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**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
FOOD AND NUTRITION SERVICE**

WEST-CENTRAL REGION
1100 COMMERCE STREET
DALLAS, TX 75202

JUL 21 1975

- Mr. Oscar M. Laurel
Executive Director
Good Neighbor Commission of Texas
Box 12007
Austin, TX 78711

Dear Mr. Laurel:

Thank you for the Good Neighbor Commission's interest in the Food Stamp Program. Let us preface our reply to your letter with some relevant background material.

The first major impetus for collecting racial information on users of government services was the passage of the Civil Rights Acts. A difference in the quantity or quality of services received by minority groups became prima facie evidence of discrimination. In the sociological sense there were only three "races": Caucasian, Negroid, and Mongoloid. However, burgeoning "racial", meaning ethnic or subcultural, consciousness in other minority groups exposed discrimination and prejudice not hitherto recognized. The only way to evaluate the quantity and quality of services received by American Indians (of the Mongoloid race) and Mexican-American and other Spanish-speaking peoples (of the Caucasian race) was to individually identify the groups by a "racial" or ethnic designation.

In the Food Stamp Program these designations differ to meet the needs of specific geographical areas. In Texas, for instance, recipients are designated as follows:

- 1) Caucasian
- 2) Indian
- 3) Mexican-American or Latin (Spanish speaking)
- 4) Mexican-American or Latin (English speaking or bilingual)
- 5) Black/Negro
- 6) Oriental
- 7) Other

On Federal Food Stamp Program forms they are:

- 1) Negro or Black
- 2) Spanish surnamed
- 3) American Indian
- 4) Oriental

2.

- 5) White
- 6) All Other
- 7) Not Determined

In New Mexico:

- 1) Negro
- 2) Spanish American
- 3) American Indian
- 4) Oriental
- 5) White (other than Spanish American)
- 6) All Other

The use of ethnic designations makes it possible to compare what percentage of a minority group is below poverty levels with what percentage of that group is receiving food stamps; and conclude whether the program is reaching that group. While it is then impossible to classify all Caucasians as "whites," we also want to remain responsive to the community and use those names by which the various ethnic groups call themselves.

Except in Texas, "Anglo" is not a widely recognized name for white Americans who do not belong to any particular ethnic group. Although "white" itself is highly inaccurate, its use is an almost inseparable part of the language. Our use of the term "white" is not meant to hinder efforts of organizations like yours who are working hard to promote goodwill and understanding between ethnic groups. If you are interested in pursuing this subject on the national level, write to the Food and Nutrition Service, Food Stamp Program, Washington, D.C. They would be able to consider the matter in much greater detail.

Best wishes to you and the Good Neighbor Commission. We would appreciate hearing further your thoughts on this matter.

Sincerely,



H. H. Fullium, Director
Food Stamp Program