

March 2024 Updates to OMB's Race and Ethnicity Standards: What Researchers Should Know

"All information presented here is a distillation of The Office of Management and Budget (OMB)'s Statistical Policy Directive No. 15: Standards for Maintaining, Collecting, and Presenting Federal Data on Race and Ethnicity; these are not specific recommendations from Michigan Institute for Clinical & Health Research (MICHHR)."

On March 28, 2024, the U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Revised the Statistical Policy Directive No. 15 (SPD 15) and issued [updated standards](#) for maintaining, collecting and presenting race and ethnicity data across federal agencies with following key updates:

1- Collect Race and Ethnicity Information Using one Combined Question -"What is your race and/or ethnicity?"

Rationale: Increasing non-response to race questions and public concerns drove the recommendation. Research indicated a combined question reduced confusion and improved data quality.

Outcome: Shift towards a more inclusive and clearer method of collecting race and ethnicity data, addressing concerns about accuracy and respondent confusion. Equal treatment of categories like Hispanic or Latino as "race and/or ethnicity" aims for clearer instructions while allowing respondents to select all applicable categories.

2. Add Middle Eastern or North African as a New Minimum Category

Rationale: Adding Middle Eastern or North African (MENA) as a new minimum reporting category distinct from White for accurate representation of this group and adjusting the White

Outcome: The decision reflects a commitment to inclusivity and accuracy in race and ethnicity reporting, addressing concerns about misrepresentation and promoting better understanding of diverse identities.

3. Require the Collection of Detailed Race and Ethnicity Categories as a Default

Rationale: Recognizing the diverse experiences within each minimum reporting category and the importance of detailed data for measuring differences in healthcare outcomes and addressing specific program and stakeholder needs. Flexibility is allowed to adapt detailed categories based on evolving demographic data, while also ensuring consistency and accuracy in data collection.

Outcome: The decision reflects a balance between the need for detailed data to address diverse experiences and concerns about burden and privacy risks. It provides agencies with flexibility to determine the additional data they collect while ensuring consistency and accuracy in reporting.

For more information contact: Statistical_Directives@omb.eop.gov

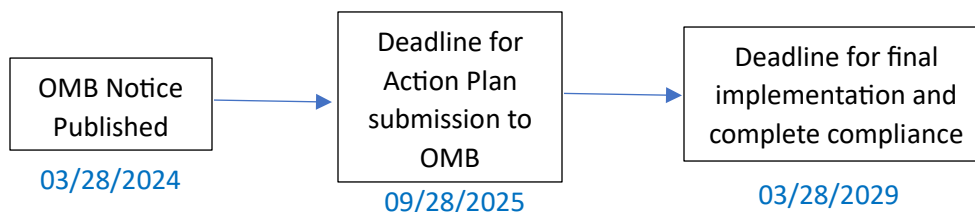
The revised SPD 15 also updated terminology in the minimum race category definitions to avoid using phrases that are obsolete and/or offensive (table 1).

Table 1. Updated Definitions for Minimum Race and Ethnicity Reporting Categories in 2024 SPD 15

Minimum Race and Ethnicity Reporting Category	Updated Definition
American Indian or Alaska Native	Individuals with origins in any of the original peoples of North, Central, and South America, including, for example, Navajo Nation, Blackfeet Tribe of the Blackfeet Indian Reservation of Montana, Native Village of Barrow Inupiat Traditional Government, Nome Eskimo Community, Aztec, and Maya.
Asian	Individuals with origins in any of the original peoples of Central or East Asia, Southeast Asia, or South Asia, including, for example, Chinese, Asian Indian, Filipino, Vietnamese, Korean, and Japanese.
Black or African American	Individuals with origins in any of the Black racial groups of Africa, including, for example, African American, Jamaican, Haitian, Nigerian, Ethiopian, and Somali.
Hispanic or Latino	Includes individuals of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Salvadoran, Cuban, Dominican, Guatemalan, and other Central or South American or Spanish culture or origin.
Middle Eastern or North African (MENA)	Individuals with origins in any of the original peoples of the Middle East or North Africa, including, for example, Lebanese, Iranian, Egyptian, Syrian, Iraqi, and Israeli.
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	Individuals with origins in any of the original peoples of Hawaii, Guam, Samoa, or other Pacific Islands, including, for example, Native Hawaiian, Samoan, Chamorro, Tongan, Fijian, and Marshallese.
White	Individuals with origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, including, for example, English, German, Irish, Italian, Polish, and Scottish.

Timeline:

- All federal agencies will need to submit an Action Plan on Race and Ethnicity Data to OMB within 18 months of publication of this Notice.
- The deadline for full compliance and implementation of the revised SPD 15 is five years after the publication of this Notice.



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