

NSF CISE REU Sites and Supplements Evaluation
Proposed Crosswalk: Survey Race Categories → OMB Race Category Guidelines

OMB feedback on a prior survey project submitted by our team for review provided guidelines on the collection of race data. Specifically, OMB noted the following:

While it might be desirable to have highly detailed race and ethnicity data, the number of categories should be kept to a manageable size, as determined by statistical concerns and data needs. The primary statistical concern is sample size. For small subpopulations, there may be too few people to generate statistically robust estimates (i.e., the uncertainty about such estimates will be so large as to render them of little value in making policy decisions). In addition, when there are too few people in a subgroup, the estimates cannot be made public (i.e., disseminated) without a major risk to the privacy of the survey subject and confidentiality of their data.

You may add sub-categories as long as these can be aggregated to one of the standard categories.

CERP proposes to collect race data using the categories shown in Table 1 below in order to enhance accuracy in responding. These categories will be aggregated into the OMB standard categories shown in the second column of the table. In all cases, no data about a particular respondent subgroup will be disseminated when small subgroup numbers risk compromising the privacy of those respondents.

Table 1. Crosswalk of Survey Race Data to OMB Race Roll-Ups

Survey Race Category	OMB Race Roll-Up Category
African American/African/Black	Black or African American
American Indian/Alaska Native	American Indian or Alaska Native
Arab/Middle Eastern	White
Caucasian/European/White	White
East Asian (e.g., Chinese, Japanese, Korean)	Asian
Southeast Asian (e.g., Cambodian, Vietnamese, Hmong, Filipino)	Asian
South Asian (e.g., Indian, Pakistani, Nepalese, Sri Lankan)	Asian
Other Asian	Asian
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander