

November 20, 2025

D-2025-Case Management-011

TO: REGIONAL CENTER EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS

SUBJECT: MIDDLE EASTERN AND NORTH AFRICAN (MENA) INCLUSION ACT

On October 6, 2025, Assembly Bill 91, the Middle Eastern and North African (MENA) Inclusion Act, was signed into law as Chapter 357, Statutes of 2025. The Department of Developmental Services (Department) is working with SANDIS to update available ethnicity categories to comply with the MENA Inclusion Act.

The statute requires that no later than January 1, 2028, various organizations, including regional centers, begin collecting specific demographic data pertaining to the ancestry or ethnic origin for major Middle Eastern and North African descent. This data collection must occur in any form or system that requests respondents to identify one or more ethnic or racial designations or languages.

New Subcategories

Under the existing Middle Eastern and North African category, the following subcategories will be included:

- Amazigh or Berber, Assyrian, Bahraini, Circassian, Djiboutian, Jordanian, Kurdish, Kuwaiti, Libyan, Mauritanian, Moroccan, Omani, Sudanese, and Turkish.

Reclassified Subcategories

The following groups will be reclassified to the Middle Eastern and North African category:

- Afghan (previously classified under 'Asian') and Somali (previously classified under 'Black or African American').

In accordance with state and federal privacy laws, regional centers shall continue to maintain the confidentiality of personally identifying information about individuals whose demographic data is collected pursuant to this law.

Implementation of this directive will require changes to SANDIS. The Department will collaborate with SANDIS and regional centers during this process, and specific

instructions will be provided before January 1, 2028 once the functionality is available. Questions about this directive should be directed to the Department's Data Task Force, at dtf@dds.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

Original Signed by:

ANN NAKAMURA
Branch Chief
Research and Analytics Branch

cc: Regional Center Administrators
Regional Center Directors of Consumer Services
Regional Center Community Services Directors
Association of Regional Center Agencies