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(907) 465-3991 phone
(907) 465-3908 fax
research@akleg.gov

Registries in Alaska Based on Race, Religion, or Country of Origin

Tim Spengler, Legislative Analyst

You wished to know if any state agencies or local governments in Alaska maintain registries/lists on individual Alaskans based on race, religion, nationality, or country of origin.

We queried a number of state departments—Administration, Education and Early Development, Health and Social Services, and Law—and municipalities—Anchorage, Fairbanks, Juneau, Kenai, and Mat-Su—as well as the Alaska Human Rights Commission to ascertain if any of these entities compile information on the race, religion, or country of origin of *individual* Alaskans. While some of this information—usually race/ethnicity—is compiled by some agencies, it is done so in an aggregated manner.¹ None of the entities we queried report that they disaggregate these data in a way that would identify the race/ethnicity, religion, or country of origin of individuals. In fact, a number of the departmental and municipal contacts with whom we corresponded questioned the legality of lists or registries that would identify individual Alaskans by such categories.²

A number of the divisions within the Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS) collect race/ethnicity information from those who receive their services. Religion and national origin data are also requested by some agencies within DHSS. In many cases, the information is provided voluntarily. Below, we provide the response we received from DHSS (largely verbatim) regarding what relevant information their divisions compile.³ You will notice that the data varies by agency, as do the methods of collecting such information.⁴

The **Alaska Pioneer Homes** maintain a database known as Point Click Care, in which staff enter the race and religion of new residents entering the Pioneer Homes system. This information is provided voluntarily by residents as part of their application process.

The Division of **Behavioral Health** maintains a web-based application and database (AKAIMS, or Alaska Automated Information Management System) that serves the dual purpose of a management information system and an electronic health record. While data on religion, nationality, and country of origin is not kept, data on race is collected by AKAIMS. Reports on race are generated to monitor for disparities between services that may exist for AK Native and non-Native peoples.

Health Care Services receives Medicaid recipient eligibility files from the Division of Public Assistance. These files contain race information, but only for recipients who chose to provide this

¹ The Division of Personnel, Department of Administration, tracks race information of employees for the purposes of federal reporting for Equal Opportunity Employment/Affirmative Action. This information is aggregated, however, so the race of individual Alaskans is not identifiable. Also, while the U.S. Census Bureau does not ask questions about religion, it does ask about citizenship, place of birth, and race. Again, this data is typically aggregated at the national level, and sometimes at the state level. Finally, school districts track the race/ethnicity of students as reported by parents/guardians, which they report to the Department of Education and Early Development in an aggregated form.

² We are not attorneys and, therefore, are not qualified to address the legality of such data compilation. You may wish to contact Legislative Legal for their opinion on the matter.

³ The information was provided by DHSS legislative liaison Tony Newman. Should you have questions regarding DHSS' response, we encourage you to contact Mr. Newman directly at (907) 465-1611, or at anthony.newman@alaska.gov.

⁴ It is our understanding that the DHSS data collected is not disaggregated by individuals.

information during the eligibility determination process. Religion, nationality, and country of origin information are not contained in these files.

The Division of **Juvenile Justice** maintains the Juvenile Offender Information Management System (JOMIS), for which race information is routinely collected for youth served by the division. Religious preference, country of origin, nationality may also be documented when offered or warranted.

As part of its application process, the Division of **Public Assistance** collects race, religion, and national origin information voluntarily from applicants to meet federal program and nondiscrimination requirements, and provides an annual report to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services regarding caseload demographics. Certain assistance programs require Alaska Natives to provide race information. The division maintains privacy and confidentiality of client information pursuant to state and federal laws, which prohibit the disclosure of client information without written authorization from the client or their authorized representative.

The Division of **Public Health** maintains three registries that collect the race, country of origin, and nationality of individuals in order to monitor health status and diagnose and investigate health problems. None collect data on religion. The Alaska Immunization Registry, VacTrAK, collects data on race. The Alaska Trauma Registry collects data on race, ethnicity, and country of origin. The Alaska Cancer Registry collects race and birthplace (state or country if outside the U.S.).

The **Office of Children's Services'** collects, through its Online Resources for Children of Alaska (ORCA) database, information on race, religion, nationality, religious preference, and country of origin, when offered or warranted, for clients, families, and foster family members.

We hope this is helpful. If you have questions or need additional information, please let us know.