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Office of Management and Budget (OMB)  
DIRECTIVE NO. 15  
Race and Ethnic Standards for Federal Statistics  
and Administrative Reporting  
**(as adopted on May 12, 1977)**

This Directive provides standard classifications for record keeping, collection, and presentation of data on race and ethnicity in Federal program administrative reporting and statistical activities. These classifications should not be interpreted as being scientific or anthropological in nature, nor should they be viewed as determinants of eligibility for participation in any Federal program. They have been developed in response to needs expressed by both the executive branch and the Congress to provide for the collection and use of compatible, nonduplicated, exchangeable racial and ethnic data by Federal agencies.

**1. Definitions**

The basic racial and ethnic categories for Federal statistics and program administrative reporting are defined as follows:

- a. American Indian or Alaskan Native. A person having origins in any of the original peoples of North America, and who maintains cultural identification through tribal affiliation or community recognition.
- b. Asian or Pacific Islander. A person having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, the Indian subcontinent, or the Pacific Islands. This area includes, for example, China, India, Japan, Korea, the Philippine Islands, and Samoa.
- c. Black. A person having origins in any of the black racial groups of Africa.
- d. Hispanic. A person of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central or South American or other Spanish culture or origin, regardless of race.
- e. White. A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, North Africa, or the Middle East.

**2. Utilization for Record keeping and Reporting**

To provide flexibility, it is preferable to collect data on race and ethnicity separately. If separate race and ethnic categories are used, the minimum designations are:

- a. Race:
  - American Indian or Alaskan Native
  - Asian or Pacific Islander
  - Black
  - White
- b. Ethnicity:
  - Hispanic origin
  - Not of Hispanic origin

When race and ethnicity are collected separately, the number of White and Black persons who are Hispanic must be identifiable, and capable of being reported in that category.

If a combined format is used to collect racial and ethnic data, the minimum acceptable categories are:

- American Indian or Alaskan Native
- Asian or Pacific Islander
- Black, not of Hispanic origin