

U.S. CENSUS BUREAU REGIONAL OFFICE REALIGNMENT

Over the past year, the Census Bureau Director, Deputy Director, Associate Director for Field Operations, Chief of the Field Division, and the twelve Regional Directors have worked together to develop a plan to update the number, size, geographic coverage, and staffing of the agency's regional offices. The goal is to reduce the cost and improve the quality of the hundreds of surveys the Census Bureau conducts annually. The current structure of 12 regional offices has been in place since 1961. Each regional office consists of about 50 staff members who oversee the work of about 550 field workers based out of their homes.

As a result of the review, the Census Bureau is reforming its regional management structure, taking advantage of technology to enhance performance and reduce costs. The result will be greatly increased efficiency and enhanced ability to continue to provide high quality data and keep pace with innovative changes in how surveys are conducted worldwide. While it is improving quality, it is not changing the core of its data collection effort, the professional interviewer staff.

The Census Bureau will eliminate layers of management, streamline business processes, and close 6 of 12 regional offices. This will be achieved in a phased process over the next 18 months by allowing more Census Bureau field employees to work from home and deploying more modern management metrics to improve productivity and enhance quality. The restructuring is projected to result in a \$15-\$18 million annual savings (net of transition costs) to the Federal government commencing in FY 2014.

These changes will affect approximately 330 employees out of a national field force of about 7,200. The 6 remaining regional offices will be slightly increased in size, but there will be a net loss of approximately 115 to 130 positions nationally at the end of the process.

The Census Bureau is committed to finding the best possible outcome for each affected employee in a closing office, and is seeking approval where necessary from the Department of Commerce and the Office of Personnel Management to provide transition assistance, early retirement, retirement incentives, and job opportunities elsewhere in the Census Bureau.

The Census Bureau developed a set of objective criteria to determine which offices will be closed. It will take approximately 18 months to implement the new arrangement, which it needs in place by January 2013 when the Census Bureau has a projected increase in workload.