

Cultural Competency

Coverage Guidelines

Example: Descriptions / Identifying race

We normally do not identify or describe people by race, creed, sexual preference, skin color or disability.

*We will run descriptions of suspects only when asked to by law enforcement and only when the description is narrow enough to help apprehend a criminal. We will use race as part of a larger description of a **fugitive** only when the full description of the suspect clearly identifies one person from another. There should generally be at least 5 separate identifiers in a description before we air skin color or race.*

- Define people only based on their relevance to the story.
Example: An accountant's race may be irrelevant in a tax story.
- Do not ask one person to speak for an entire culture.
- Build more diverse resources and sources.
- Work with purpose to make your stories more diverse.

Ideas for covering minority communities

- Encourage civic and civil dialogue: Report history, add context, focus on solutions. "Solution stories can change the tone of public discourse, making it less divisive and more constructive." — Solutions Journalism Network, Reporting on race
- Create a newsroom task force to find diverse community members to advise and be represented on your newscast. Sponsor community forums with these advisors.
- Audit your newscast for culture and color
How are minorities portrayed in your newscast? Be transparent, consider reporting what you find.
- Review your policies regarding when and how you identify people by race or culture. Discuss it in your newsroom — report on it when appropriate.
- Examine how crimes are reported by law enforcement in the low-income and minority areas of your city. Compare and report on the arrest and conviction rates of Blacks, Latinos and Whites in your community.
- Set up a meeting with your police PIO and discuss how race is used in press releases. Do not forget to discuss descriptions of victims as well as suspects.