

Reporting Change of Ethnic and Racial Data PRISM 2006

Background – Prior to September 2005, the PRISM partners submitted ethnic / race data to PRISM based on the Office of Management and Budget's (OMB) 1977 Directive. This 1977 Directive allowed agencies to collect only one ethnic / race category from each individual.

The racial and ethnic makeup of the country has changed since 1977, giving rise to the question of whether those standards still reflected the diversity of the country's present population. In response to this criticism, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) initiated a review of the 1977 Directive. The result of the Committee's efforts was a report describing recommended changes to the Directive.

During October 1997, OMB announced the revised standards for federal data on race and ethnicity. Agencies receiving federal funds are required to collect ethnic / race data based on the 1997 Directive from OMB. The minimum categories for race are now:

American Indian or Alaska Native;
Asian;
Black or African American;
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander;
and White.

Instead of allowing a multiracial category as was originally suggested in public and congressional hearings, the OMB adopted the Interagency Committee's recommendation to **allow respondents to select one or more races when they self-identify**. There are also two minimum categories for ethnicity: Hispanic or Latino and Not Hispanic or Latino. Hispanics and Latinos may be of any race.

Beginning September 2005, partner agencies began submitting ethnic and race under the new 1997 OMB Directive to PRISM. However, there remained the issue of how to update all of the over one million ethnic / race codes already in loaded into PRISM. To address the issue, the partner agencies were asked to update all of their ethnic / race codes within PRISM based on the new coding scheme. As of January 1, 2006, five of the six agencies have updated their historical codes within PRISM and the quarterly reports beginning January 2006 reflect the new ethnic / racial coding scheme.

For information on the OMB revisions to the Standards for the Classification of Federal Data on Race and Ethnicity - www.whitehouse.gov/omb/fedreg/print/1997standards.html