

# Simple Strategies for Collecting REAL Data

## Think About It!

Collecting patient demographic data and language helps you better understand your patients and the communities you serve. You will be able to tailor care based on their need and improve their outcomes.

Meeting the minimum standards of race, ethnicity and language (REAL) data builds a foundation for improving quality of care and effectively identifying health care disparities.

## Take Action!

### Basic & Intermediate Action Resources:

- [REAL Data Collection Script and Definition](#)
- [CMS Demographic Language Collection](#)

### Advanced Action Resources:

- [Sociodemographic Domain Measures \(section 4\)](#)
- [Accountable Health Communities Health Needs Screening Tool](#)
- [Guidelines for Care of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Patients](#)

## Basic and Intermediate Levels

### Collect Data on Race and Ethnicity

Collect race and ethnicity using one question, with the option of selecting multiple categories. The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) recommends tailoring this list to accommodate and reflect populations served. The recommended minimum race/ethnicity data to collect is below.

*“What is your race and/or ethnicity? Select all that apply.”*

- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian
- Black or African American
- Hispanic or Latino
- Middle Eastern or North African
- Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
- White

### Ask About Language

Include questions to capture English proficiency and an optional question for language(s) spoken at home. Examples:

*“Is English your primary language? If not, what is your primary language? How well do you speak English? Do you speak a language other than English at home?”*



Verify patient information frequently throughout the service of care to ensure accurate data capture and availability of translation services as needed (i.e., before appointment, upon registration, upon discharge).

## Advanced Level Strategies

Consider adding questions beyond REAL data to your intake form. Changing your process to add more sociodemographic questions allows your team to understand patient populations and helps tailor a more patient-centered intervention. Consider adding questions in the following areas to your patient registration workflow:

- Sexual orientation
- Self-identification
- Education
- Gender
- Disability
- Employment