

## **ASSOCIATION OF MULTIETHNIC AMERICANS (AMEA)**

**PO Box 66061**

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### **FACT SHEET**

#### **What is AMEA?**

The Association of MultiEthnic Americans (AMEA) is an international alliance of local multiethnic/interracial groups, incorporated as a nonprofit, public benefit organization. Representatives of local multiethnic/interracial organizations from across the United States founded AMEA in November of 1988. Members of local affiliates come from all walks of life and include people from many racial/ethnic backgrounds and blends. AMEA is a secular, non-denominational organization, open to people of all faiths.

#### **When was AMEA formed?**

On July 4, 1986 - the Organizing Committee for a national Association of MultiEthnic Americans formed. On November 12, 1988 - members of the Organizing Committee convened in Berkeley, California and founded the Association of MultiEthnic Americans. Carlos Fernandez, founder of I-Pride of San Francisco, was elected president; Ramona Douglass, of the Biracial Family Network of Chicago, was elected vice-president.

#### **What is AMEA'S Mission?**

**TO EDUCATE AND ADVOCATE ON BEHALF OF MULTIETHNIC INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES BY COLLABORATING WITH OTHERS TO ERADICATE ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION.**

#### **Why is this AMEA'S mission?**

We believe that:

- Every child, every person, who is multiethnic/multiracial has the same right as anyone else to assert a personal identity that embraces the fullness and integrity of their actual ancestry;
- Every multiethnic/multiracial family, whether biological or adoptive, has the same right to grow and develop as any other;
- Our children have the right to love and respect each of their parents equally;
- A positive awareness of interracial and multicultural identity is one of the essential keys to unlocking America's, and the world's, profound difficulty with the issues of race and inter-ethnic relations;
- Our community is uniquely situated to confront these issues because of the special experiences and understanding we acquire in the intimacy of our families, our own personalities, and our friends;
- Our community has the potential of becoming a stable core around which the ethnic pluralism of this country is unified; and,
- We are an anchor for promoting understanding and peace among the nations of the world.

#### **When did AMEA become involved with the census issue related to the creation of a new multiracial category on government forms?**

In September 1989, AMEA sent a letter about this issue to Congressman Thomas Sawyer (D), Chairman of the House subcommittee monitoring the census. In 1993, Congressman Sawyer invited AMEA to present testimony for first "Census, Statistics and Postal Personnel" subcommittee he chairs. AMEA President Carlos Fernandez presented the testimony on June 30, 1993. He was assisted by Edwin Darden, AMEA Eastern Regional Vice-President. In December 1995, AMEA was asked, by the late Secretary of Commerce Ron Brown, to send a representative as appointee to the "Census 2000 Advisory Committee." Ramona Douglass was chosen to represent AMEA. AMEA remains on that Census Advisory Committee today.

#### **Why did AMEA become involved with the census issue?**

The Board of Directors felt strongly that by working on the federal level, and utilizing something tangible like the census, AMEA would be able to positively affect the thinking of the United States as a whole, enabling them to raise their awareness of the reality of racial duality. This is the reality that so many Americans live with daily in the multiracial/multicultural community. This issue, also, relates to our mission: To promote a positive awareness of interracial and multiethnic identity, for ourselves and for society as a whole. In addition, the Director of the U.S. Census Bureau, Ken Prewitt, estimated that up to 5% of 2000 Census respondents would mark more than one box. It has also been estimated that 2-3% of Americans identify with more than one racial heritage.

**What happened to the Census as a result of AMEA’S work on the issue of changing the racial categorization issue?**

On July 10, 1997 - the Federal Interagency Committee made a recommendation allowing Census respondents to “check one or more boxes.” In addition, the revisions of the OMB’s Statistical Policy Directive 15 were made official and posted in the Federal Register of October 30, 1997 - Volume 62, Number 210.

**What other issues are AMEA involved with?**

Accurate collection of medical data is a prerequisite for optimal health care. One serious gap has been our country’s error in the way people have been screened for genetic diseases, bone marrow donations, and drug reactions. The mistake has been the lack of inquiry into the existence of multiple ethnicity in individuals. If, for instance, a health care practitioner makes a decision about a patient’s race by just looking at them, they may miss the opportunity to test for more than one potentially fatal disease. The health care professional should ask their patient about the existence of additional ethnicities. For example, a dark-skinned person, presumed to be African-American, may also be Caucasian and Jewish. Both Tay Sachs Disease and Sickle Cell Anemia need to be ruled out. There is also the need to ask about multiple ethnicities in regards to bone marrow donors.

In addition, research is beginning to show that different ethnic populations may respond differently to various medications. It is essential that healthcare institutions be made aware of the census option change and to make sure they utilize accurate methodologies to obtain vital healthcare statistics.

**How is AMEA supported?**

Through affiliate and membership dues, and donations.

**How does AMEA intend to continue to proactively impact race issues in America?**

- Expanded membership, both affiliates and individual members;
- National conference October 14, 15, 16, 2002, Tucson, Arizona

The Multiracial Child: Building a Community of Professionals, Parents and Youth.

- A documentary promoting positive multiracial identities, and delineating how understanding our histories will prepare us for the future;

**For More Information**

Contact the National Office of the Association of MultiEthnic Americans,

1-877-954-AMEA

For More Information On How You Can Make A Difference

Write To Us

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