

Subject: Treatment of Individuals

Item: Collection and Documentation of Ethnic and Racial Categories

PURPOSE:

To collect data regarding race and ethnicity from each applicant for statistical purposes.

POLICY:

Local agency (LA) staff must collect information regarding race and ethnicity for each applicant and document it in the WIC Management Information system (WIC MIS) at the initial certification appointment.

PROCEDURE(S):

I. Collecting data at certification

- A. LA staff must explain to each applicant that the collection of the information is strictly for statistical reporting requirements, and has no effect on the determination of their eligibility for WIC benefits.
- B. The LA staff must ask the applicant's understanding of the verbal explanation.
- C. The LA staff must collect and document in the WIC MIS ethnic/racial categories.

1. Face to Face.

Staff must document "Y" for yes or "N" for no in the WIC MIS after applicant's each response.

- a. Having each applicant self-identify their ethnicity by asking:

- Are you Hispanic or Latino?

- b. Having each applicant self-identify their race by asking:

- Are you American Indian or Alaska Native?
- Are you American Indian from South or Central America?
- Are you Asian?
- Are you Black or African American?
- Are you Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander?
- Are you White?

- c. Visually identifying the applicant's ethnic/racial category for reporting purposes if the applicant is unwilling or unable to respond to the questions. LA staff must document at least one race category in the WIC MIS.

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2. Forms

- a. LA that use forms with ethnicity/race questions to collect the required information must:
 - i. Explain verbally to the applicant why the information is needed.
 - ii. Ask the applicant's understanding of the explanation.
 - iii. Review and document the written responses. When questions are left blank on the form, ask the applicant for the information.
 - iv. Visually identify the applicant's ethnicity/race category for reporting purposes if the applicant is unwilling or unable to respond to questions.
 - b. Forms containing written ethnicity/race questions are required to meet the following criteria:
 - i. Include a written statement explaining why the data is collected. This statement must precede the ethnicity and race questions. For example, the LA form could say: "WIC uses this information for statistical purposes only and it does not affect your eligibility."
 - ii. List the ethnicity/race questions on the form.
 - iii. Limit the use of ethnicity/race categories to the ones presented in this policy.
- D. The LA staff must not "lead," "second guess," or in any other way change or challenge a self-declaration made by the applicant as to his or her race or ethnic background.
- E. The applicant may identify with one or more racial categories and LA staff must document each selection in WIC MIS.

II. Recertifications

- A. At recertifications, staff must ensure the presence of either "Y" or "N" in the ethnicity field and at least one race category selection. If either is absent, staff must process the ethnicity/race questions the same as indicated for initial certification.

AUTHORITY:

[7 CFR §246.8 Nondiscrimination](#)

FNS Instruction #113-1

[OMB Directive No. 15, October 30, 1997](#)

PARTICIPANT RIGHTS

WPPM #510-50

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CROSS REFERENCE:

WPPM 970-10 Glossary

WPPM 1000-50 Ethnicity and Race Job Aid