On October 30, 1997, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) issued new Race and Ethnicity Standards for Federal Statistics and Administrative Reporting (Revised Directive 15). The categories established by these standards will be the basis for just about all publications issued by the Federal statistical agencies.

The new designations for Race are: White; Black or African American; Asian; Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander; and American Indian or Alaska Native. For Ethnicity the designations are: Hispanic or Latino; and Not Hispanic or Latino. It has been recommended that the Hispanic Origin question precede the Race question.

The Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander category will be defined as a person having origins in any of the original peoples of Hawaii, Guam, Samoa, or other Pacific Islands. The Asian category will be defined as a person having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia or the Indian subcontinent including Cambodia, China, India, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Pakistan, the Philippine Islands, Thailand, and Vietnam. By creating separate categories, the data on the Native Hawaiians and Other Pacific Islander groups will no longer be overwhelmed by the aggregate data of the much larger Asian groups.

The new standards allow for the reporting of more than one race when self-identification is used on surveys or in other Federal data collection. The alternative would be to have added a "multiracial" category, which OMB does not recommend. Based upon research conducted for OMB, the two recommended forms for the instruction accompanying a multiple response question are "Mark one or more," and "Select one or more." If confidentiality criteria are met, OMB recommends that Federal agencies should provide at a minimum the number of individuals identifying with more than one race.


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