

# Update on the U.S. Census Bureau's Race and Ethnicity Question Proposals for the 2020 Census

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# U.S. Office of Management and Budget

## Standards for Race and Ethnicity (1997)

All Federal statistical agencies, including the Census Bureau, must adhere to the 1997 OMB *Revisions to the Standards for the Classification of Federal Data on Race and Ethnicity*.

- OMB standards specify five minimum categories for data on race and two categories for data on ethnicity:
  - RACE:** American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, Black or African American, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, White
  - ETHNICITY:** Hispanic or Latino, Not Hispanic or Latino
- Race and ethnicity categories are socio-political constructs; should not be interpreted as scientific or anthropological in nature
- Respondents should be offered the option of reporting more than one race
- When race and ethnicity questions are collected separately, ethnicity should be collected first
- Individual responses are based upon self-identification
- When collecting race and ethnicity data via self-identification, a two separate questions format should be used

Source: [www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-1997-10-30/pdf/97-28653.pdf](http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-1997-10-30/pdf/97-28653.pdf)

# U.S. Office of Management and Budget

## Standards for Race and Ethnicity (1997)

OMB minimum categories for data on race and ethnicity for Federal statistics, program administrative reporting, and civil rights compliance reporting are defined as follows:

- **American Indian or Alaska Native** - A person having origins in any of the original peoples of North and South America (including Central America), and who maintains tribal affiliation or community attachment.
- **Asian** - A person having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, or the Indian subcontinent including, for example, Cambodia, China, India, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Pakistan, the Philippine Islands, Thailand, and Vietnam.
- **Black or African American** - A person having origins in any of the black racial groups of Africa. Terms such as “Haitian” or “Negro” can be used in addition to “Black or African American.”
- **Hispanic or Latino** - A person of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South or Central American, or other Spanish culture or origin, regardless of race. The term, “Spanish origin,” can be used in addition to “Hispanic or Latino.”
- **Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander** - A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Hawaii, Guam, Samoa, or other Pacific Islands.
- **White** - A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, the Middle East, or North Africa.


Source: [www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-1997-10-30/pdf/97-28653.pdf](http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-1997-10-30/pdf/97-28653.pdf)

# Census Bureau Decision

## Separate Ethnicity and Race Questions

- Census Bureau issued memorandum to document 2020 Census Program decision on race and ethnicity questions (January 26, 2018)
- Census Bureau needed to make a decision on design of race and ethnicity questions by December 31, 2017 to prepare 2020 Census systems, and deliver final 2020 Census question wording to Congress by March 31, 2018
- In accordance with current OMB standards, Census Bureau will use two separate questions for collecting data on race and ethnicity

Source: [www.census.gov/programs-surveys/decennial-census/2020-census/planning-management/memo-series/2020-memo-2018\\_02.html](http://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/decennial-census/2020-census/planning-management/memo-series/2020-memo-2018_02.html)



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE  
Economics and Statistics Administration  
U.S. Census Bureau  
Washington, DC 20233-0001

2020 CENSUS PROGRAM MEMORANDUM SERIES: 2018.02

Date: January 26, 2018

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Record

From: Albert E. Fontenot, Jr. (January 26, 2018)  
Associate Director for Decennial Census Programs

Subject: Using Two Separate Questions for Race and Ethnicity in 2018 End-to-End Census Test and 2020 Census



Contact: Burton Reist, Chief  
Decennial Communications and Stakeholder Relations  
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This memorandum documents the 2020 Census Program decision to continue to use two separate questions for collecting data on race and ethnicity in the 2018 End-to-End Census Test and the 2020 Census.

**Overview**  
The Census Bureau needed to make a decision on the design of the race and ethnicity questions by December 31, 2017 in order to prepare 2020 Census systems, and deliver the final 2020 Census question wording to Congress by March 31, 2018.

**Discussion**  
The Census Bureau will continue to use two separate questions for collecting data on race and ethnicity in the 2018 End-to-End Census Test, and as the proposed format for the 2020 Census. The race and ethnicity questions include several design changes that were tested over the past decade in effort to improve the designs from the 2010 Census.

**OMB Categories and Definitions**  
All Federal statistical agencies, including the Census Bureau, must adhere to the 1997 Office of Management and Budget (OMB) [Revisions to the Standards for the Classification of Federal Data on Race and Ethnicity](#). The OMB standards specify 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; and two categories for data on ethnicity: "Hispanic or Latino" and "Not Hispanic or Latino." The OMB standards explain that the specified race and ethnicity categories are socio-political constructs and should not be interpreted as being scientific or anthropological in nature. The OMB standards provide the following definitions for the race and ethnicity categories:

  [census.gov](http://census.gov)

# Proposed Design for 2020 Census

## Separate Ethnicity Question

→ NOTE: Please answer BOTH Question 6 about Hispanic origin and Question 7 about race. For this census, Hispanic origins are not races.

6. Is this person of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin?

- No, not of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin
- Yes, Mexican, Mexican Am., Chicano
- Yes, Puerto Rican
- Yes, Cuban
- Yes, another Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin – *Print, for example, Salvadoran, Dominican, Colombian, Guatemalan, Spaniard, Ecuadorian, etc.*

- Question designs for 2020 Census must adhere to 1997 OMB standards for race and ethnicity
- Census Bureau will not use combined question format for collecting race and ethnicity; 1997 OMB standards require two separate questions for self-response
- Census Bureau will not use “Middle Eastern or North African” category
- Several significant changes from 2010 Census questions proposed for race and ethnicity

## Separate Race Question

7. What is this person's race?

Mark  one or more boxes AND print origins.

- White – *Print, for example, German, Irish, English, Italian, Lebanese, Egyptian, etc.*

- Black or African Am. – *Print, for example, African American, Jamaican, Haitian, Nigerian, Ethiopian, Somali, etc.*

- American Indian or Alaska Native – *Print name of enrolled or principal tribe(s), for example, Navajo Nation, Blackfeet Tribe, Mayan, Aztec, Native Village of Barrow Inupiat Traditional Government, Nome Eskimo Community, etc.*

- |   |                                     |  |
|---|-------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Chinese  | <input type="checkbox"/> Vietnamese | <input type="checkbox"/> Native Hawaiian   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Filipino   | <input type="checkbox"/> Korean     | <input type="checkbox"/> Samoan  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Asian Indian   | <input type="checkbox"/> Japanese   | <input type="checkbox"/> Chamorro  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other Asian – <i>Print, for example, Pakistani, Cambodian, Hmong, etc.</i> |                                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Other Pacific Islander – <i>Print, for example, Tongan, Fijian, Marshallese, etc.</i> |

- Some other race – *Print race or origin.*



# Proposed Design for 2020 Census

## Separate Race Question

- Question on race is asked second; OMB standards direct that ethnicity should be asked before race
- “What is this person’s race?”
- Respondents may report multiple races
- Significant changes from 2010 Census:
  - Instruction to “Mark  one or more boxes **AND** print origins.”
  - Examples and dedicated write-in areas for White category
  - Examples and dedicated write-in areas for Black or African Am. category
  - Term “Negro” has been removed
  - Examples for American Indian or Alaska Native category
  - “Guamanian or Chamorro” was changed to “Chamorro”

### 7. What is this person’s race?

Mark  one or more boxes **AND** print origins.

White – Print, for example, German, Irish, English, Italian, Lebanese, Egyptian, etc. ↴

Black or African Am. – Print, for example, African American, Jamaican, Haitian, Nigerian, Ethiopian, Somali, etc. ↴

American Indian or Alaska Native – Print name of enrolled or principal tribe(s), for example, Navajo Nation, Blackfeet Tribe, Mayan, Aztec, Native Village of Barrow Inupiat Traditional Government, Nome Eskimo Community, etc. ↴

<input type="checkbox"/> Chinese	<input type="checkbox"/> Vietnamese	<input type="checkbox"/> Native Hawaiian
<input type="checkbox"/> Filipino	<input type="checkbox"/> Korean	<input type="checkbox"/> Samoan
<input type="checkbox"/> Asian Indian	<input type="checkbox"/> Japanese	<input type="checkbox"/> Chamorro
<input type="checkbox"/> Other Asian – Print, for example, Pakistani, Cambodian, Hmong, etc. ↴		<input type="checkbox"/> Other Pacific Islander – Print, for example, Tongan, Fijian, Marshallese, etc. ↴

Some other race – Print race or origin. ↴

# Next Steps

## Preparing for 2020 Census

- Finalize data collection specifications, processing plans, and editing and tabulation plans for 2020 Census
- Discuss 2020 Census content proposals with Congress
- Update advisors, stakeholders, and public about 2020 Census plans for separate ethnicity question and race question