

**RESOURCES FOR RESEARCHERS: Guidance Document**

## Race & Ethnicity

**Race** refers to the concept of dividing people into groups based on various sets of physical characteristics and the process of ascribing social meaning to those groups.

**Ethnicity** describes the culture of people in a given geographic region, including their language, heritage, religion and customs.

The U.S. Office of Management and Budget requires that race data be collected for a minimum of five groups: White, Black or African American, American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, and Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander. OMB permits the Census Bureau to also use a sixth category - Some Other Race. Respondents may report more than one race (Two or more races).

The table below compares the current minimum reporting categories with the new, more inclusive reporting categories as permitted by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget:

| <b>Current Reporting Categories (5+2 format)</b> | <b>New Reporting Categories (7+2 format)</b>     |
|--------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Five race/ethnicity categories</b>            | <b>Seven race/ethnicity categories</b>           |
| Hispanic                                         | Hispanic or Latino or Spanish Origin of any race |
| American Indian or Alaskan Native                | American Indian or Alaskan Native                |
| Asian or Pacific Islander                        | Asian                                            |
|                                                  | Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander        |
| Black, non-Hispanic                              | Black or African American                        |
| White, non-Hispanic                              | White                                            |
|                                                  | Two or more races                                |
| <b>Two additional categories</b>                 |                                                  |
| Non-Resident Alien                               | Non-Resident Alien (of any race or ethnicity)    |
| Race and Ethnicity unknown                       | Race and Ethnicity unknown                       |



## DEFINITIONS:

**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.

**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 any of the black racial groups of Africa. Terms such as "Haitian" or "Negro" can be used in addition to "Black or African American."

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

**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, the Middle East, or North Africa.

**Two or more races:** People may choose to provide two or more races either by checking two or more race response check boxes, by providing multiple responses, or by some combination of check boxes and other responses. For data product purposes, "Two or More Races" refers to combinations of two or more of the aforementioned race categories.

### Examples:

The following are examples of ways to ask about social identities. This list is not exhaustive, and each example has limitations. Researchers must carefully consider the complexities of the social identities participants will be asked to disclose, and carefully consider the cultural context in which the research is being conducted. These considerations will impact how the following questions should be framed.

Some Americans are often stereotyped as foreign, to avoid conveying this assumption, researchers who are recruiting participants from the United States may wish to incorporate participants' American identity into questions about racial and ethnic identities.

**Example A:** Describe your racial and ethnic identity (or leave blank if you prefer not to say): \_\_\_\_\_

**Example B:** What is your families' ethnic background and/or country of origin (e.g., Haitian/Haiti; Brazilian/Brazil; French/France; Indonesian/Indonesia, etc.)? Leave blank if you prefer not to say:  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Example C:** With which racial and ethnic groups do you identify?  
Please select all that apply:

American Indian or Alaskan Native

Asian / Asian American

Black or African American

Hispanic or Latinx / Hispanic American

Middle Eastern or North African / Middle Eastern American

Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander / Pacific Islander American

White / European American

Prefer to self-describe: \_\_\_\_\_

Prefer not to say



**Example D:** With which racial and ethnic groups do you identify?

Please select all that apply:

American Indian or Alaskan Native

Asian

Black or African American

Hispanic or Latinx

Middle Eastern or North African

Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander

White

Prefer to self-describe: \_\_\_\_\_

Prefer not to say

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