

Know Your Rights! Domestic Partnership Benefits in Alaska



Our Survey of Public Employers

To evaluate the extent to which Alaska's public employers are providing domestic partnership benefits equal to those provided to spouses, the ACLU of Alaska conducted a survey of all public agencies in the State of Alaska. Below is an initial summary of our findings to date:

Alaska Supreme Court: Public Employers Must Provide Equal Benefits

On October 11, 2005, the Alaska Supreme Court ruled that public employers in the state of Alaska could not offer employment benefits to married couples without providing similar benefits to same-sex domestic partners, finding that to do so would violate the Equal Protection Clause of the Alaska Constitution. While the State of Alaska and the Municipality of Anchorage were the primary defendants in the case, the ruling sends a clear message to city, borough, and state agencies all over Alaska that to deny access to domestic partnership benefits is unconstitutional. **Public employers such as a municipal governments, state agencies, and school districts have an obligation to provide the same benefits to same-sex domestic partners that they provide to spouses.**

A. Public Employers Currently Providing Domestic Partnership Benefits

AK Cities & Boroughs

Municipality of Anchorage
City of Akutan
City of Aniak
Bristol Bay Borough
City of Chuathbaluk
City of Cordova
City of Delta Junction
City of Dillingham
Fairbanks North Star Borough
City of False Pass
City of Galena
Haines Borough
City of Homer
City of Hoonah
City & Borough of Juneau
City of Kaktovik
City of Kenai
Kenai Peninsula Borough
Ketchikan Gateway Borough
City of King Cove
City of Kodiak
City of McGrath
City of Nenana
City of Nome
North Slope Borough
City of Palmer (as of 1/10)
City of Petersburg
City of Saint Paul
City of Sand Point
City of Seldovia

School Districts, Colleges, & Universities

Alaska Gateway School District
Aleutians East Borough School District
Anchorage School District
Annette Island School District
Bristol Bay Borough School District
Chugach School District
Cordova School District
Delta-Greely School District
Dillingham City School district
Hydaburg City School District
Ilisagvik College
Juneau School District
Ketchikan Gateway Borough
Klawock City School District
Lake and Peninsula Borough
Lower Kuskokwim School District
Matanuska-Susitna Borough
Nenana City School District
Northwest Arctic Borough
Pelican City School District
Petersburg School District
Pribilof School District
Sitka Borough School District
Skagway City School District
Southeast Island School District
University of Alaska
Valdez City School District
Wrangell Public Schools
Yupit School District

State of Alaska and other Publicly-Funded Agencies and Organizations

Alaska Housing Finance Corporation
Alaska Railroad Corporation
Bartlett Regional Hospital
Cook Inlet Housing Authority
Nome Joint Utility System
North Pacific Fishery Management Council
Northwest Inupiat Housing Authority
Petersburg Medical Center
Sitka Community Hospital
Special Education Service Agency
State of Alaska

If your employer provides domestic partnership benefits, your human resource office should be able to assist you in filing an application. You may be asked to complete an affidavit confirming financial interdependence with your partner. Ideally, there should be clearly written information on your employer's benefits policy, application instructions, and details regarding the tax implications of electing domestic partnership benefits.

Know Your Rights! Domestic Partnership Benefits in Alaska

This publication is supported by the Tides Foundation's State Equality Fund, a philanthropic partnership that includes the Evelyn and Walter Haas, Jr. Fund, the Gill Foundation, and other anonymous donors.

B. Public Employers Currently Not Providing Domestic Partnership Benefits

AK Cities & Boroughs

City of Craig
City of Ketchikan (not for union employees)
Matanuska-Susitna Borough
City of North Pole
City of Unalaska
City of Whittier
City of Yakutat

Alaska Public School Districts, Colleges, & Universities

Hoonah City School District
Kenai Peninsula Borough School District
Southwest Region School District

State of Alaska and other Publicly-Funded Agencies and Organizations

Aleutian Housing Authority
Baranof Island Housing Authority
Bristol Bay Housing Authority
Copper River Basin Regional Housing Authority
Interior Regional Housing Authority
Tlingit-Haida Regional Housing Authority

If your employer does not provide domestic partnership benefits, they may be in violation of the Equal Protection clause of Alaska's constitution. Contact the ACLU of Alaska for guidance on how to obtain domestic partnership benefits from an employer that refuses to do so.

C. Public Employers Who Failed to Complete Our Survey

AK Cities & Boroughs

City of Akiak
Aleutians East Borough
City of Bethel
City of Bettles
City of Clark's Point
City of Deering
City of Fairbanks
City of Fort Yukon
City of Grayling
City of Gustavus
City of Klawock
Kodiak Island Borough
Lake & Peninsula Borough
City of Larsen Bay
City of Saint George
City of Saint Michael
City of Savoonga
City of Saxman
City of Shageluk

Alaska Public School Districts, Colleges, & Universities

Bering Strait School District
Chatham School District
Denali Borough School District
Kake City School District
Kodiak Island Borough School District
District
Kuspuk School District
Nome City School District
North Slope Borough School District
Tanana City School District

State of Alaska and other Publicly-Funded Agencies and Organizations

Bering Straits Coastal Resource Service Area
North Pacific Rim Housing Authority

Your employer has an obligation to provide you with information regarding the benefits available to you and your same-sex partner. If you work for a public employer that did not respond to our survey, you can help enforce your rights by:

1) Requesting that your employer make explicit its status on domestic partnership benefits.

2) Providing the ACLU of Alaska with accurate information regarding your employer's domestic partnership benefits policy or lack thereof.

If you have any questions, suggestions, or corrections, please contact the ACLU of Alaska at 907-258-0044.