
SECTION: PARTICIPANT RIGHTS

SUBJECT: Treatment of Individuals

ITEM: Collection and Documentation of Ethnic and Racial Categories

Policy

Local agency (LA) staff shall at the initial enrollment appointment collect and document in the Integrated Statewide Information System (ISIS) the ethnic and racial categories for each applicant.

Required Procedures

- I. LA staff shall verbally explain to each applicant that the collection of this information is strictly for statistical reporting requirements and has no effect on the determination of their eligibility to participate in the program. The collection of ethnicity and race data from WIC applicants is used by the Food and Nutrition Services to determine how effectively the program is reaching minority groups and to identify where additional outreach is needed.
- II. The LA staff shall verbally assess the applicant's understanding of the verbal explanation.
- III. The LA staff shall collect and document into ISIS ethnic and racial categories by:
 - A. verbally asking each applicant to self-identify their ethnicity by asking: Are you *Hispanic* or *Latino*? Staff will place a Y for yes or an N for no in the appropriate field in the ISIS.
 - B. verbally asking each applicant: Are you *American Indian* or *Alaska Native*, *Asian*, *Black* or *African American*, *Native Hawaiian* or *Other Pacific Islander*, or *White* and recording the applicant's response to each of these categories in ISIS. The applicant may identify with one or more racial categories and staff shall document each selection by placing a Y or N in the appropriate field.
 - C. using visual identification, if the applicant is unwilling or unable to respond to the ethnic and racial questions, to determine the applicant's ethnic or racial category for reporting purposes. LA staff is required to select at least one race category.
- IV. If the LA incorporates ethnic and racial questions on forms to collect the required information, staff shall collect and document into ISIS ethnic and racial categories by:
 - A. verbally explaining why the information is needed to the applicant;
 - B. verbally assessing the applicant's understanding of the explanation;
 - C. reviewing and entering the written responses, and in situations where questions are left blank on the form, verbally asking the applicant for the information; and

- D. visually identifying and documenting into ISIS the individual's ethnicity and at least one race category when the applicant is unwilling or unable to respond to the ethnic and racial questions.
- V. Forms containing written ethnic/racial questions are required to meet the following criteria:
 - A. include a written statement explaining why the data is collected. This statement shall precede the ethnicity and race questions;
 - B. display the ethnicity and race questions as separate categories on the form; and
 - C. limit the use of ethnic and racial categories to the ones presented in this policy.
- VI. At subsequent certifications, staff shall ensure the presence of either "Y" or "N" in the ethnicity field and at least one race category selection. If either is absent, staff shall process the ethnicity and race questions the same as indicated for initial enrollment.

Definitions

I. **Ethnicity**

Hispanic or Latino: A person of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central or South American, or other Spanish culture or origin regardless of race. The term, "Spanish origin," can be used in addition to "Hispanic or Latino."

II. **Race**

American Indian or Alaska Native: A person having origins in any of the original peoples of North and South America, (including Central America), and who maintains tribal affiliation or community attachment (includes Aleuts and Eskimos).

Asian: A person having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia or the Indian subcontinent including, for example, Cambodia, China, India, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Pakistan, the Philippine Islands, Thailand, and Vietnam.

Black or African American: A person having origins in the black racial groups of Africa including persons self-identifying as "Haitian" or "Negro" can be used in addition to "Black or African American."

Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander: A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Hawaii, Guam, Samoa, or other Pacific Islands.

White: A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, North Africa, or the Middle East.

Authority

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[OMB Directive No. 15, October 30, 1997](#)
[2010 Census NRFU Enumerator Manual](#)