

Race and Ethnicity Coding Guidelines

*For the New Jersey Department of Health
and Senior Services and its Grantees*

December 2007

INTRODUCTION

Nationwide, differences in the health status and outcomes among racial and ethnic sub-populations have been documented. In New Jersey, one of the most diverse states in the nation, these differences also exist. In an effort to address the disparities seen in health care and outcomes in the State, the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services' (DHSS), *Healthy New Jersey 2010* initiative was devised to set goals to eliminate these disparities and track the progress of each objective throughout the decade. Collecting data on racial and ethnic populations is essential to achieving the goal of reducing and ultimately eliminating health disparities in the State. These DHSS Racial and Ethnic Coding Guidelines (the Guidelines) have been devised as a product of the state's Strategic Plan to Eliminate Health Disparities, released during the Spring of 2007.

The Plan called for DHSS' Center for Health Statistics to identify all DHSS divisions or programs collecting race and ethnicity data, and to develop a specific template for collecting and reporting these data, consistent with federal OMB 15 standards. These Guidelines are to be adhered to by every DHSS entity or grantee collecting and reporting data by race and ethnic sub-population in the State. Though a more difficult task for some than others, standardization is required so that health differences among sub-populations may be better measured and tracked. This effort will help to inform policy makers as well as health care providers on areas where health promotion, disease prevention and treatment efforts should be targeted.

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Purpose

This document provides uniform standards for the collection and reporting of data on race and ethnicity for the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS) and its grantees.

Adherence to DHSS Race and Ethnicity Coding Guidelines will facilitate the execution of overall public health objectives to address racial and ethnic disparities within the State. Furthermore, these Guidelines can be referred to when collecting additional race and ethnicity data items, beyond those required by OMB 15.

OMB Revised Standards (OMB 15)

DHSS Race and Ethnicity Coding Guidelines are consistent with the U.S. Office of Management and Budget’s Statistical Policy Directive 15 (OMB 15), *Revisions to the Standards for Classification of Federal Data on Race and Ethnicity (1997)*. A listing of the **minimum** number of race and ethnicity categories established by OMB 15 is presented below.

OMB 15 Race/Ethnicity Categories
American Indian or Alaska Native
Asian
Black or African American
Hispanic or Latino
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
White
Other

See Appendix I for specific definitions of these categories. For additional OMB 15 information, go to www.whitehouse.gov/omb/fedreg/1997standards.html.

COLLECTION GUIDELINES

These Guidelines apply to any DHSS office, program, or grantee that collects information on NJ residents through

- program activities,
- application processes,
- surveillance activities,
- survey data collection, or
- during the provision of health care services.

Self-identification is the recommended method of collecting race and ethnicity data. In cases where self-identification is not possible (for example, death certificates, data for children, etc.), identification should be made by the next of kin.

Ethnicity Data

It is recommended by OMB 15 that data be collected separately for race and ethnicity, with ethnicity collected first. For ethnicity, data should be collected on whether or not a person is of Hispanic or Latino culture or origin. Note that the OMB 15 standards do not permit multiple responses (e.g., both Hispanic and non-Hispanic heritage). To help provide more complete race data for Hispanic respondents, an instruction to answer both the Hispanic or Latino question and the race question may be useful, especially for mail surveys or self-administered questionnaires.

Ethnic Sub-group Data

Collection of data on Hispanic sub-groups is encouraged when possible. To capture specific sub-groups, a list of categories should be provided following

an affirmative response to the Hispanic or Latino category.

Several DHSS programs already include Hispanic subgroups in their data collection efforts. However, if a program is not currently collecting but would like to include sub-ethnic groups within the Hispanic or Latino population, the following table lists the groups to be used:

Hispanic or Latino sub-ethnic groups
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Central American or South American• Cuban• Dominican• Mexican, Mexican American, Chicano• Other Spanish or Latino• Puerto Rican

Race Data

The ethnicity question should be followed with a question about race. At a minimum, the five OMB 15 race categories should be used: American Indian/Alaskan Native, Asian, Black/African American, Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander, and White.

If a program is not currently collecting but would like to include sub-groups within the Asian or Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander population, the following tables list the groups that should be used (also see appendices II and III):

Asian sub-ethnic groups

- Asian Indian
- Chinese
- Filipino
- Japanese
- Korean
- Vietnamese
- Other Asian

Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander sub-ethnic groups

- Native Hawaiian
- Guamanian or Chamorro
- Samoan
- Other Pacific Islander
- Other Asian

Combined Format

The separate collection of data on race and ethnicity, as described above, is recommended for compliance with OMB 15. A combined format should only be used when self-reporting is not feasible or appropriate. If a combined format must be used, there are six minimum categories:

Collecting Race/Ethnicity Combined Format

American Indian or Alaska Native
Asian
Black or African American
Hispanic or Latino
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
White
Other

Other Race

When a list, separate or combined, is used to collect race information, an *other* category should also be included to capture individuals who do not identify with any of the five minimum race classifications.

Multiple Race

Collecting data on multiple races is recommended by OMB 15. This information should be collected as multiple responses to a single question rather than from a separate "multiracial" category. This may be accomplished with the instruction "Select one or more . . ." of the listed OMB 15 categories. If a combined race/ethnicity format must be used, respondents should be allowed to select more than one race, in addition to responding to the ethnicity question.

PUBLICATION GUIDELINES

All DHSS entities or grantees should use the following procedures for publishing or reporting race and ethnicity data in:

- statistical data reports,
- general program administrative and grant reporting,
- compliance reporting, and
- other presentations of data on race and ethnicity.

Publishing Race/Ethnicity Combined format
White
Black
Hispanic or Latino
Asian
Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander
American Indian/Alaska Native

Mutually exclusive race/ethnicity categories

The six OMB 15 race/ethnicity groups are mutually exclusive. Hispanic or Latino ethnicity supercedes race. Therefore, a person with a positive response to the Hispanic or Latino item will be reported in the Hispanic or Latino group, regardless of race or races specified. The White, Black/African American, Asian, and Pacific Islander, and Native American/Alaska Native groups include those with No or Unknown responses to the Hispanic/Latino item on the collection form.

Reporting Multiple Race

As recommended by OMB 15, when data on multiple races has been collected, an additional category, “Two or more races,” should be reported with the results. This category should include only those who reported two or more races. A person who is counted in the “two or more races” category should be excluded from other race categories.

Reporting Small Numbers

The National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) recommends that rates be calculated only when there are 20 or more events in the numerator. If the calculation of rates is possible, and/or if count data is being presented, then data should be shown for the six OMB-15 categories as listed above.

For certain groups it may often be impossible to present separate rates. For example, in 2005, the American Indian/ Alaskan Natives were 0.3% and Native Hawaiian/ Other Pacific Islanders were 0.1% of New Jersey’s population. In the event that a rate can not be reliably calculated, events among the Pacific Islander population can be combined with those for the Asian population. Events for American Indian and Alaskan Natives should be reported within the *Other* category (see below) when there is insufficient data to calculate a rate.

'Other' Category

Review the counts in the six race/ethnicity groups in Example I below. The race group counts exclude any person also identifying as Hispanic or Latino. If rates were calculated and the NCHS criteria had not been met, the Asian and Pacific Islander deaths would have been combined and the American Indian deaths would have been included in the “other” category, with a note stating that they were there.

Example 1: Deaths By Race/Ethnicity, New Jersey, 2004

RACE/ETHNICITY*	NUMBER OF DEATHS
White	57,574
Black	8,955
Hispanic or Latino	3,237
Asian	1,160
Pacific islander	1,160
American Indian/ Alaskan Native	68
Other single race	202
Two or more races	163

*Data for White, Black, Asian, Pacific Islander, American Indian, Other Single Race, and Two or More Races do not include Hispanics. Hispanic ethnicity includes persons of any race.

Labeling

The OMB 15 directive allows for the terms “African American” or “Black” to be used interchangeably. However, it is recommended that “Hispanic or Latino” both be used to describe the ethnic group. For DHSS publications, it is recommended that race and ethnicity groups are labeled as shown in Example I.

Standard Labels for Race & Ethnic Groups

- White
- Black
- Hispanic or Latino
- Asian
- Pacific Islander
- Other

Footnotes

To avoid confusion about whether the data published for each racial group includes or excludes persons of Hispanic descent, the following footnote(s) should be used:

“Data for White, Black, and Asian/Pacific Islander, and American Indians do not include Hispanics. Hispanic ethnicity includes persons of any race.”

Also, when American Indians are included in the “other” category due to small sample size, the following footnote should be used:

“American Indian/Alaskan Natives are included in this category. There were not enough [events] within this population to calculate a reliable rate.”

PRIMARY LANGUAGE SPOKEN

OMB 15 does not provide a recommendation that primary language spoken be collected. However, since more than a quarter of NJ residents report that a language other than English is spoken at home, collection of data on primary language spoken is required.

The recommended format for posing the primary language question is to first ask whether English is the primary language spoken at home, allowing a yes or no response. If the answer is no then a question about primary language spoken can be asked either as an open ended question or with a list.

A suggested *primary language* list for New Jersey is provided below. The list was compiled using results from the 2005 American Community Survey conducted by the US Census Bureau.

Next, if English is not the primary language spoken, ask the following question to determine the level of English proficiency. *How well do you speak English?* The answer choices listed should be: very well, well, not well, or not well at all. This question was also taken from the US Census Bureau's American Community Survey.

Primary Language Spoken (other than English)

- Chinese or Mandarin
- French (including Patois, Cajun)
- Gujarathi
- Haitian Creole
- Hindi
- Italian
- Korean
- Polish
- Portuguese
- Russian
- Spanish
- Tagalog
- Other (specify)

Appendix IV provides a checklist for standardizing programs' race and ethnicity data collection and publication practices. Appendix V contains a summary of the NJDHSS divisions and programs that are currently collecting race and ethnicity data.

APPENDICES

- I. OMB 15 minimum race and ethnicity category definitions

- II. NJDHSS minimum data collection race and ethnicity categories

- III. NJDHSS minimum race and ethnicity categories

- IV. Checklist for standardizing race/ethnicity and primary language data collection and publication efforts

- V. NJDHSS Divisions/Programs Collecting Race and Ethnicity Data

APPENDIX I. OMB 15 Race/Ethnicity Category definitions

The **minimum** categories established in the 1997 OMB Standard for Federal Data on Race and Ethnicity are:

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.

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.

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.

ETHNICITY

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."

The collection of more detailed information on population groups is acceptable provided that any additional categories can be aggregated into these minimum standard sets of categories.

APPENDIX II. NJDHSS Data Collection Standard for Race and Ethnicity Categories	
Ethnicity	Definition
Hispanic or Latino ("Spanish origin")	Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South or Central American or other Spanish culture or origin
Not Hispanic or Latino ("Not of Spanish origin")	
Race	Definition
American Indian or Alaska Native:	Origins in any of the original peoples of North and South America (including Central America), and tribal affiliation or community attachment.
Asian:	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:	Origins in any of the black racial groups of Africa.
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander:	Origins in any of the original peoples of Hawaii, Guam, Samoa, or other Pacific Islands.
White:	Origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, the Middle East, or North Africa.
Other Race:	Persons who identify as a race outside of the minimum standard racial categories.

APPENDIX III. Recommended racial/ethnic sub-group categories

Race/Ethnicity category	Definition
<i>Hispanic/Latino</i>	Mexican/Mexican American/Chicano, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central or South American, Dominican, Other Spanish or Latino
<i>Asian</i>	Asian Indian, Chinese, Filipino, Japanese, Korean, Vietnamese, Other Asian
<i>Pacific Islander</i>	Native Hawaiian, Guamanian or Chamorro, Samoan, Other Pacific Islander

The White, Black, Asian and Pacific Islander categories include those who answered Yes for one of the respective race groups and who also answered No to or did not answer (Unknown) the Hispanic ethnicity question. All responders answering Yes to the Hispanic or Latino ethnicity question should be coded as Hispanic, regardless of the race response chosen. To avoid confusion about whether the data published for each racial group includes or excludes persons of Hispanic descent, the following footnote should be used:

**Data for White, Black, and Asian, and Pacific Islander do not include Hispanics.
Hispanic ethnicity includes persons of any race.*

APPENDIX IV. Checklist for standardizing NJDHSS race/ethnicity data collection and publication efforts

- Review all forms, surveys, applications and/or documents which are used to collect or report race/ethnicity categories
- Compare current program race/ethnicity categories used to those recommended and note any differences
- Change different race/ethnicity categories to those recommended minimum categories (as necessary) and notify all program staff in writing
- Update and replace revised forms/application currently posted on program web sites
- Use the standard race/ethnicity categories for all **new** data collection and publication activities
- Forward a copy of the NJDHSS coding standard to all Grantees collecting race/ethnicity data on behalf of the Department.
- If necessary, provide training on adhering to the race and ethnicity coding guidelines for all staff and grantees.

APPENDIX V: NJDHSS Divisions/Programs Collecting Race and Ethnicity Data

DIVISION/PROGRAM	Data source/ type	Race /ethnicity categories compliant? Y=Yes/N=No	Ethnicity asked first? Y=Yes/ N=No	Combined race/ ethnicity format? Y=Yes/ N=No	Allow multiple race? Y=Yes/ N=No	Ask primary language? Y=Yes/ N=No	Hispanic or Asian subgroups? Y=Yes/ N=No	Compliant by Jan 08? Y=Yes/ N=No
Office of the Commissioner								
Health Care Quality & Access								
HCQA - Cardiac Catheritization	Cardiac Cath Data Registry	Y	N	N	N	N	N	Y
HCQA - Cardiac Surgery	Open Heart Surgery Registry	Y	N	N	N	N	N	Y
HCQA - Patient Safety Information	Form	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y
HCQA - UB Hospitalization data	UB	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y
Office of Minority and Multicultural Health	Disparity Grants Quarterly Report Form	Y	Y	N	Y	N	N	Y
Office of Diversity and Equity Service	NJ DOP Discrimination Complaint Processing Form	Y	N	N	Y	N	N	Y
Management & Administration								
Bureau of Vital Statistics (BVS)								
BVS - EBC - birth data	Vital Events recording / Births, deaths, adoptions, divorce, domestic partnership, civil union and still birth	N - The current EBC, Fetal Death and perinatal data systems were programmed in the mid 90s using the old OMB standard from 1989. The system is an old version of Basic for DOS. It will take a massive effort to convert to a new web-based system, and will take 2 years to plan.	N	N	Y	N	Y	N
BVS - Fetal Deaths		N - Same explanation as above.	N	N	Y	N	Y	N

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BVS - EDRS - deaths		Y	Y	N	Y	N	Y	Y
Human Resources Services	Employment Application	Y	N	Y	N	N	N	Y
Public Health Services Branch/ Epidemiological Services								
Cancer Epi. Svcs.	NJ State Cancer Registry; Cancer incidence, prevalence, and mortality	Y	N	N	Y	N	Y	Y
Communicable Dis. Svc.	Infectious & Zoonotic Disease Program/ Infectious Disease Surveillance/Tuberculosis /STDs	N - A/PI category is combined.	N	N	Y	N	N	Y
Occupational Health Svc. (OHS)								
OHS -NJ FACE	NJ FACE investigations/ Work-Related Fatality and Control Assessment	N - A/PI category is combined.	N	N	N	N	N	Y
OHS - Work-Related Lead Poisoning	ABLES/ Work-Related Lead Poisoning prevalence	N - A/PI category is combined.	N	N	N	N	N	Y
OHS - Silicosis Surveillance	Questionnaire/Data Form	Y	N	N	Y	N	N	Y
OHS - Work-Related Asthma Surveillance	Questionnaire/Data Form	N - A/PI category is combined.	N	N	Y	N	N	Y
Family Health Services (FHS)								
FHS - Black infant mortality (BIMR)	Direct service at agency level/ self identification	Y	N	N	N	N	N	Y

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FHS - Blood Lead level	Blood Lead level testing/ Child and Adolescent Health (Lead) Program	N - A/PI category is combined.	Y	N	Y	N	N	Y
FHS - Chronic Disease Prevention and Control	Survey	Y	N	N	Y	N	N	Y
FHS - Early Identification & Monitoring	Special Child Health Registry (Birth Defects Registry)	N - A/PI category is combined.	N	N	N	N	Y	N
FHS - Family Health Line	Survey/ Telephone hotline	N - A/PI category is combined.	N	Y	N	N	N	Y
FHS - Family Planning	Survey on Family Planning	Y	N	N	Y	N	N	Y
FHS - Healthy Start	Program	Y	N	N	Y	N	Y	Y
FHS - Hearing	NJ Early Intervention System/ Hearing loss prevalence among newborn babies	Y	N	Y	Y	N	N	Y
FHS - Perinatal & Reproductive Services, 4 P's	Survey, MMR	N - Category collected is Asian Indian.	Y	N	Y	N	Y	Y
FHS - PRAMS	Maternal and Child Health/ PRAMS	Y	N	N	Y	N	Y	Y
FHS - Uncompensated Primary Care	Form	N - Primary health care centers will not all be able to comply by Jan 2008 due to limited funds which are required in order to update the computer systems currently configured for HRSA standards.	N	Y	N	N	N	N
FHS – WIC	WIC Access/ Forms	Y	Y	N	Y	N	N	Y
Division of HIV and AIDS								

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DHAS - Adult Reporting Form	HIV/AIDS incidence and prevalence	Y	Y	N	Y	N	N	Y
DHAS - Confidential Lab Report	Laboratory Reporting Form	N - A/PI category is combined.		Y		N	N	Y
DHAS - Home Care, Ryan White Data	Collected by funded agencies	Y	N	N	Y	N	N	Y
DHAS - Never in Care Project	Survey	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y, Hispanic only	Y
DHAS - Prevention and Education	PAE Client level data collection	Y	Y	N	N	N	N	Y
DHAS - Medical Monitoring Project Survey	HIV Disease Surveillance	Y	Y	N	Y	N	Y, Hispanic only	Y
Center for Health Statistics (CHS)	NJ Behavioral Risk Factor Survey	Y	Y	N	Y	N	N	Y
Division of Aging and Community Services	NAPIS Form R - General Characteristics of Elderly Clients Receiving Compensation	Y	Y	N	Y	N	N	Y
Comprehensive Tobacco Control Program	New Jersey Adult Tobacco Survey, New Jersey Youth Tobacco Survey, Quitservices	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	N	Y