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**Field Operations Memo 2007-18**  
**March 23, 2007**

**To:** Transitional Assistance Office Staff  
**From:**  John Augeri, Assistant Commissioner for Field Operations  
**Re:** Revised Ethnicity and Race Data Collection

**Overview**

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New federal regulations require state agencies to collect ethnicity and race data about recipients who receive benefits from federal programs. The purpose of this data collection is to provide the federal government with sufficient information to permit effective enforcement of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color and national origin in programs receiving federal financial assistance.

Under the new regulations, there are two categories for ethnicity:

- Hispanic/Latino, and
- Non-Hispanic/Latino.

Under the new regulations, there are five categories for race:

- American Indian or Alaska Native,
- Asian,
- Black or African American,
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, and
- White.

State Letter 1320 transmitted a regulation change that is a result of these new federal requirements for collecting ethnic and racial data.

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**Purpose of Memo**

This Field Operations Memo:

- describes changes to BEACON windows to accommodate the new federal requirements; and
  - provides procedures to be followed to collect ethnicity and race data using the new standards.
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## BEACON Window Changes

Effective with BEACON Increment 2.1.22 scheduled for release on April 2, 2007, the following changes have been made in the Assessed Person window and in the Citizenship window to meet the new federal requirements:

On the Assessed Person window, the current Ethnic Origin field has been replaced by two new fields:

- **Ethnicity**
- **Race** (This field allows for the completion of multiple answers.)

The **Ethnicity** field includes the following choices:

- Hispanic/Latino
- Non-Hispanic/Latino
- Not Available

The **Race** field includes the following choices:

- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian
- Black or African American
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
- White
- Not Available

In the Citizenship window, the Ethnic Origin field, which has been changed to *Race*, is pre-populated with certain race information contained in the Assessed Person window.

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## Conversion of Current Ethnic Origin Data

With the implementation of Increment 2.1.22, MIS will populate the new Ethnicity and Race fields in the Assessed Person window and the new Race field in the Citizenship window using existing data from the current Ethnic Origin field.

Data will be converted according to the chart on the next page:

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**Conversion of  
Current Ethnic  
Origin Data  
(continued)**

**Ethnic Origin/Ethnicity/Race Conversion Chart**

| <i>Current Ethnic Origin</i>         | <i>New Race Code</i>                | <i>New Ethnicity Code<br/>Hispanic/Latino?<br/>Yes/No</i> |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|
| American Indian                      | American Indian or<br>Alaska Native | Not Available   |
| Alaskan American                     | American Indian or<br>Alaska Native | Not Available   |
| Asian or Pacific<br>Islander         | Asian                               | Not Available   |
| Black – Not Hispanic<br>Origin       | Black or African<br>American        | Non-Hispanic/Latino<br>(No)                               |
| Hispanic                             | Not Available                       | Hispanic/Latino (Yes)                                     |
| White – Not Hispanic<br>Origin       | White                               | Non-Hispanic/Latino<br>(No)                               |
| No Answer<br>( <i>Race Unknown</i> ) | Not Available                       | Not Available   |
| Other                                | Not Available                       | Not Available   |

**AU Manager's  
Responsibilities**

At Application

During the Request for Assistance (RFA) for a TAFDC, EAEDC or Food Stamp application, BEACON will display a prompt on the Assessed Person window with one question on ethnicity and one on race for the Primary Applicant or head of household. Later in the interview, BEACON will display a prompt to also ask these questions for each household member applying for assistance. The AU Manager must complete both fields for all programs for all assessed persons. Applicants and recipients may now identify themselves as belonging to more than one race.

When completing the Assessed Person window, the AU Manager must:

- ask the Primary Applicant or head of household separate questions about ethnicity and race;
- ask about ethnicity before race by asking, for example: “Are you Hispanic or Latino/Latina?”; and then
- ask the applicant or recipient, “What is your race?”

**AU Manager's Responsibilities (continued)**

**Important:** Applicants are not required to answer questions about ethnicity or race. Answering or not answering the Race/Ethnicity questions has no effect on eligibility or benefit level.

Federal regulations require, however, that ethnicity and race information be captured *whenever possible*.

- If an applicant has not indicated ethnicity or race(s) on an application form and declines to answer the ethnicity and race questions during a *face-to-face* interview, the AU Manager must assign an appropriate code in the Ethnicity and in the Race fields in the Assessed Person window based on observation.
- If an applicant has not indicated ethnicity or race(s) on an application form and declines to answer the ethnicity and race questions during an NPA FS *telephone* interview, the AU Manager must enter “Not Available” in the Assessed Person window.

At reevaluation/  
recertification/case  
maintenance  
activities

AU Managers must review the ethnicity and race information in the Assessed Person window during reevaluation, recertification, and case maintenance activities. If “Not Available” is displayed in either the Ethnicity or Race field, the AU Manager must update the field(s) with the appropriate entries, whenever possible, using the procedures described above.

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**Updated Forms and Notices**

The paper food stamp application form (FSA-1) has been revised. The *Ethnic Origin* field has been removed and separate fields for *Ethnicity* and *Race* have been added with the choices listed above.

The BEACON-generated Child Care Referral Notice has been revised to include ethnicity and race information to also comply with the new federal requirements for ethnicity and race data collection. This information is pre-populated with the information on ethnicity and race recorded by the AU Manager on the Assessed Person window. The paper Child Care Referral form (BEA/CCA) has also been revised to include fields for ethnicity and race information which the AU manager must fill in. For more information on making a child care referral using the revised form, see Field Operations Memo 2007-17.

The BEACON-generated Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC) Referral Form has been revised to remove the Race field. The paper version remains unchanged.

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**Reference**

For more information, refer to a *User's Guide: Transitional Assistance Programs and BEACON*, Chapter VI-C-1.

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**Questions**

If you have any questions, please have your Hotline designee call the Policy Hotline at 617-348-8478.

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