

OMB Launches New Public Listening Sessions on Federal Race and Ethnicity Standards Revision

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By Dr. Karin Orvis, Chief Statistician of the United States

The first step in the formal review process for OMB's statistical standards for collecting race and ethnicity data is well underway – and the public can now share their perspectives and input.

What we are reviewing: In June, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) announced that my office would begin formal review to revise OMB's Statistical Policy Directive No. 15 (Directive No. 15): *Standards for Maintaining, Collecting, and Presenting Federal Data on Race and Ethnicity*. This Directive provides minimum standards that ensure the Federal Government's ability to compare race and ethnicity information and data across Federal agencies, and also helps us to understand how well Federal programs serve a diverse America.

How the process works: Earlier this year, I convened an Interagency Technical Working Group of Federal Government career staff representing over 20 agencies across the federal government, including almost every CFO Act agency and recognized statistical agency that collect or use race and ethnicity data, as well as the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. The Working Group has begun the important work of developing a set of recommendations for improving the quality and usefulness of Federal race and ethnicity data. The Working Group will evaluate relevant research, engage in a meaningful way with the American public and all impacted agencies, and develop recommendations on topics including, but not limited to:

1. Whether the minimum reporting categories should be changed and how to best address detailed race and ethnicity groups in the Standards;
2. Whether updates should be made to the question format, terminology, and wording of the questions, as well as the instructions for respondents and associated guidance; and
3. Whether guidance for the collection and reporting of race and ethnicity data can be improved, including in instances when self-identification is not possible.

How the public can get involved: My office is committed to a full, transparent revision process, with input from the American public, to ensure the rigor, validity, objectivity, and impartiality of the resulting recommended revisions. To do so, we will continue to provide updates on the process. Today, I want to share two ways for the public to share their perspectives and input with the Working Group.

1. The Working Group, through OMB, will solicit public input on its recommended proposal for revisions to Directive No. 15 through a Federal Register Notice. If you'd like to be notified when the Federal Register Notice is published, please send a request to join our mailing list to Statistical_Directives@omb.eop.gov.
2. The Working Group will hold virtual, bi-monthly listening sessions to hear directly from members of the public. These listening sessions will begin starting Thursday, September 15, 2022. To schedule a listening session, please send a brief email expressing interest to Statistical_Directives@omb.eop.gov.

I hope that anyone interested will participate in this important process and I look forward to sharing more updates soon.