

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)  
Anti-Racism Data Legislation Engagement



## Systemic Racism and Race-based Data

### 1. What is systemic racism?

- Routine and societal systems, structures, and institutions such as requirements, policies, legislation and practices that perpetuate and maintain avoidable and unfair inequalities across racial groups, including the use of profiling and stereotyping (*In Plain Sight: Addressing Indigenous-specific Racism and Discrimination in B.C. Health Care*).

### 2. What is race-based data?

- Race is a term used to classify people into groups based principally on physical traits (phenotypes) such as skin colour. Racial categories are not based on science or biology but on differences that society has created (i.e., “socially constructed”), with significant consequences for people’s lives. Racial categories may vary over time and place and can overlap with ethnic, cultural or religious groupings (Government of Ontario. 2019. Data Standards for the Identification and Monitoring of Systemic Racism. <https://www.ontario.ca/document/data-standards-identification-and-monitoring-systemic-racism>).
- Race-based data is often used as a short-hand to mean different things: racial background, ethnic origin, ancestry, or other social identity markers, such as religion or place of birth. It may be used to racialize an individual or group as “other” or “foreign” and subject them to differential adverse treatment. Ontario’s Anti-Racism Data Standards defines race-based data to include information about race, ethnic origin, Indigenous identity, and religion (Phan, M. 2021. Maytree. Race-based data in the criminal justice system. <https://maytree.com/publications/race-based-data-in-the-criminal-justice-system/>).

### 3. How can collecting race-based data contribute to reducing systemic racism?

- Collection and use of this data in the right way can help to make systemic inequalities visible and address issues of discrimination, inequities, and gaps in services.

### 4. How can race-based data collection result in systemic racism?

- While the intent of collecting race-based data is to reduce systemic inequities, the same data can reinforce stigmatization if it is used or collected poorly.
- Engaging with communities to understand how to achieve the benefits of race-based data collection while minimizing the potential harm is a key objective of the engagement process.

**5. What race-based data is Government currently collecting?**

- While Government is able to collect some race-based data, there is a lack of consistency and gaps in the way in which it is collected, how it is shared, and who can access it.
- Legislation will enable the consistent collection, use and disclosure of demographic data to identify where systemic racism is taking place.

**6. How might Government use anti-racism data in the future?**

- That is what Government is hoping to learn from this consultation.
- In the report, *Disaggregated Demographic Data Collection in British Columbia: The Grandmother Perspective*, the BC Human Rights Commissioner made several recommendations on how anti-racism data might be used to better understand areas of inequity in key government sectors.

**7. Is there an example of how Government currently manages storage and access to data?**

- The [Data Innovation Program](#) (DIP) is a data integration and analytics program that Government analysts and academic researchers currently use. The DIP links and de-identifies data (no personal identifiers such as name and address) from multiple ministries and organizations, providing a better understanding of B.C.'s more complex issues. The program supports population-level analysis, not individual or case-level analysis.