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## Technical Bulletins: Conducting A Special Census

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*A University of Tennessee*

# Technical Bulletin

March 16, 1992

## Conducting A Special Census

*by Carol C. Hewlett, MTAS Senior Information Resource Consultant  
and*

*Judith D. Forkner, Local Planning Assistance Office,  
Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development*

Many local governments across the country were unhappy with the 1990 Federal Census results. The census counts are particularly important to Tennessee cities because state law provides for the distribution of certain state revenues to cities based on the population counts of the federal census conducted every 10 years.

Unless you update your count, the 1990 federal figures will be the basis for any per capita revenue from the state throughout this decade.

Cities that are incorporated between the federal cen-

suses may conduct a citywide census to establish their initial population count. These cities have the option of conducting one additional citywide count prior to the next federal census.

Tennessee law offers two ways for cities to correct or update their population count between decennial censuses:

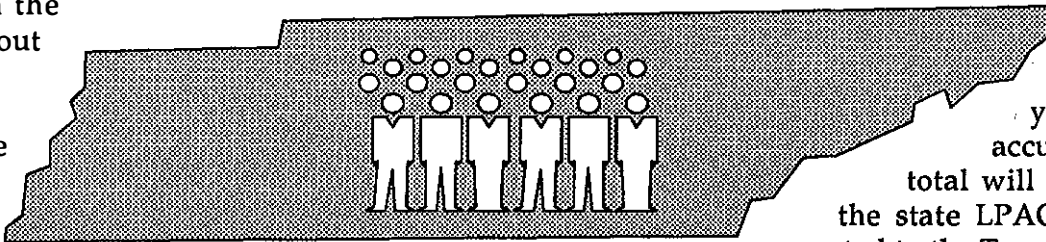
1. counting and adding newly annexed residents to their population count at various times throughout the decade between federal censuses, and

2. conducting a citywide census at any time between federal censuses, with a limit of two such censuses per decade.

Each of these censuses is generally referred to as a "special census." To add the people counted in a special census to the population, the results must be reported to the Local Planning Assistance Office (LPAO) of the Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development.

The regional LPAO will field check your census for accuracy. The new total will be certified by the state LPAO director and reported to the Tennessee Commissioner of Finance and Administration on July 1 of each year.

If you contract with the U.S. Bureau of the Census to conduct a new count, a map of the area surveyed and the new population must be submitted to the LPAO by the Census Bureau before July 1. This information must go to the state LPAO director for the same certification process as censuses done by the city. However, the bureau's count isn't checked by LPAO staff.



## **Types of Special Censuses**

### **Census of Annexed Territory**

Prior to beginning a census of annexed territory, contact your regional LPAO office to find out how to organize the collected information for certification.

A census of annexed territory can be taken any time. In most cases it's done soon after annexation. However, when a city annexes largely undeveloped property, municipal officials might be better off delaying the new population count until the area is substantially developed. In either case, it's important to submit the results of your census to the regional LPAO office as soon as the count is complete so the certification process can be complete by July 1.

### **Citywide Census**

#### **Census of a New Municipality:**

A special population census of a newly incorporated municipality may be taken at any time. If the count is conducted by the city, the results must be submitted to the LPAO to be checked before being certified. Plan for extra certification time since new incorporations often involve a large territory with more people than an annexed area. This will ensure that you begin your first year as a city with the appropriate amount of state-shared revenue.

#### **Census to Update Population Count:**

A series of public acts authorizes not more than two citywide special censuses during the 10-year period between regular federal censuses. This limitation is for the purpose of recalculating and increasing the city's share of revenue from the state gasoline, beer, and sales tax (*Tennessee Code Annotated* 54-4-203, 57-5-205, and 67-6-103).

State law doesn't specify that the municipal share of the Tennessee Valley Authority gross receipts tax (or in-lieu-of-tax payments) and municipal shares of the special tax on petroleum products be increased as a result of a special citywide census. However, the State Comptroller's Office and the Tennessee Department of Revenue use the municipal populations certified annually by the LPAO to calculate these payments to cities.

Two things to consider in timing a citywide special census are: an estimate of the number of present residents not counted in the 1990 Federal Census, and yearly estimates of the number of new residents likely to settle in the city during the remainder of the decade.

The likely rate of increase or decrease in per capita shares of the various state-shared taxes during the rest of the decade can also be an important consideration, depending on the numbers involved. The municipal portion of the state-shared taxes and appropriations is estimated annually by MTAS and distributed to each Tennessee city government.

Don't forget to include your city's planning staff in making the decision to conduct a citywide census. This staff will likely have information on the present population as well as projections of population growth. Such statistics are helpful in timing a special census so the city receives the greatest benefit. Remember, you can only conduct two citywide special censuses between federal censuses, so careful planning is important.

### **Costs for Conducting a Special Census**

A special census may be conducted by a city or the U.S. Bureau of the Census. Any special census must meet LPAO regulations. The cost for LPAO certification is 10 cents per capita. Any city wanting to conduct a special census must first contact the LPAO.

The U.S. Bureau of the Census conducts censuses using local personnel. This count may take longer and cost more than a census done by the city, but the information is likely to be much more detailed. On pages 4 and 5 is a Census Bureau bulletin with additional information on federally conducted special censuses.

When a municipality has the Census Bureau conduct a citywide census, the only state requirement is that the bureau officially notify the LPAO by providing a map of the area covered and the census count.

*continued on page 3*

## **For Additional Information**

For additional information, contact one of the Local Planning Assistance Offices, the U.S. Bureau of the Census, or your MTAS consultant in Knoxville at (615) 974-0411, Nashville at (615) 256-8141, Jackson at (901) 423-3710, or Martin at (901) 587-7055.

### **Local Planning Assistance Office**

Donald G. Waller, Director  
320 Sixth Avenue North  
6th Floor, Rachel Jackson Building  
Nashville, TN 37243-0405  
(615) 741-2211  
FAX (615) 741-5070

### **LPAO, East Tennessee**

Jim Wagner, Director  
5401 Kingston Pike, Suite 210  
Knoxville, TN 37919  
(615) 594-6666

### **LPAO, Middle Tennessee**

Phillip Maples, Director  
24 Grassmere Park Drive, Suite 11  
Nashville, TN 37211-3662  
(615) 741-1534

### **LPAO, West Tennessee**

Michael Sparks, Director  
Suite 302-A, Jackson State Office Building  
Jackson, TN 38301  
(901) 423-5650  
FAX (901) 423-6650

### **LPAO, Southeast Tennessee**

Stanley Harrison, Director  
540 McCallie, Suite 106  
Chattanooga, TN 37402-2015  
(615) 634-6446  
FAX (615) 634-6351

### **LPAO, Upper East Tennessee**

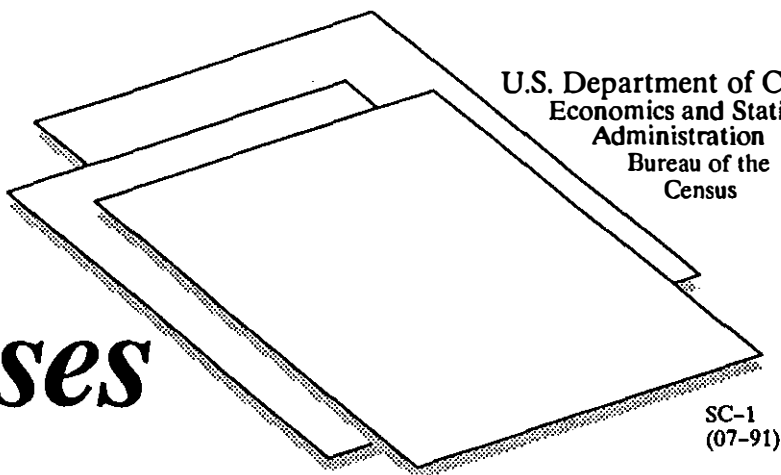
Charles C. Snapp, Director  
207 North Boone Street  
Johnson City, TN 37601  
(615) 928-8176

### **LPAO, Upper Cumberland**

George James, Director  
621 East 15th Street  
Cookeville, TN 38501-1820  
(615) 528-1577  
FAX (615) 526-5230

# *Federal Special Censuses*

U.S. Department of Commerce  
Economics and Statistics  
Administration  
Bureau of the  
Census



SC-1  
(07-91)

## **GENERAL INFORMATION**

The Bureau of the Census offers a special census program for cities, towns, villages, counties, townships, and school districts that need up-to-date census figures. Such a census, taken under Federal supervision, is consistent with the Federal censuses taken every 10 years. Many states recognize the counts of Federal censuses for distribution of tax funds and other matters. If you have any doubt whether a Federal or state authority would recognize a special census count for the purposes the state or local government has in mind, you should check with the appropriate Federal or state authority before entering into a contract with the Census Bureau.

The Census Bureau conducts special censuses under a reimbursable agreement. Only an appropriate state or local government may authorize the Census Bureau to conduct a special census. For example, a countywide census must have the approval of the governing board of the county. A state or county can, however, contract to have a census taken for less than the entire jurisdiction. The Census Bureau provides the final tabulated count, in writing, to the local officials. The Census Bureau will provide the count to any Federal, state, or local official, or other individual upon receipt of a request in writing from the appropriate official or individual.

When the community desires to have a special census taken, an authorized official of the community should write a letter to the Census Bureau and request an estimate of the cost. Please refer to "THE COST." The state or local government will then receive information regarding cost. The cost estimate is valid for 90 days. After that date, it is subject to revision by the Census Bureau to take into account any changes in wage rates or other costs that may have occurred.

Upon execution of a contract and receipt of funds to conduct the special census, the Census Bureau will send maps of the area to the state or local government for updating. Once the state or local government returns the updated maps, the Census Bureau will schedule the special census.

## **CONDITIONS**

1. The state or local government agrees to pay all necessary expenses. The costs may exceed the estimate, particularly if the number of persons enumerated exceeds the expected population on which the Census Bureau based the cost estimate.
2. The state or local government agrees to provide suitable office space equipped with furniture, telephones, typewriters, and other equipment necessary for the successful completion of the census.
3. The state or local government agrees to make available qualified, mature persons who are able and willing to work full time as enumerators in the special census.
4. The census supervisor will interview and test these people.
5. The individual returns from the special census remain the property of the Census Bureau.
6. At additional cost, the Census Bureau will make available special tabulations in the form of statistical summaries, provided that the tabulations do not reveal the identity of any person. The state or local government may request special tabulations within 3 months of the date on which the special census count is certified.

**THE ENUMERATION**

The Census Bureau conducts the enumeration of a special census under the same concepts as those that govern the Federal decennial census. Special census enumeration includes members of the Armed Forces living and stationed in the community. The enumeration does not include persons who have entered the Armed Forces from that particular city or town and who now are stationed elsewhere. The Census Bureau does not include visitors staying in the area temporarily or on a seasonal basis in the special census unless they are working in the area or have no usual home elsewhere. The enumeration includes persons enrolled in colleges or universities at the place where they stay while attending college. The special census enumeration does not include military and government employees overseas. Unlike the decennial census, response to a special census is voluntary.

The special census supervisor, who will be an experienced employee of the Census Bureau, will make the necessary arrangements for the selection, appointment, and training of the staff, and the conduct of the enumeration. At the conclusion of the enumeration, the supervisor will provide a preliminary count to the local officials requesting the census. The census supervisor may also release these counts to officials of the political subdivisions of the area enumerated, to news media, and to others who are interested.

The standard questionnaire includes the name of each resident of the special census area, relationship, age, sex, race, Hispanic origin, and marital status. The questionnaire also includes occupancy/vacancy status, type of vacant, number of units in a structure, and tenure for housing units.

The Census Bureau will provide further information about additional unpublished data upon request. A state or local government may add questions

provided additional lead time is allowed for preparing a new questionnaire and additional estimated costs are agreed upon.

**THE COST**

Upon request, the Census Bureau develops cost estimates for special censuses on a reimbursable basis. The Census Bureau staff uses the area's estimated population and housing counts to determine the staff and workdays required to conduct the special census. The Census Bureau also considers the demographic characteristics, geographic location, and climatic conditions of the area when preparing the cost estimate.

A request for a cost estimate should include the following:

1. The name or description of the proposed special census area.
2. An estimate of the current population of the special census area.
3. An estimate of the current number of housing units in the special census area (i.e., housing units include houses, apartments, and mobile homes).
4. The names of any colleges, boarding schools, military installations, or similar institutions within the area.
5. The name, phone and fax number of the person who can provide additional information, if required.
6. A check for the proper amount in Exhibit 1 made payable to "Commerce/Census."
7. Any special data requirements.

The state or local government should send a request for a cost estimate to: Office of Special Censuses, Bureau of the Census, Room 205, Scuderi Building, Washington, DC 20233-0001. Phone (301) 763-8426.

**Exhibit 1 – Fees For Preparation of Cost Estimate For Special Censuses**

<i>Type of area</i>	<i>Fee</i>
Cities, towns, incorporated places with estimated populations less than 50,000 .....	\$125
Any areas with an estimated population of 50,000 or greater .....	\$200
Counties, county equivalents, school districts, etc. regardless of size .....	\$200

The Municipal Technical Advisory Service (MTAS) is a statewide agency of The University of Tennessee's Institute for Public Service. MTAS operates in cooperation with the Tennessee Municipal League in providing technical assistance services to officials of Tennessee's incorporated municipalities. Assistance is offered in areas such as accounting, administration, finance, public works, communications, ordinance codification, and wastewater management.

MTAS *Technical Bulletins* are information briefs that provide a timely review of topics of interest to Tennessee municipal officials. *Bulletins* are free to Tennessee local, state, and federal government officials and are available to others for \$2 each. Contact MTAS for a list of recent *Bulletins*.

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