

State of Alaska FY2009 Governor's Operating Budget

Department of Health and Social Services Bureau of Vital Statistics Component Budget Summary

Component: Bureau of Vital Statistics

Contribution to Department's Mission

The department's mission is to promote and protect the health and well-being of Alaskans. The Bureau of Vital Statistics (BVS) contributes to this mission through the registration and safeguarding of vital events records for Alaska. The bureau also publishes annual reports of vital events, produces newsletters, develops web-based reports of public health indicators, and conducts research to provide comprehensive population-based health data to support the evaluation of health outcomes and services. Public Health utilizes data from these reports to monitor and assess the health status of Alaskans.

Core Services

The Bureau of Vital Statistics (BVS) is responsible for registering and safeguarding all vital events in Alaska. To ensure that vital records are registered timely and accurately, the bureau manages a statewide training program for local registrars, hospital staff, funeral directors, and court clerks to provide guidance in the use of the BVS information system and the registration of vital events. The bureau continually monitors the data quality of each vital record submitted to ensure that the information contained in each record accurately reflects the facts surrounding the vital event.

Vital records data plays an important role in assessing the health of Alaskans, by providing population-level data on patterns and trends in the health status of Alaskans ranging from prenatal care and pregnancy outcomes to differences in mortality rates among various ethnic groups in Alaska.

The bureau provides the public with certified copies of vital events as needed for establishing legal identity, applying for driver's licenses or passports, or documenting dependents for health or retirement benefits.

The bureau produces an annual report of vital events in Alaska, including data on births, fetal and infant deaths, adoptions, marriages and divorces, induced terminations of pregnancy, and deaths. The purpose of this report is to provide reference material and indicators for health and vital events in Alaska. The bureau also produces and distributes other statistical reports and information, primarily through a web-based system, to provide population-based health data to support the evaluation of health outcomes and services.

The bureau continues to work with the Alaska Children's Trust by providing Alaskans the opportunity to obtain Heirloom Birth and Marriage Certificates. These heirloom certificates cost an additional \$20 and \$25, respectively; however these additional fees are dedicated to the Children's Trust, which works to prevent child abuse and neglect.

BVS also maintains the state's Medical Marijuana Registry.

FY2009 Resources Allocated to Achieve Results

FY2009 Component Budget: \$2,504,500

Personnel:

Full time	28
Part time	0
Total	28

Key Component Challenges

The federal Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004 was passed by Congress to address the integrity of birth records as an identity document and the physical security of vital record offices. It is anticipated that the regulations will be published soon. Based on a preliminary draft of the regulations, it is expected that the regulations will significantly

impact bureau operations and Alaskans. The draft regulations require the electronic registration of births and deaths, which the bureau's antiquated information system is incapable of doing. There are other anticipated costs related to the regulations, such as physical security requirements for buildings and the data entry of older birth and death records. There could be significant impacts for Alaskans, since the federal government will stop accepting birth records from states that do not conform to the regulations, meaning that Alaskans would be unable to use Alaska-issued birth certificates for obtaining passports or Social Security or Medicaid benefits.

The current information system is more than 20 years old and is based on computer technologies no longer supported by modern operating systems. Because of this, it is increasingly difficult for hospitals and other providers to run the software necessary for registering births. If the problem gets worse, providers will have to manually prepare birth certificates on paper forms and mail them to the bureau for processing. This will create significant delays in registering births in Alaska. Since it will take at least two years to design, test, and fully implement a new birth and death registration system, it is critical to get started on replacing the current system as soon as possible.

It is becoming increasingly difficult to recruit and retain staff to work in the Juneau front office. The four positions in the front office are responsible for assisting customers and processing requests for vital records. In 2006, six recruitments were required to keep the office fully staffed and in 2007 to date five recruitments have been conducted. Not only has the vacancy factor affected the bureau's ability to respond timely to vital record requests, but the time spent repeatedly recruiting and training new staff has also limited the time senior staff has available to process requests. In past years the bureau has been able to work around these vacancies by shifting work to other units in the bureau. However, the overall work load has increased to the point that any backlog in work due to front office vacancies can no longer be absorbed by other staff. Unless this situation can be remedied, it will ultimately lead to significant delays in processing requests for vital records.

Significant Changes in Results to be Delivered in FY2009

No significant changes.

Major Component Accomplishments in 2007

Despite an increased workload and technology challenges, the bureau worked hard to maintain customer service improvements achieved in the previous year. Efforts were successful in some areas but not in others. The year began with a significant increase in requests for birth records, mainly due to changes in passport requirements. Additionally, the information system was inoperable for over two weeks due to repeated hardware failures, and recurring problems with the auto-attendant phone system impacted staff's ability to process vital record requests. Processing time for vital record requests increased from an average of two days in 2006 to about two weeks in 2007. However, the processing times for other documents remained low. The processing time for paternity actions remained at about a week, and adoption and correction requests continued to be processed within two weeks.

By the end of 2006, BVS had completed a project to enter all older births into the information system. Before this project began, births were only available electronically from 1970 forward. The benefits of this project are many. First, a certified copy of a birth record can be issued from the system instead of the vault copy. This saves two to three minutes staff time for each request processed. If a birth record is available electronically, certified copies of these birth records can be issued from the Anchorage and Fairbanks offices, instead of having to mail the requests to Juneau for processing. Finally, the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act will require that all Alaska birth records since 1935 be available electronically. The "back birth" project ensures the bureau will meet this requirement of the federal legislation.

Bureau staff also began the task of entering all deaths into the information system. The benefits of this project are similar to the birth project. Completion of these projects will ensure the bureau meets the provision of the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act that will require the electronic availability of birth and death records.

The bureau continued adding to the number of public health statistics reports that are published on the BVS website. Detailed information on injury deaths, leading causes of death, chronic disease deaths, infant mortality, birth rates, causes of death, and health profiles is readily available at: <http://www.hss.state.ak.us/dph/bvs/data/default.htm>.

Statutory and Regulatory Authority

AS 18.05.010 - 070 Administration of Public Health and Related Laws

AS 18.50.010 - 990 Vital Statistics Act
AS 25.05.071 - 391 Alaska Marriage Code
AS 25.20.050(b) Parent and Child
AS 25.20.055 Parent and Child
AS 25.23.160 - 170 Adoption
AS 44.29.020 Department of Health & Social Services
AS 09.55.060 Special Actions and Proceedings
AS 17.37.030 Medical Use of Marijuana
7 AAC 05.110 - 990 Vital Records
7 AAC 05.976 Heirloom Marriage Certificates

Contact Information
<p>Contact: Laura Baker, Budget Chief Phone: (907) 465-1629 Fax: (907) 465-1850 E-mail: Laura.Baker@alaska.gov</p>

**Bureau of Vital Statistics
Component Financial Summary**

All dollars shown in thousands

	FY2007 Actuals	FY2008 Management Plan	FY2009 Governor
Non-Formula Program:			
Component Expenditures:			
71000 Personal Services	1,461.2	1,608.6	1,684.8
72000 Travel	21.1	23.3	23.3
73000 Services	664.8	739.2	739.2
74000 Commodities	86.5	57.2	57.2
75000 Capital Outlay	0.0	0.0	0.0
77000 Grants, Benefits	0.0	0.0	0.0
78000 Miscellaneous	0.0	0.0	0.0
Expenditure Totals	2,233.6	2,428.3	2,504.5
Funding Sources:			
1002 Federal Receipts	171.3	310.4	310.4
1004 General Fund Receipts	294.8	84.0	84.0
1007 Inter-Agency Receipts	118.8	229.0	229.0
1156 Receipt Supported Services	1,648.7	1,804.9	1,881.1
Funding Totals	2,233.6	2,428.3	2,504.5

Estimated Revenue Collections

Description	Master Revenue Account	FY2007 Actuals	FY2008 Management Plan	FY2009 Governor
Unrestricted Revenues				
Unrestricted Fund	68515	18.8	0.0	0.0
Unrestricted Total		18.8	0.0	0.0
Restricted Revenues				
Federal Receipts	51010	171.3	310.4	310.4
Interagency Receipts	51015	118.8	229.0	229.0
Receipt Supported Services	51073	1,648.7	1,804.9	1,881.1
Restricted Total		1,938.8	2,344.3	2,420.5
Total Estimated Revenues		1,957.6	2,344.3	2,420.5

**Summary of Component Budget Changes
From FY2008 Management Plan to FY2009 Governor**

All dollars shown in thousands

	<u>General Funds</u>	<u>Federal Funds</u>	<u>Other Funds</u>	<u>Total Funds</u>
FY2008 Management Plan	84.0	310.4	2,033.9	2,428.3
Adjustments which will continue current level of service:				
-FY 09 Bargaining Unit Contract Terms: General Government Unit	0.0	0.0	76.2	76.2
FY2009 Governor	84.0	310.4	2,110.1	2,504.5

**Bureau of Vital Statistics
Personal Services Information**

Authorized Positions		Personal Services Costs		
	<u>FY2008</u>	<u>FY2009</u>		
	<u>Management</u>	<u>Governor</u>		
	<u>Plan</u>			
Full-time	28	28	Annual Salaries	998,602
Part-time	0	0	COLA	64,024
Nonpermanent	3	0	Premium Pay	0
			Annual Benefits	657,122
			<i>Less 2.03% Vacancy Factor</i>	<i>(34,948)</i>
			Lump Sum Premium Pay	0
Totals	31	28	Total Personal Services	1,684,800

Position Classification Summary

Job Class Title	Anchorage	Fairbanks	Juneau	Others	Total
Administrative Clerk II	0	0	5	0	5
Administrative Clerk III	3	2	8	0	13
Administrative Supervisor	1	0	3	0	4
Chf Health Res & Vital Stat	0	0	1	0	1
Project Asst	0	0	1	0	1
Research Analyst II	0	0	2	0	2
Research Analyst IV	0	0	1	0	1
Statistical Technician I	0	0	1	0	1
Totals	4	2	22	0	28