

Changing Demographics and the 2000 Census by David Dumble

Ten years have passed since the 1990 Census, which means it's time to have another one! Changes in the 2000 Census that reflect changing demographics nationwide will have an impact on affirmative action reporting.

The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) created the present system of categorizing persons by race and/or ethnicity. The present method of categorizing persons into five distinct categories (White, Black, Asian, Hispanic, American Indian) for CASA contact reporting purposes is derived from these OMB rules.

These changes reflect the growing numbers of mixed-race or multi-race persons living in the United States. There are an estimated two million children of multiracial heritage in the United States. Nationwide, more children are born to white-Japanese ancestry couples than to couples where both are of Japanese ancestry. The situation is even more extreme in California, which legalized mixed-race marriages almost 20 years before the U.S. Supreme Court required all states to do so. One in six children born in California is of mixed-race; in Sacramento County the figure is nearly one in five.

One of the most frequently asked questions about CASA is how to deal with persons identifying themselves as being a member of more than one race (or declining to state their race at all). At present the system has no good way of dealing with these occurrences, as one, and only one, race can be indicated for each person. The DANR Affirmative Action Office has been in contact with policy makers at the USDA and has been talking with the technical people behind CASA on how best to address this issue, both in terms of policy and technology. We hope to have the system conforming to the methodology of racial identification used in the 2000 Census by the time that data is made available in April of 2001.

Under present regulations, we have some breathing room before CASA will be expected to conform to the new methodology of identifying the race of DANR's clientele. In the meantime, try to deal with persons identifying themselves with more than one race and those declining to state any race at all as appropriately as you can, given CASA's present format. If you have any questions, contact David Dumble at (510) 987-9345 or david.dumble@ucop.edu.



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