



## DCHS Race/Ethnicity Data Collection Policy FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions)

### **1. Why is the label 'Slavic' used instead of 'Eastern European'?**

It was chosen based on the recommendation of the Coalition of Communities of Color who conducted focus group discussions with members of the Slavic and Eastern European community. The term 'Slavic' was recommended by that group as the most inclusive label available. That said, some members of this community may not prefer it and they can choose another identity or choose to 'decline to answer'.

### **2. Did you consider breaking out people of South East Asian origin from the broader 'Asian' identity?**

We support the break out of SE Asian from the larger Asian identity for a more descriptive level of data, if this data will be useful for programs and providers. Our policy sets a minimum number of identities, not a limitation. As long as those identifying as SE Asian can be 'rolled up' into the Asian category for reporting, we support the inclusion of this more descriptive identity. We chose not to include SE Asian in our mandated categories out of a need to balance inclusiveness with the usefulness of the data. The more identities we include, the smaller the groups we are describing which presents problems for statistical analysis. To be able to make statistically meaningful comparisons we chose to include fewer groups or identities.

### **3. Why don't you simply ask people how they want to identify – and write it down?**

To be able to compare groups and identify disparities we need to be able to identify people with one of a clear set of race/ethnic identities. So if we gave clients the opportunity to self-identify we would still need to take those responses and categorize them in to a subset. This relies on the judgment of analysts to interpret client responses and code them. Instead we established a set of identities that are fairly inclusive and ask clients to choose among them.

**4. Did you consider giving people the opportunity to identify their country of origin?**

While country of origin may be important information, it is not the same as race or ethnicity. There may be many different races and ethnicities within each country. Programs or providers may ask for country of origin if that would be helpful, but it isn't mandated.

**5. We are over-burdened as it is – How are we expected to ask an additional question?**

We recognize that collecting data in this way may require more time and effort in conversation with clients. Our belief is that this greater effort is balanced by the value of the improved data generated. We will be better able to describe the communities we serve as well as identifying gaps in services to communities of color.

**6. What happens if these identities are different than those required by our funders?**

It is essential that data be gathered in a way that supports all funder reporting requirements, both Multnomah County's and other funders. As a part of our implementation, we are having conversations with programs and providers about how these

data are collected- both the medium (in-person, by phone) and the forms used to record the data. We will also discuss how our policy can be integrated with current practice, so that funder requirements can still be met.

**7. What should we do if clients don't want to choose any of these identities?**

Our policy includes the option for clients to 'decline to answer'. Clients should be given the opportunity to consider the identities provided and if they are unable to choose, or will not choose, then they should be encouraged to 'decline to answer'.

**8. Why are you just focusing on race – what about sexual orientation, gender and disability for example?**

The establishment and implementation of a policy for race/ethnicity data collection is just the first step in the improvement of client demographic data at DCHS. Our future work includes reviewing our collection of client gender, sexual orientation, and disability data and setting policies for collecting these variables as well. Our goal is to improve our ability to accurately describe our client populations and improve services to our clients.