

Collection of Race/Ethnicity Data

Healthy Marriage and Responsible Fatherhood (HMRF) Performance Measures and Additional Data Collection

The purpose of the Healthy Marriage and Responsible Fatherhood (HMRF) grant program is to strengthen families and promote healthy family relationships and economic stability for the long-term well-being of children and families through healthy marriage, relationship education, and responsible fatherhood programming. HM grant recipients offer services to promote healthy marriage and relationships through legislatively authorized activities such as public advertising campaigns, marriage and relationship education/skills, pre-marital education, marriage enhancement, divorce reduction, marriage mentoring, and reduction of disincentives to marriage for adults as well as education in high schools, marriage and relationship education/skills, and public advertising campaigns for youth. RF grant recipients must provide legislatively authorized activities in three areas: economic stability, responsible parenting, and healthy marriage.

Why Race & Ethnicity Data are Collected:

Data for Service Delivery and Program Monitoring:

Grant recipients are legally required to collect, store, and report performance measures data to the federal government for program monitoring and to ensure compliance with federally mandated activities under the authorizing legislation (42 U.S.C. §603(a)(2)). In addition, grant recipients must deliver curriculum-based workshops and services that are relevant to the community context and the populations they serve. Collecting demographic information is necessary to support grant recipients in meeting these requirements.

Grant recipients provide services nationwide to various populations, including participants from a wide range of racial and ethnic backgrounds. Research indicates that certain racial and ethnic groups, such as African American and American Indian adults, experience higher rates of divorce compared to other groups. Research also suggests differences in family stability, nonmarital birth rates, and nonresident fatherhood across racial and ethnic groups, which may increase the likelihood that individuals from these communities participate in relationship, marriage, and responsible fatherhood programs. Accordingly, the

collection of demographic data is essential for program oversight and to ensure that grant recipients are effectively reaching and serving their target populations.

Data for Understanding Program Effects:

ACF is statutorily required to conduct research to determine the effect of the HMRF grant program (42 U.S.C. §613(b)), which includes determining for whom and under what conditions the program produces meaningful impacts.

Per the [ACF Evaluation Policy](#), a core principle of rigorous research is that findings must be relevant and generalizable to the populations being studied. Without demographic variables, researchers cannot determine whether results differ across subpopulations, which is crucial given that previous studies have suggested differences in outcomes for certain racial and ethnic groups. Additionally, the ACF Evaluation Policy emphasizes that research and evaluation studies must address questions relevant to the populations served by ACF programs, for which demographic data are needed. Secondary analysis and reproducibility require datasets to include key covariates describing participants, which typically include demographic variables. Finally, ACF is interested in conducting longitudinal analyses of data gathered from the 2015, 2020, and current 2025 HMRF grant cohorts to understand differences in outcomes. The 2015 and 2020 cohorts both collected race and ethnicity data; for data pooling and data harmonization that would produce valid, comparable results, continuing to gather race and ethnicity data from the 2025 cohort would be crucial.

Civil Rights Compliance: Federal programs receiving funds, like HMRF, must comply with Title VI, which prohibits discrimination based on race, color, and national origin, necessitating data collection to ensure compliance and identify disparities.