



Permanent Commission RACIAL, INDIGENOUS & TRIBAL POPULATIONS

LD 1948 “An Act to Amend the State’s Data Governance Program”

February 06, 2024

Senator Nangle , Representative Stover, and Honorable Members of the State and Local Government Committee.

My name is Ariel Ricci, and I am the Executive Director of the Permanent Commission on the Status of Racial, Indigenous, and Tribal Populations. Public Law 2022, Chapter 717, *An Act to Promote Equity in Policy Making by Enhancing the State’s Ability to Collect, Analyze, and Apply Data*, empowered the Permanent Commission to collaborate with the Secretary of State and the Chief Information Officer within the Department of Administrative and Financial Services (DAFS) on the creation of a data governance program for Maine.¹

The Permanent Commission fully supports LD 1948 as necessary to advance Maine’s statewide data governance program. In particular, we support:

1. Creation of a data inventory to gain a baseline understanding of the individual level data collected by state agencies;
2. Development of a statewide data governance plan or strategy that charts the path towards implementation of Chapter 717;
3. Development of statewide standards and guidance around collection of demographic data, in order to improve data consistency; and
4. Requiring state agencies to appoint a staff person to act as a data governance steward, in order to facilitate communication.

¹ PL 2022, Chapter 717: https://drive.google.com/file/d/15z3iJyLqfW_ofDke4rAtiRRauIMY9cE3/view

We consider that accurate, consistent, and complete data is critical to understand the needs and experiences of the diverse populations that the Maine State Government serves and to assess the efficacy of programs and policies.

In order to better understand the progress made by jurisdictions further along the data governance journey, we explored the status of data governance efforts in five other jurisdictions - Oregon, Rhode Island, Connecticut, Indiana, and British Columbia. Common themes include having a statewide data management plan or strategy that is reviewed and updated every two years to note progress and set fresh goals for the subsequent two year period, and agencies and departments having a designated Data Officer or Data Steward that serves as the main point of contact and coordinates the creation of an agency's data inventory.² Additionally, as statewide standards and guidance are developed, much can be learned from the Maine Health Data Organization's work to understand challenges and best practices in race and ethnicity data collection.³

The Permanent Commission looks forward to continuing to collaborate with our partners in DAFS and the Secretary of State's Office to develop an equitable data governance program that supports evidence-based policy making.

² Public Health Partners. (December 2023). "An Environmental Scan on Data Governance Projects." <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1ANCzpmJqVfqW2K8UmP54PNIfd28-ICkW/view>

³ Maine Health Data Organization. (February 2022). Memo to HCIFS Committee <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1i7w646BrLXDtSLVsm9JDTuGR7kV2RJ7U/view> .