

**Justification for Non-Substantive Changes for Forms SS-5, SS-5-FS  
Application for a Social Security Number (SSN) Card, the Social Security Number  
Application Process (SSNAP), the Online Social Security Number Application Process  
(oSSNAP) and the Internet SSN Replacement Card (iSSNRC) Application  
20 CFR 422.103 - 422.110  
OMB No. 0960-0066**

**Background**

SSA currently collects race and ethnicity information as part of our SSN card application process (OMB No. 0960-0066). We ask for this information under three of the modalities 0960-0066 comprises, including the Social Security Number Applications Process (SSNAP) script screens (for phone calls or in-office visits), as well as the paper Forms SS-5 and SS-5-FS. We collect this information when individuals apply for their original or replacement SSN card in our offices, through video (when applicable), or through the mail. While applicants for original or revised SSN cards must provide all the other information 0960-0066 requests, completing the race and ethnicity questions is voluntary. Our aggregate internal management information data indicates that approximately 51% of respondents complete the racial data questions, while 43% answer the ethnicity questions.

In this non-substantive Change Request, we are revising the wording of the current race and ethnicity instructions for the three information collections under OMB No. 0960-0066 mentioned above to encourage more applicants to answer these questions. We hope our doing so will encourage more respondents to answer the questions, in accordance with the goals of the Administration's [Executive Order on Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government](#).

On the page below we describe the specific language changes we are making. We conducted usability testing on the new race and ethnicity instructions language with seven members of the public. During the usability testing interview, we asked the participants their thoughts about the current and proposed language for race and ethnicity, and they had a preference regarding the way in which we phrase the race and ethnicity instructions. The majority of participants (5 out of 7) preferred the proposed new language, expressing that it would make them more likely to share their race and ethnicity.

**Specific Revisions to the Collection Instruments**

**SS-5, SS-5 SP, SS-5-FS Page 3:**

- **Change #1:** We are changing the language in the instructions on page 3 for questions #6 and #7:

**Old Language:**

Providing race and ethnicity information is voluntary and is requested for informational and statistical purposes only. Your choice whether to answer or not does not affect decisions we make on your application. If you do provide this information, we will treat it very carefully.

**New Language:**

Providing race and ethnicity information is voluntary and does not affect decisions on your application. We request this information for research and statistical purposes, to ensure all our customers receive fair and equal treatment.

**Justification #1:** We are making the change to help encourage more respondents to answer the race and ethnicity questions. SSA hopes to use the data we collect through the race and ethnicity questions to ensure we are treating our applicants and beneficiaries equitably.

**SSNAP Screens**

- **Change #2:** We are changing the instructional language on the Race and Ethnicity screen:

**Old Language:**

The next two questions are about ethnicity and race.

To ensure that all of our customers are treated fairly, we are requesting information about your race and ethnicity. Providing this information is voluntary and it will not affect decisions about your application. The information is being requested for research and statistical purposes only. The categories and definitions below are the same as those used by other Federal agencies. The information will be kept private and used for authorized Federal agency reporting purposes only.

**New Language:**

The next two questions are about race and ethnicity. Providing this information is voluntary and will not affect your application.

We are requesting this information for research and statistical purposes, to ensure we treat our customers fairly and equally. We hope you will share this information with us.

**Justification #2:** We are making the change to help encourage more respondents to answer the race and ethnicity questions. SSA hopes to use the data we collect through the race and ethnicity questions to ensure we are treating our applicants and beneficiaries equitably. In addition, we found that removing the language stating that the “information

will be kept private and used for authorized Federal agency reporting purposes only” worked better during the usability testing.

The revisions we are making to our race and ethnicity instructions will not change the overall burden for this information collection. We will implement these revisions upon OMB’s approval.