

# Race, Hispanic Origin, and Ancestry

## Why, What, and How

### Why Will Census 2000 Ask About Race, Hispanic Origin, and Ancestry?

5. Is this person Spanish/Hispanic/Latino? Mark  the "No" box if not Spanish/Hispanic/Latino.

No, not Spanish/Hispanic/Latino

Yes, Mexican, Mexican Am., Chicano

Yes, other Spanish/Hispanic/Latino — Print group. ↴

Yes, Puerto Rican

Yes, Cuban

6. What is this person's race? Mark  one or more races indicate what this person considers himself/herself to be.

White

Black, African Am., or Negro

American Indian or Alaska Native — Print name of enrolled or principal tribe. ↴

Asian Indian     Japanese     Native Hawaiian

Chinese     Korean     Guamanian or Chamorro

Filipino     Vietnamese     Samoan

Other Asian — Print race. ↴     Other Pacific Islander — Print race. ↴

Some other race — Print race. ↴

10 What is this person's ancestry or ethnic origin?

(For example: Italian, Jamaican, African Am., Cambodian, Cape Verdean, Norwegian, Dominican, French Canadian, Haitian, Korean, Lebanese, Polish, Nigerian, Mexican, Taiwanese, Ukrainian, and so on.)

- People who answer the census help their communities obtain federal funds and valuable information for planning schools, hospitals, and roads. Census information also helps identify areas where residents might need services of particular interest to certain racial or ethnic groups, such as screening for hypertension or diabetes.

- All levels of government need information on race, Hispanic origin, and ancestry to implement and evaluate programs, such as the Equal Employment Opportunity Act, Civil Rights Act, Voting Rights Act, Public Health Act, Healthcare Improvement Act, Job Partnership Training Act, Equal Credit Opportunity Act, Fair Housing Act, Census Redistricting Data Program, and others.

- Both public and private organizations use race, Hispanic origin, and ancestry information to find areas where groups may need special services and to plan and implement education, housing, health, and other programs that address these needs. For example, a school system might use this information to design cultural activities that reflect the diversity in their community. Or a business could use it to select the mix of merchandise it will sell in a new store.

- Everyone who answers the census is asked about race and Hispanic origin because this information is needed for areas as small as neighborhoods and city blocks.

- The ancestry question permits people to identify groups not listed in the race and Hispanic origin questions, such as Dominican, Lebanese, Cambodian, or Dutch. Ancestry is asked only on the long form — the

longer questionnaire that goes out to one in six households. This sample is large enough to produce reliable information for all but the smallest areas.

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For additional information about Census 2000, visit the Census Bureau's Internet site at <http://www.census.gov> or call one of our Regional Census Centers across the country:

Atlanta 404-331-0573

Boston 617-424-4977

Charlotte 704-344-6624

Chicago 312-353-9759

Dallas 214-655-3060

Denver 303-231-5029

Detroit 248-967-9524

Kansas City 816-801-2020

Los Angeles 818-904-6522

New York City 212-620-7702  
or 212-620-7703

Philadelphia 215-597-8312

Seattle 206-553-5882

## **Does Everyone Need to Answer the Question on Hispanic Origin?**

Yes, the Hispanic origin question must be answered by EVERYONE. Those who are not of Hispanic origin are asked to mark the box "NO, not Spanish/Hispanic/Latino." People who are of Hispanic origin are asked to indicate the specific group they belong to: Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, or other groups, such as Spanish, Honduran, or Venezuelan.

## **How Do I Answer the Question on Race?**

The individual who responds to the census decides what his or her racial identity is. For the first time ever, people answering the census will be able to select more than one racial category to indicate mixed racial heritage. The groups shown in the census race question collapse into the six race groups needed by the federal government: White, Black or African American, American Indian and Alaska Native, Asian, and Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islanders. People who mark the American Indian or Alaska Native category are asked to provide the name of their principal or enrolled tribe. People who say they are "Other Asian," "Other Pacific Islander," and/or "Some other race" are asked to also write in their race.

## **How Do Hispanics Answer the Race Question?**

People of Hispanic origin may be of any race. Hispanics can choose one or more race categories, including White, Black or African American, American Indian and Alaska Native, Asian, and Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander. If someone does not identify with any of the specified race groups, he or she may mark the "Some other race" category and write in their race.

## **How Do I Answer the Ancestry Question?**

Ancestry refers to an individual's nationality, lineage, or the country in which the individual or the individual's parents or ancestors were born before their arrival in the United States. Examples of ancestries are *Polish*, *Jamaican*, *Egyptian*, and *Taiwanese*. The ancestry question is open-ended, allowing respondents to write in their lineage or ancestry.

## **Answering the Census Is Important, Easy, and Safe.**

By law, the Census Bureau cannot share your individual records with others, including welfare agencies, the Immigration and Naturalization Service, the Internal Revenue Service, courts, housing authorities, police, and the military. Anyone who breaks this law can receive up to five years in prison and \$5,000 in fines. The law works — millions of questionnaires were processed during the 1990s without any breach of trust.