United States Department of Agriculture
Food and Consumer Service
Mountain Plains Region
1244 Speer Boulevard
Denver, CO
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AUG 11 2000

Reply to Attn of: SP 00-25
CACFP 629
SFSP 419

Subject: Revised Standards for Collecting Racial Ethnic Data

To: STATE AGENCY DIRECTORS - (Child Nutrition Programs) Colorado ED, Colorado DPH Iowa, Kansas, Missouri DH, Missouri ED, Montana PI, Montana DPHHS, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah ED, Wyoming ED

For more than 20 years, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) has provided a common language to promote uniformity and comparability for data on race and ethnicity for the population groups. We have been advised that OMB has accepted the recommendations of the Interagency Committee for the Review of the Racial and Ethnic Standards with the following two modifications: (1) the Asian or Pacific Islander category has been separated into two categories--"Asian" and "Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander," and the term "Hispanic" has been changed to "Hispanic or Latino."

The revised standards have five minimum categories for data on race: "American Indian or Alaska Native," "Asian," "Black or African American," "Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander," and "White." The data on ethnicity has two categories: "Hispanic or Latino" and "Not Hispanic or Latino."

State Agencies (SA) are required to adopt these standards as soon as possible, but not later than January 1, 2003. Respect for individual dignity should continue to guide the process and methods used for collecting data on race and ethnicity. Officials may use either a two question format or a combined format.

The two question format is as follows:

RACE:

1. American Indian or Alaska Native
2. Asian
3. Black or African American
4. Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
5. White

ETHNICITY:

1. Hispanic or Latino
2. Not Hispanic or Latino

When the two-question format is used, the ethnicity must be broken out. When data on race and ethnicity are collected separately, provision must be made to report the number of respondents in each racial category for "Hispanic or Latino." In other words, a person may identify himself as "Black" or "White," but of "Hispanic or Latino" ethnicity. This format was used in the 2000 Census and in our prototype free and reduced price meal application previously provided with consolidated memorandum SP 99-16, CACFP 576, and SFSP 384.

The combined format is as follows:

1. American Indian or Alaska Native
2. Asian
3. Black or African American
4. Hispanic or Latino
5. Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
6. White

Ideally, respondent self-identification is the preferred method for collecting the data. However, if the respondent does not supply the information, officials are to supply the data based on their best knowledge and personal observation.

If you have any questions concerning racial ethnic data collection, please let us know.

Mary Nelson

for RALPH W. MERRILL
Acting Regional Director
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