

Race and Ethnicity Write-In Field in HMIS

Updated 06/10/24. See Revision History for details.

Table of Contents

What is the race and ethnicity write-in option in HMIS?.....	1
When should the write-in field be used?.....	2
How does the Joint Office use the race and ethnicity write-in field?.....	2
Alternatives for the race ethnicity write-in field?.....	3
Revision History.....	3

What is the race write-in field in HMIS?

The race write-in option follows the multiselectable menu of racial and ethnic identities. It is a space to write-in a race/ethnicity details not captured by the options presented.

To select multiple values hold down the "ctrl" or "cmd" key and click on each value

<p>Race and Ethnicity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> American Indian, Alaska Native, or Indigenous ▲ Asian or Asian American Black, African American, or African Hispanic/Latina/e/o Middle Eastern or North African Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander White Client doesn't know Client prefers not to answer Data not collected ▼ 	<p>G</p>
<p>Additional Race and Ethnicity Detail</p>	<p>Clear All</p>	

When should the race write-in field be used?

It is recommended providers guide participants to locate their Race and Ethnicity within the categories offered and limit use of the write-in option when possible. The write-in option should only be used to capture additional details the participant feels necessary to share. Unless these details are part of an additional race or ethnicity umbrella category, the specific details input here will not be used for JOHS demographic reporting.

JOHS data staff are not able to accurately locate a participant within the given categories based on write-in information and because of this the race and ethnicity of those using the write-in field will not be captured. As an example, a person stating American may be any race or ethnicity and JOHS data staff can't extrapolate from that write-in. Because of this, it is imperative that a participant's racial or ethnic identity is also captured in the selectable HUD specific options as this will be used in demographic reporting.

There may be circumstances where a participant's identity is not captured under an umbrella category and a write-in may be the appropriate option. The write-in response will be evaluated by the JOHS data team and equity team. See section below.

How does the Joint Office use the race and ethnicity write-in field?

The data team runs a report on an biannual basis to determine how often the race write-in field is used and the types of responses received. The data team then sends this list off to the equity team. The equity team then reviews the list of write-in responses to see if an additional race/ethnicity umbrella category is needed.

Until an additional umbrella category is added, the race/ethnicity write-in field is NOT used for demographic reporting.

Alternatives for the race ethnicity write-in field

Specific providers or programs may wish to collect additional information regarding a participant's identity. While race and ethnicity write-in field can be used to capture pieces like country of origin, providers should be aware that write-in responses are not standardized and can be difficult to analyze.

If further detail is required on an ongoing basis, please reach out to the JOHS data team to discuss the addition of a specific assessment question to capture these data.

Source materials

- [HUD HMIS Data Standards - Race and Ethnicity](#)

Revision History

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