

### Topic 15. Ethnicity and Race of Offenders

**Definition: Ethnicity**

Ethnicity or ethnic origin is a person's heritage, nationality, lineage, or country of birth of the person him/herself or of his/her ancestors. "Ethnicity" does not have the same meaning as "race" even though respondents may use the terms interchangeably. People who report their origin as Spanish, Hispanic, or Latino may be of any race.

**SINGOFFETHNICITY**

When a respondent tells you that the crime was committed by one offender, you ask a series of questions in the incident report section of the instrument to gather information about the offender. One of these questions is Item **SINGOFFETHNICITY**, which asks, "Was the offender Hispanic or Latino?" Enter Precode (1) for "Yes," (2) for "No," or (3) for "Don't know."

**MULTOFFETHNICITY**

When a respondent tells you that the crime was committed by more than one offender, you also ask item **MULTOFFETHNICITY**, "Were any of the offenders Hispanic or Latino?" Enter Precode (1) for "Yes," (2) for "No," or (3) for "Don't know."

**MULTOFFENDERMOST ETHNICITY**

When the respondent indicates that at least one of the offenders was Hispanic or Latino, you ask item **MULTOFFENDERMOSTETHNICITY**, "Were the offenders mostly Hispanic, mostly non-Hispanic, or an equal number of Hispanic and non-Hispanic?" Read the answer categories for this item to the respondent (do not read Precode (4), "Don't know"): (1), "Mostly Hispanic," (2), "Mostly non-Hispanic," (3), "Evenly divided." Enter the answer as indicated by the respondent.

**Definition: Race**

For the NCVS, we use six race categories at Items **SINGOFFRACE** and **MULTOFFENDERRACE** to identify an offender's race -- White, Black, American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian (Japanese, Chinese, Filipino, Korean, Asian Indian, Vietnamese, or other Asian), and Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander. If the respondent does not know the offender(s) race, enter Precode (6) for "Don't know."

**SINGOFFRACE**

When a respondent tells you that the crime was committed by just one offender, you ask him/her a series of questions in the to gather information about the offender. One of these questions is Item **SINGOFFRACE**, which asks about the offender's race. The answer categories for this item are White, Black or African American, American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, and Native

---

### Reporting Crime Incidents

Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander. A person's ethnic origin is **NOT** the same as a person's race. If a respondent answers the offender's race question with "Spanish, Hispanic, Latino" or any other ethnic origin, such as French or German, ask the respondent to identify to which racial groups the offender belongs based on the answer categories read to the respondent. If necessary, reread the answer categories.

**MULTOFFENDERRACE  
and  
MULTOFFENDERRACE  
MOST**

When a respondent tells you that the crime was committed by more than one offender, you ask the respondent a series of questions in the incident report section to gather information about these offenders. Two of these questions are at Items **MULTOFFENDERRACE** and **MULTOFFENDERRACE MOST**. The question at Item **MULTOFFENDERRACE** asks: "What race or races were the offenders? Were they ..."

Since the offenders could be of more than one race, you can enter more than one precode at Item **MULTOFFENDERRACE** to identify the races of each offender. The answer categories for Item **MULTOFFENDERRACE** are (do not read category 6, "Don't know" to the respondent):

- Precode (1), White
- Precode (2), Black or African American
- Precode (3), American Indian or Alaska Native
- Precode (4), Asian
- Precode (5), Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
- Precode (6), Don't know

The question at Item **MULTOFFENDERRACEMOST** asks: "What race were most of the offenders?" When two or more precodes are entered at Item **MULTOFFENDERRACE**, ask the question at Item **MULTOFFENDERRACEMOST** to determine the race of **MOST** of the offenders. Only enter **ONE** of the following precodes at Item **MULTOFFENDER RACEMOST** (do not read category 7, "Don't know" to the respondent):

- Precode (1), Mostly White
- Precode (2), Mostly Black or African American
- Precode (3), Mostly American Indian or Alaska Native
- Precode (4), Mostly Asian
- Precode (5), Mostly Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
- Precode (6), Equal number of each race
- Precode (7), Don't know

---

**Reporting Crime Incidents**