



Participant Demographics - To Collect or Not To Collect?

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It has been an ongoing struggle in my organization, and I imagine I'm not alone. When setting up a new recreation management software solution, the basis of decision-making lies upon the development of the customer profile template. Should we be collecting demographics from our park users? Is there a value in capturing this information? When weighing the pros and cons of this decision, it's important to consider the following factors:

- Give careful consideration to the options provided to participants, in data collection, to be respectful.
- Balance the protection of registrants when including underrepresented populations including care to avoid exploitation of vulnerable populations.
- Ask if the information is "need to know" or "nice to know," and determine the intended use of the information before beginning data collection.
- Give people options, whether it be skip, selecting multiple answers or allowing demographic sections to be voluntary.

Collecting demographic data from park users is a tool to make informed decisions which are inclusive of the community and respectful to participants. It helps us to understand who we serve, and more importantly who we are missing. Are you hungry for more and wanting to understand why this matters? Are you looking for information on how to collect demographic information to advance racial equity, within scope of best practices?

Check out these resources!

[ORARC-Tip-Sheet-Inclusive-Demographic-Data-Collection.pdf \(harvard.edu\)](#)

[Fundamentals, Data, Demographics and Population Data \(racialequitytools.org\)](#)

<https://www.peakgrantmaking.org/insights/demographic-data-collection-a-tool-for-change/>

The MRPA Race and Equity Advisory Committee will send articles, images, and quotes to help you move through your race equity journey. Let's learn, grow, and evolve together!