OCID Race and Ethnicity Data Overview

Fact Sheet
August 2023

Most programs and agencies have different data definitions, collection, and reporting for race and ethnicity, which are not easily reconciled. To consistently report race and ethnicity information across data sources, OCID developed a methodology for applying race and ethnicity attributions when there are multiple options within and across points in time.

Background

Across and within the OCID data sources there are inconsistencies in how different agencies collected and reported race and ethnicity data and which categories were available to respondents. OCID's primary goal is the integration of data across multiple data sources to better understand the well-being of all children in Oregon, and the ability to do so with race and ethnicity information is a critical to that mission. The OCID team has been working with state partners to develop a methodology for determining race and ethnicity attributions when there are multiple options within and across points in time. The methodology is incorporated into the Child Well-being Dashboard and OCID analyses.

Explore Further

OCID integrates administrative data from 5 state agencies. More information on the data, its sources, and other technical details can be found on the OCID website.

Any association between race and ethnicity and outcomes does not imply that the social constructs of race and ethnicity caused that outcome or that there is a biological basis for differences between groups. Personal characteristics such as race and ethnicity often serve as proxies for experiences that are associated with different outcomes for subgroups, such as systemic racism, stress, poverty, or housing instability.

Guiding Methodology

1. Allow race and ethnicity to vary over time because how people self-identify can change, and the categories people were able to choose from have changed over time across data sources.
2. When multiple selections for race and ethnicity are available within 1 calendar year, select identification with the rarest group available as determined by the population in Oregon.
    a. We use the American Community Survey to determine the order of race and ethnic groups for this principle, and the order from rarest to most common is: Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, Black/African American, American Indian/Alaskan Native, Asian, Hispanic/Latinx, and White.
    b. Because programs and policies can differ for individuals who identify as American Indian or Alaskan Native, we changed the order to first favor American Indian or Alaskan Native in our most recent iteration of this methodology. Moving this category from the 3rd priority to the 1st priority increased the number of children in this category substantially: within some years, the number tripled.

3. Wherever possible, prioritize information collected about the child directly over information collected about the child's parents from the birth certificate.

Order of Identification

Race and ethnicity categories combine information from vital statistics, education, Medicaid, and child welfare records. When multiple race and ethnicity selections existed within or across sources by year, identification was favored in the following order:

- American Indian/Alaskan Native (AI/AN)
- Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander (NH/PI)
- Black/African American (Black/AA)
- Asian
- Hispanic/Latinx
- White
- Other race

Individuals with Hispanic/Latinx ethnicity and White race comprise the Hispanic/Latinx category, and individuals with Hispanic/Latinx ethnicity and non-White race remain in the identified race category (e.g., individual with Black/African American race and Hispanic/Latinx ethnicity remains in the Black/African American category).

The "Other race" category comes from the birth record (mother's race) for children who did not have any directly observed race or ethnicity categories from any other data sources, and whose mothers did not identify with categories listed on the birth record.

Future Plans

Assigning a race and ethnicity to individuals when there are multiple sources of information across integrated datasets such as OCID is an evolving area of development. As the OCID project and its data sources continue to change and develop, so will the methods to align different race and ethnicity information. The following are a selection of areas for future development:

- As new sources of data are integrated into OCID, we will assess the availability of race and ethnicity information from each source.
- Wherever possible, prioritize data sources for race and ethnicity information that collect at least the following categories: American Indian or Alaskan Native; Asian; Black or African American; Hispanic or Latinx; Middle Eastern or North African; Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander; White; and categories for missing information (i.e., "don't know," "unknown to agency," or "declined to answer").
- Because of small sample sizes we are unable to report on people who identify as Middle Eastern or North Africa. However, we will reconsider our ability to use this category whenever we have a data refresh. It is possible that we might be able to use this category after we have several years of information collected with REALD.
- We hope to explore intersections of multiple identities (e.g., Black and Hispanic/Latinx) in the future to reflect that experiences differ within the category that might otherwise be reported as "multiracial."