

D R A F T
Maricopa Association of Governments
Census 2010 Technical Geography Programs Debriefing

In preparing for the 2010 Census, MAG staff has worked closely with member agency staff and Census Bureau staff to assist in the Census Bureau's efforts to get the best count possible for the region. Following is a discussion of the Census Bureau's technical programs with an identification of the specific feedback received about these programs.

Participant Statistical Area Program (PSAP) -

PSAP allowed participants to review and suggest modifications to the Census geographic boundaries for block groups, census tracts, census county divisions, and census designated places for reporting data from the 2010 Census.

Time Frame: 2007-2009

What went well:

- Denver regional census staff was available and helpful in responding to inquiries.
- Census, MAG, and local staff worked together to problem solve (e.g. census tract renumbering).
- Although MAG was responsible for PSAP for all member agencies, member agencies provided input on their respective jurisdictions.
- Being proactive with PSAP workshop and PSAP agenda items.
- Providing custom tools to MAG member agencies to work with PSAP data simplified the review process
- Final review was straightforward.

Suggestions for future enhancements:

- Due dates were unclear. Census Bureau should clarify dates (calendar days vs. business days)
- Although there was some difficulty sorting out geography and numbering issues that were carried over from Census 2000 PSAP, Census Bureau staff for the most part did review and agree on these issues with MAG and MAG member agencies prior to the actual PSAP
- Some data provided by Census for use as "edges" in delineating new statistical areas were out of date or spatially inaccurate (i.e. water courses). Census Bureau should update all "edges" in TIGER to reflect current conditions.
- Glitches in the TIGER data caused some issues with MTPS, such as "zingers." TIGER should be refined to remove spatial errors.
- Inability for each member agency to use MTPS and then allow MAG to import data from the member agencies for one county-wide submission. All data updates had to be re-entered for MAG to submit. Census Bureau should publish an acceptable file format standard for submission which could be created using ArcGIS - the defacto-

standard for GIS software. Alternatively, Census Bureau should add ability to combine individual MTPS usage from jurisdictions for one unified submission.

- Had to break submittal down into smaller zip files because Maricopa County is so large and the online submission system would not accommodate such a large upload. Improve upload system to accommodate large uploads.

Local Update of Census Addresses (LUCA) - Tribal, state, and local governments were invited to review and comment on the list of residential housing unit and group quarters addresses that the Census Bureau used to deliver questionnaires.

Time Frame: 2006-2008

What went well:

- Good relationship with local census office staff.

Suggestions for future enhancements:

- Training by census staff to MAG member agencies was provided too early. LUCA materials were received months after the initial training. Provide training to local jurisdictions closer to arrival of LUCA materials.
- Member agencies did not have adequate advanced notice of when LUCA materials would arrive. Provide dates to member agencies for receipt of LUCA materials to enable them to prepare necessary resources to work on LUCA.
- During address canvassing there were errors using the new technology. Testing on handheld devices should be more rigorous to ensure they work accurately before address canvassers use them in the field.
- Address canvassers missed a street or one side of a street or an entire area of homes. Ensure address canvassers are well trained. It is not about how fast they get the job done but more about how accurately they do the job.
- The timeframe window given for when to expect LUCA documents was too large but when the documents did arrive the timeframe to complete LUCA was too short. Provide adequate time for jurisdictions to plan for and review LUCA materials, especially for the larger jurisdictions.

Local Update of Census Addresses (LUCA) Review -

Member agencies review LUCA materials.

Time Frame: September 2009 - February 2010

What went well:

- MAG staff provided explanation of how to review LUCA materials
- Census Bureau visited POPTAC to answer questions about LUCA materials
- MAG member agencies and MAG staff found numerous addresses that needed to be included in member agency submissions.
- Coordination between Maricopa County and MAG allowed for additional feedback to member agencies prior to submission for review.

Suggestions for future enhancements:

- Maricopa County was one of the largest and one of the first areas to get LUCA review materials. The staff at the OMB LUCA Feedback Office were unprepared for the questions asked and were unorganized and unresponsive. Have the LUCA Feedback Office set up in time to review LUCA submissions. Have staff at the LUCA Feedback Office hired, trained and able to respond to inquiries from those who submitted LUCA files in a timely fashion.
- There were a high number of valid addresses rejected that should have been accepted. MAG member agencies and MAG should not have had to reevaluate information that was correctly submitted in the original LUCA program.
- Instructions were confusing. Ensure instructions are clear on how to appeal an address.
- The Census Bureau needs to look at the address validation process to see why valid multi-family units were deleted.
- The timeframe window given for when to expect LUCA Review documents was too large but when the documents did arrive the timeframe to complete LUCA Review was too short. Provide adequate time for jurisdictions to plan for and review LUCA materials, especially for the larger jurisdictions.
- LUCA Review is vital to member agencies for a good Census count. Member agencies should assemble a team for coordinating review that includes expertise in databases, spatial analysis, and knowledge of the local area.

New Construction Program (NCP) -

The NCP provided an opportunity to submit mailing addresses for units constructed after the 2010 Census Address Canvassing operation.

Time Frame: November 2009 – February 2010

What went well:

- MAG staff provided information back to member agencies on both residential completions and permits to ensure all new construction was captured.
- Member agencies provided information on residential completions to MAG on a monthly basis.
- Arizona State University provided MAG all issued permits, reducing the work load for member agencies
- Member agencies provided information on unit numbers on multi-unit addresses
- Permits issued and completed were merged to avoid duplication
- Census instructions were clear

Suggestions for future enhancements:

- Some member agencies had difficulty collecting unit numbers from newly issued permits. Collect this information, if necessary, on an ongoing basis.

- Submission deadline on New Construction four months prior to Census Day was too early. The submission date on New Construction should be moved closer to Census Day
- Census staff originally stated that the NCP deadline was flexible, but later the Census staff stated that all deadlines need to be met or data would not be accepted. Census Bureau needs to be consistent in setting reasonable deadlines to start with.
- NCP requests were sent out at the same time as LUCA review requests, requiring the same people to be working on multiple programs. The requests should be timed better.
- The correct contact person was not always provided to the Census Bureau. Member agencies need to provide the Census Bureau with the correct contact person.
- The member agency staff person responsible for NCP needs to attend the NCP training at MAG.

Boundary Annexation Survey (BAS) -

The BAS is used to update information about the legal boundaries and names of all governmental units in the United States. It is used to tabulate data for the decennial census.

Time Frame: (for 2010 BAS) - January 2010 - March 2010

What went well:

- MAG and member agencies are used to doing BAS every year so they know what to do and how to do it.
- MAG provides a BAS Workshop every year to review materials with jurisdictions if needed.

Suggestions for future enhancements:

- Census staff in Jeffersonville were either unavailable or uninformed. The BAS staff should be trained well and available to answer the phone for the 1-800 number.
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Boundary Validation Program (BVP) -

The BVP was conducted in parallel with the 2010 Boundary and Annexation Survey (BAS). The intent of the program is to provide the highest elected or appointed official (HEO) an opportunity to review the Census Bureau's boundary data prior to the 2010 Decennial Census.

Time Frame: November/December 2009; Review June 2010

What went well:

Suggestions for future enhancements:

- The Census Bureau did not mention this program to MAG, so MAG was unable to alert the census liaison at the local jurisdiction of the BVP.

- The Census Bureau did not alert the census liaison at the local jurisdiction of the BVP. It would have been helpful for Census Bureau to send information on BVP to member agency census liaison to keep them informed of census material being sent to their highest elected official.
- The instructions were unclear on what to do if an error in a city boundary is detected at this stage.
- The letter sent from the Census Bureau to the highest elected official (HEO) was not clearly written. The letter should be rewritten to the HEO to clarify what is being requested.

General Observations

- Communication between the Census Bureau and the Post Office seemed inadequate. Several member agencies reported missing forms, mis-directed mail and local Post Offices unprepared for the mass Census form mailout. Better coordination between the Census Bureau and Post Office down to the local level could ensure a better count and less follow up time/expense. Special attention should be made for the numerous residents where the Postal Service does not deliver mail to their physical residence address but to a separate location.
- Jurisdictions should create a Census Response Team, much like the Count To 10 committees, but include a Public Information Officer, someone with local knowledge of the area, and technical experts (database, spatial technology, statistics). The Team should meet regularly to ensure adequate communication and that deadlines are met.