

WASHINGTON STATE
POPULATION SURVEY

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Understanding the Change and
Impacts of Race Re-Classification

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THE 1998 WASHINGTON STATE POPULATION SURVEY asked respondents to identify their races twice. The questions asked at the beginning of the survey were consistent with the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Directive 15 issued in 1977, which classifies race into four categories. Then the race questions were asked again and this time they were modeled after OMB’s 1997 revised standards. Due to budget constraints, only the respondent was required to answer the second set of questions. Therefore, this analysis is based on 7,279 persons who answered the survey, but not those within their households. The following study uses weighted percentage of those cases and basically represents all the householders in the state.

This research brief examines the impacts of the race re-classification on the race distribution in Washington State. Detailed race data are tabulated into broader groups following the “Provisional Guidance on the Implementation of the 1997 Standards for Federal Data on Race and Ethnicity” (OMB, 1999). Multiracial, a new category, is the focus of the following discussion.

What has changed in race classification?

Since the 1970’s, race data have been collected based on the single race categories set forth in OMB Directive 15.

Race categories classified in 1977 OMB Directive 15 and used in 1990 Census					
White	Black or African American	American Indian, Eskimo & Aleut (AIEA)	Asian & Pacific Islanders (API)	Other (specify)	<u>Note:</u> Mark one race only

However, those single race categories seem unable to adequately represent the races and ethnicity of America. Particularly since the 1990 census, the standards have come under increasing criticism from those who believe that these minimum categories do not reflect the increasing diversity of our nation’s population that has resulted primarily from growth in immigration and in interracial marriages. In response to the criticisms, OMB announced in July 1993 that it would undertake a comprehensive review of the current categories for data on race and ethnicity. After almost four years of research and public hearings, OMB decided to revise the standards. The two fundamental changes between the original and the revised race categories are as follows.

- The Pacific Islanders are separated from Asians.
- Respondents are allowed to mark more than one race.

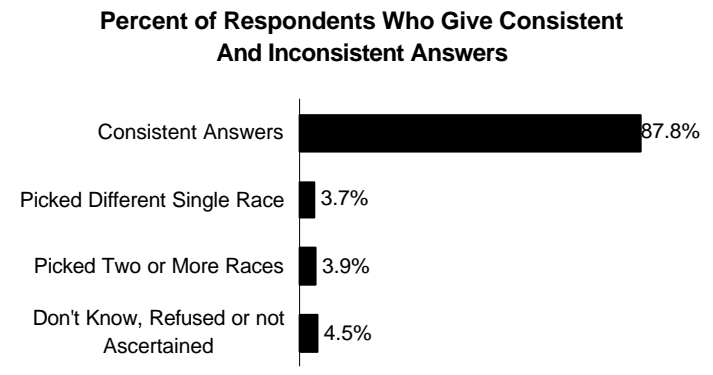
OMB 1997 revised standards and used in the 2000 Census Dress Rehearsal						
White	Black or African American	American Indian, or Alaska Native (AIAN)	Asian	<i>Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander</i>	Other (specify)	<u>Note:</u> Mark one or more if necessary

The **Washington State Population Survey** was conducted in the spring of 1998 to provide social, demographic, and economic information about Washington. Responses were obtained from telephone interviews of **7,279 households** that represented the state as a whole. The survey was designed by the Office of Financial Management (OFM) and conducted by the Washington State University Social and Economic Sciences Research Center. Data are subject to sampling variability and other sources of error. More information about the state survey is available under “**Select Population Data**” at: <http://www.ofm.wa.gov/>.

Other is not one of OMB standard race categories but OMB allows the agencies to use it when they collect race data. In data tabulation and reporting, the Other race category is allocated back into the standard categories. The survey has also included Other as one of the choices. In this evaluation, Other is still kept as a separate racial group in order to measure accurately the impacts on race distribution that has been caused by the change of race re-classification. Ethnicity is asked in a separate question and the respondents make choices between Hispanic and Non Hispanic.

Findings

- Almost 88 percent select consistent single race categories when answering both sets of race questions.** The remaining 12 percent respond to the questions differently. Nearly 4 percent of the respondents switch to a different single race on the second set of questions. About 4 percent change their answer from single race to multiracial. The remaining 5 percent result in “Don’t know,” “Refused,” or “Not Ascertained.”



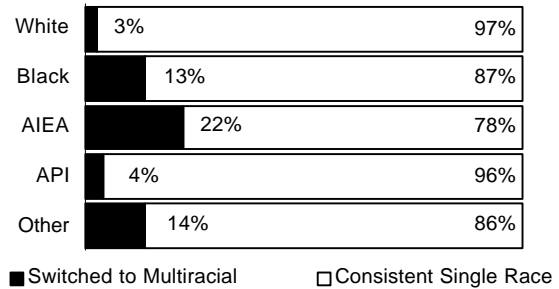
- OMB’s race re-classification shows impacts on the race distributions.** The most dramatic impact is indicated by the 4.1 percent decrease shown on Other category. The second largest impact is on the White population, which has a 2.6 percent decrease. One of the reasons for this impact is that some of the multiracial people, who either abandon part of their heritage to fit into one race or select Other earlier, now identify themselves with two or more races. Nearly 4 percent of the population represented by the sample are multiracial. This percentage is much larger than the national average of 2 percent (CPS, 1995). Further research is needed to determine if this larger percent is the reality or is due to the expanded sample of the minority population. The number of answers that falls into “don’t know, refused or not ascertained” category has increased to almost 5 percent. It is probably due to the fact that the respondents were asked about their racial identification for the second time and especially at the end of the survey.

Table 1. Percent Difference between the Original and Revised Race Categories

Race Categories	OMB 1977 Race Standard	OMB1997 Revised Standard	Difference
White	84.55	81.95	-2.6
Black	2.57	2.15	-0.42
AIEA	1.00	0.70	-0.3
Asian / Hawaii	3.47	3.23	-0.24
Other	7.56	3.49	-4.07
Two or more	N/A	3.94	N/A
Refused, Don't know or Not Ascertained	0.86	4.53	3.67
Total	100.00	100.00	

- One out of every five American Indians considers him/herself as multiracial.** When the respondents have only one choice, more than 99 percent of them marked a certain single race (Other race is included). However, when multiple choices are permitted, some people change their mind. About 22 percent who previously considered themselves as American Indians have marked two or more races when answering the second set of questions. So have 14 percent of the “Others” and 13 percent of the Blacks.

Percent of People Who Switch from Single Race to Multiracial



- More Hispanic Origin people consistently mark Other as their race.** More than 62 percent of Hispanic Origin population consistently mark Other as their race when they come across the race questions for the second time. Only 20 percent switch to White. On the contrary, nearly half of Non Hispanic Others have changed to White on their second choice. There are more Non Hispanic Others identified as multiracial (18 percent) than Hispanic Origin Others as well.

Table 2. Percent of Answers to the Second Set of Questions by Those Who Identified Themselves As Other Previously

	Hispanic	Non Hispanic
White	20.0	46.9
Black	0.0	0.6
AIAN	0.4	0.8
API	0.1	4.0
Other	62.3	24.2
Two or More	7.4	17.9
Refused	9.6	5.5
Total	100.0	100.0

- One of the ways to tabulate the multiracial population suggested by OMB is “All Inclusive,” which groups multiracial population with one leading race and all the other races marked. This tabulation method counts the number of choices people make and thus the sum of total exceeds 100 percent. For example, a person who marks his race as White and Black will be included in the “White and some other races” as well as in “Black and some other races.” In Washington State, people who marked White plus one or more other races form the largest multiracial group followed by those who chose American Indian & Alaska Native and some other races.

Table 3. Race Tabulation of Single Race and All Inclusive Category

Single Race		All Inclusive	
White	81.95	White and some other races	3.52
Black	2.15	Black and some other races	0.76
AIAN	0.70	AIAN and some other races	1.92
HAWAII	0.44	Hawaiian and some other races	0.07
Asian	2.80	Asian and some other races	0.18
Other	3.49	Other and some other races	1.12

- ***People who have White and American Indian heritage form the largest multiracial group.*** In keeping with the spirit of the OMB revised race classification, all possible race mixture should be tabulated and reported under the condition the data do not violate the confidentiality and are able to maintain the good quality. The multiracial population identified from the survey can be tabulated into 24 possible categories. The majority is composed of White and American Indian and Alaska Native population, followed by the White and Other combination. The percent of total population refers to the weighted total of householders surveyed.

Table 4. Percent of All Possible Race Combinations

Multiracial	Percent of Total Population	Percent of Total Multiracial
White and Black	0.259	6.6
White and AIAN	1.811	46.0
White and Hawaiian	0.051	1.3
White and Asian	0.117	3.0
White and Other	1.05	26.6
Black and AIAN	0.317	8.0
Black and Asian	0.003	0.1
Black and Other	0.047	1.2
AIAN and Hawaii	0.006	0.2
AIAN and Asian	0.000	0.0
AIAN and Other	0.013	0.3
Hawaiian and Asian	0.026	0.7
Asian and Other	0.005	0.1
White Black and AIAN	0.073	1.9
White Black and Asian	0.002	0.1
White Black and Hawaiian	0.031	0.8
White Black and Other	0.024	0.6
White AIAN and Hawaiian	0.013	0.3
White AIAN and Other	0.076	1.9
White Hawaiian and Asian	0.004	0.1
Black AIAN and Asian	0.001	0.0
Other White and Asian	0.002	0.1
Asian AIAN black and White	0.001	0.0
White Black AIAN Hawaiian and Asian	0.004	0.1
Total	3.94	100.0

References or Related Readings

Office of Management and Budget (1997). Revision to the Standards for the Classification of Federal Data on Race and Ethnicity

Office of Management and Budget (1999). Provisional Guidance on the Implementation of the 1997 Standards for Federal Data on Race and Ethnicity

Bureau of the Census (1995). Current Population Survey: May Race and Ethnicity Supplement

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