

CENSUS 2000 - RACE/ETHNICITY DATA

(Last Updated -- September 24, 2002)

During the late 1990s, responding to a need to learn more about people identifying with more than one racial category and other needs, the U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB) revised its guidelines on how race and ethnicity should be collected by the federal statistical system. Census 2000 is the first data series using these revised guidelines.

These revised guidelines changed several key elements about the collection of race and ethnicity data. The key changes were:

1. The Asian and Pacific Islander race category was divided into two categories - (a) Asian and (b) Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander.
2. The question about ethnicity (Hispanic or Latino origin) is now being asked before the question on race.
3. Respondents are now allowed to check more than one race category.

While all three of these changes impact the ability to compare racial distributions over time. The last change has the largest impact.

THERE IS NO SINGLE RIGHT WAY TO LOOK AT RACIAL DISTRIBUTIONS WHEN WORKING WITH THE CATEGORIES INCLUDING PEOPLE IDENTIFYING WITH MORE THAN ONE RACE.

You, the user will need to decide the best way to work with these new categories. OMB has issued a [draft report](#) (you will need to scroll down to the section on race and ethnicity) summarizing and evaluating the advantages and disadvantages of different methods of working with these categories