

What are the demographics of your mission field?

Adapted from Curtis Brown, PNW

Demographic reports can help us better understand the people who are living in our mission field. For most churches, their mission field is the community, communities, neighborhoods, or region they serve. Typically, larger churches have larger populations or geographies in their mission field and smaller churches have smaller populations or geographies. Some churches will have a mission field determined by a language or ethnic group within a larger geography. Regardless, your mission field is determined by your congregation's decision to target its ministry toward a specific community. If this mission field hasn't already been defined by your church's leadership, assist in helping it get done.

The Alaska United Methodist Conference has already made available a powerful demographic research tool through MissionInsite. Access this tool by following these steps:

1. Go to www.alaskaumc.org/?page_id=3156
2. Click on the "How to Register" document and follow its instructions to set up an account using the AUMC's access code.
3. After registering, select the "Create a Demographic Report Using the Report Wizard" title from the "Welcome to the MI System!" window.
4. Follow the instructions for selecting a geography. For most churches, a radius around the church facility will be the easiest, but feel free to customize this geography if you'd prefer.
5. When prompted, select the "QuickInsite" report. The report will generate in a new window, and you'll want to save it as a PDF document for printing and sharing electronically.
6. On page 8 of the "QuickInsite" report review the listing of the "Mosaic Lifestyle Segmentation Types" for your geography. These are secular categories used to develop advertising and target marketing. They have colorful and evocative names.
7. From this list identify the top 2-3 segments in your geography. If your church has already identified a target demographic within your mission field that isn't represented in these top 2-3 segments, select an additional Mosaic Segment that best represents that target demographic.
8. With this list of Mosaic segments, return to the MissionInsite.com web page and, if necessary, log back in.
9. From the tabs in upper left, select "Help" and then "Documents" from the drop-down list.
10. In the list of documents, select "Mission Impact Mosaic Application Guide by Bandy." This is a large document in PDF format that includes a detailed analysis of each Mosaic segment's religious habits and preferences.

11. By clicking on its title in the Table of Contents you will find 7 pages on each of the segments you selected. Print out and save just the relevant pages for the segments identified in your report.

Distribute the "QuickInsite" demographic report and relevant "Mission Impact Mosaic Guide" sections to your leadership team and other interested church leaders. Give them time to review the reports, and then gather your team and other interested leaders for a discussion of your reports and information.

Discussion Questions:

1. *In what 3-5 ways are the people who currently participate in our congregation like the people in our mission field?*
2. *In what 3-5 ways are the people who currently participate in our congregation unlike the people in our mission field?*
3. *What surprised you about the demographic materials? What information, if any, provoked a strong discussion or emotional response in you and your team?*
4. *Based on the Mosaic segment reports, what 2-3 changes could your congregation make to become more attractive to each of the segments you reviewed? How would those changes change the culture of your congregation?*
5. *What are the 2-3 key learnings, reflections, or pieces of information that you will share with the rest of your congregation based on your review your mission field demographics?*