

UPDATE OF VA COLLECTION STANDARDS FOR RACE AND ETHNICITY

1. **PURPOSE:** The purpose of this notice is to announce the development of a new Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Directive and Handbook outlining standards for the collection and reporting of data on race and ethnicity to implement the [Statistical Policy Directive No. 15: Standards for Maintaining, Collecting, and Presenting Federal Data on Race and Ethnicity \(SPD 15\)](#) released on March 28, 2024, by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). This notice also requests that impacted program owners contact the Office of Enterprise Integration (OEI) prior to implementing any changes to race and ethnicity data collections.
2. **POLICY:** The VA Statistical Official is responsible for developing the standards and procedures for the implementation of SPD 15, including the collection and reporting of data on race and ethnicity. The VA Data Governance Council and the Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Access (I*DEA) Council have been and will continue contributing to the development of those implementation plans.
 - a. The new Federal collection standards include:
 - (1) Using one combined question for race and ethnicity.
 - (2) Encouraging respondents to select as many identity options as are applicable to how they identify.
 - (3) Adding Middle Eastern or North African as a new minimum category. The new set of minimum race and/or ethnicity categories are:
 - (a) American Indian or Alaska Native,
 - (b) Asian,
 - (c) Black or African American,
 - (d) Hispanic or Latino,
 - (e) Middle Eastern or North African,
 - (f) Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, and
 - (g) White.
 - (4) Requiring the collection of additional detail beyond the minimum required race and ethnicity categories for most situations, to ensure further disaggregation in the collection, tabulation, and presentation of data when useful and appropriate.

- b. VA must submit to OMB, through the VA Statistical Official, an Agency Action Plan for implementing SPD15 before or by September 28, 2025. The implementation plan for the new standards will be finalized in coordination with the Office of Information Technology (OIT) as well as impacted Administration and Staff Offices through the leadership of the VA Data Governance Council VADataGovernanceCouncil@va.gov.
 - c. The deadline for implementing the new standards is March 28, 2029. However, any information collections covered by the Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA), generally through identical questions posed to or reporting requirements imposed on 10 or more members of the public, should comply with the new standards whenever the collection is established or renewed. OMB may offer certain exemptions in cases when the updates to the collection might require an undue burden to the Agency or the public or compromise our ability to protect sensitive information.
 - d. Administration and Staff Offices should coordinate with OEI, Office of Data Governance and Analytics before moving forward with any changes to their race and ethnicity data collection process. In preparation for the development of an implementation plan, Administrations and Staff Offices with new planned and existing data collections that capture race and ethnicity data should contact VA Central Office (VACO) Paperwork Reduction Act VACOPaperworkReduAct@va.gov and the VA Data Governance Council VADataGovernanceCouncil@va.gov with the following information:
 - (1) OMB Control Number (for existing collection, if known),
 - (2) Program Office,
 - (3) Program Office Point of Contact,
 - (4) OIT Point of Contact, and
 - (5) Date of PRA Expiration (for existing collection, if known).
3. **RESPONSIBLE OFFICE:** Office of Enterprise Integration (008), Office of Data Governance and Analytics (008B).
 4. **RELATED DIRECTIVE and/or HANDBOOK:** Not applicable.
 5. **RESCISSION:** This notice will be rescinded, and guidance will be incorporated into the appropriate VA Directive and Handbook no later than one year after the date of publication.

CERTIFIED BY:

**BY DIRECTION OF THE SECRETARY
OF VETERANS AFFAIRS:**

/s/
Guy T. Kiyokawa
Assistant Secretary for
Enterprise Integration

/s/
Guy T. Kiyokawa
Assistant Secretary for
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