

Demographic Data Collection

Use the following strategies to effectively collect the required demographic information. Please work with staff to alter strategies as needed to best fit your target population and/or collection method.

1. **Collect It As Early As Possible:** Collect demographic data during registration or sign-in, if possible, to maximize response rates. Otherwise, collect it at the end through polls or surveys. Abide by any relevant information security standards. Confirm that registrants attend the event before reporting them as participants.
2. **Explain Your Purpose:** People may not understand why you need the information and may have concerns about how it will be used. Tell them it will help identify if you are reaching a diverse population and providing culturally competent services.
3. **Promise Anonymity or Confidentiality:** People are more hesitant to share their demographic information when it can be linked to them personally. Provide an anonymous method for collecting the information, if possible, and state in the question that it is anonymous. Otherwise, state in the question that their information is confidential and explain that it will only be used in the aggregate.
4. **Allow for No Response:** You are required to ask for the demographic information, but they are not required to provide it. Keep all demographic questions optional and include an “I do not want to answer” response option.
5. **Define Terms:** Define terms that may be unfamiliar. For example, people may not know what a developmental disability is or whether their locality is urban or rural.
6. **Allow for Self-Description:** The standard categories may not capture everyone. Give people an option to describe themselves when relevant.
7. **Ask at the End:** Placing sensitive questions early in a collection instrument can deter people from completing the rest of the questions. If the instrument is long, however, put questions about disability and parental status earlier to maximize response rates for the participation performance measures.
8. **Use Required Questions:** The staff has provided required questions listed on the next two pages to collect the required demographic information.