far. So, with that, without any further delay, operator, do we have our first caller?

Coordinator: We certainly do. And the first question is coming from Jeffrey Mervis of Science Magazine, your line is open.

Jeffrey Mervis: Hi, thank you very much for making yourself available. I appreciate that. And I'm sure all of us do. I hope that this is the first of several such briefings. Question, if your subject matter experts say that they need more time to get things right, that they've come up across a surprise that needs to be resolved, what's the trade-off between quality and meeting the December 31 deadline? Who will make that decision and does your compressed post data collection schedule give you time to deal with those surprises?

Al Fontenot: Hi this is Al Fontenot. Thank you very much for that question. That's an excellent question. It is our plan right now, that if we need more time to fix a problem that comes up that would impact the quality of Census, we're taking it.

As you noted, we did not say we were going to be able to meet the December 31 deadline. We said we're working to come as close as possible to the December 31 deadline. That provides us with the flexibility if we encounter unexpected challenges to deal with them and handle them before we actually present the documents. That decision will be made by career staff at the Census Bureau who are parts of the statistical quality group.

We have an executive guidance group that is responsible for the overseeing the some of the quality on the 2010 Census, the staff, and most of that back end section report to me and that would be kind of my decision in conjunction with the deputies director who is a career statistician, career staff.

Jeffrey Mervis: And is there a hard stop if you need more flexibility to take as much time as you need?

Al Fontenot: We have not established a hard stop. We're trying to maintain the flexibility to get the job done in a quality way.

Jeffrey Mervis: Thank you.

Michael Cook: Thank you for that, Jeff. Operator, can we have our next caller? Please?

Coordinator: And the next question is coming from Will Sutton, New Orleans Advocate. Your line is open.

Will Sutton: Hi there, Will Sutton. Thank you very much for taking the question. Thank you for providing this time. As you obviously know Louisiana, came in dead last and wanted to get a sense from you, what are the factors that put us in last place? I notice from the data that by 11 pm, on October 15, we were short by several tenths of a percent short of 99. and all of a sudden it seemed to go to 99% but unsure where those counts came from and the impact on our count, generally, and then why? What did we do as (citizens) as residents or what didn't we do to make a better showing?

Al Fontenot: I think Laura, and Delta could be described as the primary reasons Louisiana was in last place. If you recall, Hurricane Laura, went right through the Lake Charles area and our Shreveport ACO, and followed by Delta going through the same area of the country before they could even recover.

And I let Tim talk in detail because his staff managed that operation and was able to go in early going between the operation and try to get as good a count as possible of those areas. And, Tim, I'll turn it over to you.

Tim Olson: Yeah, Al, thank you. And Will, we really appreciate your question. Louisiana, particularly Southwest Louisiana, was certainly the most impacted in the nation in terms of both of those hurricanes and what we had to do to get to done to complete the non-response workload was one, is we were in constant consultation with the governor's office, and with local officials throughout that area, to determine when we could be on the ground conducting the enumeration.

Second, the governor's office provided us with actual lists of every hotel and motel that was being used by people that had been evacuated and were being temporarily housed outside of the area. In each of those facilities, we

established census teams that were available and querying each guest of those facilities to determine if they had previously been counted by a self-response or in fact, had not and we conducted the enumeration on the spot.

The third thing we did is we assembled a large travel team of experienced census workers, that the moment the conditions in those areas was feasible or acceptable for us to re-enter and do the work, they were ready, and went in.

So as AI mentioned, Hurricane Laura occurred, and for a full five weeks, local officials, for good reason, could not permit us to be on the ground conducting the non-response, then the permission came. And we had a solid three, three and a half days, where several thousand enumerators from not only the area, but around the country were in that area completing the work.

And then Hurricane Delta came in and shut things down. So, to answer your question, there was an extraordinary effort by the local staff, by our partners, urging people to self-respond if they hadn't already. And literally, you know, thousands of people, counting the people in the non-response follow up operation as best we could.

AI Fontenot: And I'll add to the end of that on those last days and explain that. We had a number of addresses in that area that had high quality administrative records, but we were holding off hoping to be able to do a personal enumeration.

When we're unable to get in for a personal enumeration, and the last day, we looked at the quality of those administrative records and determined following our processes and our procedures that those were the quality level of administrative record set at the end of an operation, we would have incorporated into our data.

And therefore, that's why you saw that move the last days is we incorporated those administrative records at the end.

Will Sutton: Okay. All right. Got it.

Michael Cook: Thanks for those responses, guys and thanks for that question, caller. Before we go to our next caller, just to reiterate that these, these, this Q&A is actually reserved for accredited media.

So, I just asked that if you aren't media, and you want to ask a question, you can reach out to the Public Information Office at [pio@census.gov](mailto:pio@census.gov) and we will get your question addressed and/or send you to the right office within the Census Bureau to get take care of your needs. So, without that for the delay, operator, can I have the next caller?

Coordinator: The next question is coming from Stephanie Ebbs at ABC News. Your line is open.

Michael Cook: Hi, Stephanie.

Stephanie Ebbs: Hi, good afternoon. I wanted to ask about the concerns around your accuracy, given the extreme challenges of the year and the concerns that have been raised about, you know, political motivations behind some of the changes. How do you plan to examine the accuracy of the data and how do you recommend the public look at this work to decide if they see it as accurate?

Al Fontenot: Stephanie, thank you for your question. That's an excellent question. The processes is that we use to examine the accuracy of the data, some of them take place during the census and some of them are involved in our re-interview process, and our verification process when data has been collected.

We conducted extensive re- interview processes during the course of the census. And one of the things that we did better in 2020 than we were able to do in 2010, was we had a high number of system driven quality control processes that could analyze the data in real time.

Because instead of a piece of paper and us looking at it when it was turned in, we could tell on the phone how long an enumerator took on every question, we could tell how long they took when they did the interview, we could tell where they were when they took the interview, so we were sure that they were not sitting in McDonald's, but they were in front of the house, they were enumerating because the Geo codes match.

We could tell that they were not rushing through and skipping questions. A lot of those are elements that are key to ongoing quality and ongoing accuracy of census data. We conducted that during the census. At the end of the census process, there are a number of comparisons and activities that take place in the backend process, to compare the data to expected results, to compare it to historical results, to compare it to other areas that have similar characteristics to ensure we have the quality of the data at the end.

Those processes have not been eliminated, and they will be going on to ensure that we conduct an accurate census. The other piece on that I might add is we've added a group that was not a part of it, which I've mentioned earlier called the executive guidance group for 2020 census quality, and that's made up of experts in all various areas of data collection data analysis from around the census, not just the Decennial Directorate, not just my group, but from across the census.

And they're analyzing every piece of data we receive and looking at it from a quality standpoint to be sure that when we put out this data at the end, this is something that we the Census Bureau, as the nation's premier statistical agency can stand behind and take full credit for an effective and accurate census.

Michael Cook: Thanks so, operator, can we have our next caller? Just to remind callers if you do want to ask a question you hit Star 1 and announce your name your organization. Operator, next caller.

Coordinator: The next question is coming from Brian Francisco Fort Wayne Journal Gazette. Your line is open.

Brian Francisco: Can you tell me how many field enumerators contracted Covid-19 and was there contact tracing among the households they visit?

Tim Olson: So, this is Tim Olson over the field operations. We had a very, very small number of employees, both in offices and in the field that had contracted COVID-19. We followed local health guidance help offices at the local level as far as contact tracing and followed those directives.

Michael Cook: Thank you. Operator, we have our next caller.

Coordinator: And the next question comes from Tierney Sneed, Talking Points Memo, your line is open.

Michael Cook: Hi Tierney

Tierney Sneed: Hi, thanks for having the call. I wanted to go back to something that Al said when he was discussing the ways you were able to expedite the processing



timeline to meet this end of the year goal. Correct me, if I'm paraphrasing this incorrectly, but it sounds like one of the steps, one of the ways you're doing that is by prioritizing what you need to do for the apportionment data and sort of setting aside what you need to do for the redistricting data.

Should we be taking from that the redistricting deadline might still need to be extended, you know, by more than even just like days, but even weeks or months? And if so, why was the calculation made that this apportionment data deadline was something that you could not miss, but the redistricting data deadline was something that you could still maybe get extensions on down the line, down the road?

AI Fontenot: Oh, hi. Thank you for your question. This is AI. The redistricting data is normally due three months after the apportionment data. And that was one of our primary considerations that we had time to be able to work our processes to get a better understanding of where we are.

When we normally ran the operation, the redistricting and apportionment data occurred both simultaneously and then linearly after we finished the apportionment data, we finished the other part of the redistricting data.

What we did was we took out the concurrent parts and pushed those towards the back end. At this point in time, we cannot say for certain if we would require an additional extension on the redistricting data and we are constantly evaluating that.

But first, we're trying to ensure that we get the apportionment data done properly and on time, and then we have to the original date when the redistricting data is done three months after December 31.

And so, if we finish this operation sometime in the first, second week of January, then we'll be able to evaluate what we need to do to make up time a couple of weeks in that five - in that three month period that occurs after December 31.

Michael Cook: Thanks, Al. Operator, do we have our next caller?

Coordinator: The next one is coming from Hansi Lo Wang of NPR, your line is open.

Hansi Lo Wang: Hi, this is Hansi Lo Wang with NPR. What changes to the post processing schedule has the Census Bureau made given that it did not close data collection until 11:59 pm Hawaii Standard Time, October 15 and that it is continued to accept postmarked by October 15 paper questionnaires until tomorrow, October 22?

Al Fontenot: Good afternoon, Mr. (Wang). How are you? This is Al Fontenot. The changes really were changes that I talked about earlier, they were changes that took the redistricting data processing section out and pushed it further back in the schedule like after we finished the apportionment data.

There were changes that took the responses to the Presidential Memo and put those after the apportionment data is completed. The other changes really involve computing speed, processing speed, technological efficiencies, and taking it from a five-day eight-hour schedule for running to a 24/7 schedule for running to make up time. Those are the primary changes that were done.

We did not take out any major steps or even minor steps with the exception of that one quality check of the MAF that I mentioned that we took out but everything else was left in the process. Some of it shows compressed times because we're able to do it faster with today's computing capabilities.

Hansi Lo Wang: And just a follow up then so you're processing paper questionnaires right now, ones that are still being accepted?

Al Fontenot: Everything that has been received so far has been processed. So, we're just waiting to process those last ones. Yes. That comes in - those are actually added into our system at a point, they would have been added at a point that's a few days from now anyway, so that that's not hurting us waiting for the paper questionnaires.

Michael Cook: Thank you for your questions. Operator, can we have our next caller?

Coordinator: And the next question is coming from Mike Schneider, Associated Press. Your line is open.

Michael Cook: Hi Mike.

Mike Schneider: Hi, thanks for having this. Mr. Fontenot, I was wondering if you could just tell us where you are or where the Bureau is in the process of figuring out a methodology for carrying out the President's memorandum on apportionment and whether you at this point think it's feasible? And also, what other data points are ..is the Bureau planning to use besides the number of undocumented people in ICE custody?

Al Fontenot: Okay, I - thank you for your question. I will first tell you that, the way we've divided up the responsibilities, the responsibility for the execution of the presidential memo actually falls into another directorate. And I'm responsible for completing the Census Bureau apportionment from the initial plans to design to the execution and to the apportionment.

So, I can't really give you any information on our progress on a Presidential memo, because that does not fall into my area of responsibility.

Michael Cook: Thank you for that...

Michael Schneider: Surely, you have a sense of its feasibility at this point, don't you?

Al Fontenot: I'm sorry?

Michael Schneider: I said, Surely, you have some sense of its feasibility?

Al Fontenot: I don't think it's useful for us to speculate on non-factual things and on potential issues in the future. So, I'm not going to speculate on that.

Michael Cook: Thanks for that update, can I have our next caller?

Coordinator: Yes. And the next caller is coming from David Nyczepir of fedscoop . Your line is open.

Michael Cook: Hi David.

David Nyczepir : Hi, you mentioned that sort of the next step in this process is to convert, check and validate data for collection. And I'm curious, because it seems like the end of data collection itself was sort of a moving target in terms of the deadline, has that affected your ability to get IT systems ready to process this data or is everything on schedule at this point?

Al Fontenot: The IT - thank you for your question, David. The IT systems are ready. We've actually had time, I mean, the IT systems have been practiced, they've been drove, they've been tested to be ready a long time in advance, so for the

expected deadlines were. We had those ready to run when we were on the COVID schedule originally and when we had a much earlier date, even before we were on the COVID schedule.

So, the IT systems are totally ready. We're actually running some aspects of it now and we started running some aspects in - earlier in October that didn't require completed data to run. And our first reaction, some of those systems are actually running faster than we had anticipated and with less errors and less problems than we had anticipated in our plan. So, we're very positive about where we stand on the IT systems right now.

Michael Cook: Thank you for that. Operator, can we have our next caller?

Coordinator: The next question is coming from Roxanne Scott, WABE News. Your line is open.

Roxanne Scott: Hi, there. Thank you for taking my question. I wanted to know what public information will the Census Bureau release during this data processing phase. What are some benchmarks you're looking out for and what information will you release publicly?

Al Fontenot: Okay, we will probably develop a public facing schedule of key events that go on in the process when we hit some of our key updates. There are 94 lines in the condensed version of the backend processing schedule with 94 items in it that I monitor. The staff themselves monitors one that has 400 lines and 400 items in it.

We're looking to develop a version of this that we can put out for public consumption. We're still working on that right now.

Michael Cook: Operator, can we have our next caller?

Coordinator: And the next question is come from Michael Macagnone, CQ Roll Call. Your line is open.

Michael Cook: Hi Michael.

Michael Macagnone: Hi, Michael. How are you? Can you hear me?

Michael Cook: Yes, I can.

Michael Macagnone: Okay. Yeah, so my question is I wanted to follow up on something Al Fontenot said earlier. You mentioned prioritizing the apportionment data and then there was something about the memorandum in there. Is the apportionment data going to come out separately from any data product that's produced pursuant to the memorandum?

Al Fontenot: The Census Bureau will complete the apportionment data separately from any documents related to the President's memorandum. I don't know how it's going to be released. We will complete our part of it separately. Yes.

Michael Macagnone: Okay. And following up on that, you mentioned it's not in the decennial directorate, whose responsibility is complying with that memorandum.

Al Fontenot: Well, it's in the demographic directorate with the population division, and it's in the research and methodology directorate.

Michael Cook: Thanks for the questions. Okay. Operator, can we have our next caller?

Coordinator: Yes. And the next question is coming from Tara Bahrapour, from the Washington Post, your line is open.

Tara Bahrapour: Hi, thank you. My question is, how does the Bureau plan to resolve both jurisdictions not state but jurisdictions that ended lower than 99%, how they're going to get that data? And also, with enumerators, having reported being told to cut corners while they're standing in front of a house, like, you know, not only using proxies, but being told, in some cases to just guess the number of people that in their case, see someone walking by?

So, you know, the (para) data would show that they're standing there, but it might not show the quality of the data while they're standing there. How do you - how does the Bureau resolve those issues?

((Crosstalk))

Al Fontenot: Tim can address in terms of the enumerators and then I can address the other part of your question.

Tim Olson: Yeah, as far as the enumeration, we were able to and did actively monitor what was being submitted by enumerators. We had a large national team with Math Stat experts in our region, so they were constantly managing and evaluating the workload if there were any, inconsistencies or outliers. In limited cases, there were, and we sent those cases back into the field for re enumeration.

I think that's an important note that in 2020, we had that capability. In 2010, we did not have that capability, because everything was paper and it would take several weeks from the completion of a paper form and non-response

before it would be data captured and therefore have any metrics that the local managers could act on. So big improvement.

AI, do you want to take the latter part of that, or the first part of...

AI Fontenot: Yes, the first part. Yeah, certainly, thank you. For those areas that we have not enumerated, we have a tested proven statistical process called imputation, which we have used since the 1990\* census to account for non- enumerated housing units and we will be using imputation to account for any non-enumerated housing units in the census. (*\*Correction: The statistical technique of "count imputation" has been used by the Census Bureau since 1960, and some form of "characteristic imputation" (to fill in missing characteristics such as age and race) has been used since 1940.*)

Tara Bahrapour: And as a follow up, can you tell me yet what percent imputation you'll be doing this time compared to other censuses?

AI Fontenot: No, that's - that will - I'm not not wanting to tell you that. But that's something that I won't know, we won't know until we're into processing the data, de-duplicating the data and understanding everything that we actually have in the data fields. Imputation is one of the last stages that happens in our processing.

So, a lot of activities have to happen before we know the answer to that question, but we will be publishing that publicly as soon as we get to that point.

Tara Bahrapour: Thank you.



Michael Cook: And, unfortunately, we did have a hard stop or do have a hard stop at three o'clock, and I see that it's now 2:59 pm with one minute to spare.

For those that are still in the queue and haven't asked their questions, I want to encourage you to please reach out to the Census Bureau's Public Information Office by dialing 301-763-3030 or sending an email to [pio@census.gov](mailto:pio@census.gov).

We will work to get answers to your questions so that you can write your stories and continue to cover the 2020 Census. Also, I want to make sure that everyone knows that we will keep you up to date on further news briefings, as well as our - as was discussed today, the flow of information and data that will be released as a result of the 2020 census or any relative updates that are forthcoming.

So, with that, I'd like to thank everybody for joining today's call and appreciate your continued interest in the 2020 Census. Thank you, everyone.

END