Child Protection Information System - Phase 2	FY2001 Request:	$5,400,000
	Reference No:	6816

AP/AL: Appropriation   **Project Type:** Information Systems
Category: Health/Human Services
Location: Statewide   **Contact:** Larry Streuber
House District: Statewide (HD 1-40)   **Contact Phone:** (907)465-1870
Estimated Project Dates: 07/01/2000 - 06/30/2006

Brief Summary and Statement of Need:
PHASED PROJECT: This project continues efforts for the development of an information system to protect the children of Alaska and the safety of front-line Family and Youth Services workers and to increase worker productivity. Failure to meet all the goals of the planning documents, including submission of required adoptions and foster care data to the Administration for Children and Families (ACF), could result in the Department having to return over $3,700.0 to the Federal government. Also, failing to submit the required adoption and foster care data will result in a penalty. For the State of Alaska, this penalty is approximately $16.0 every six months for failing to report the required Foster Care data.

Funding:	FY2001	FY2002	FY2003	FY2004	FY2005	FY2006	Total
Fed Rcpts	$2,700,000	$1,194,900	$368,200	$220,800	$279,000	$220,800	$4,983,700
G/F Match	$2,700,000	$1,194,900	$368,200	$220,800	$279,000	$220,800	$4,983,700
Total:	$5,400,000	$2,389,800	$736,400	$441,600	$558,000	$441,600	$9,967,400

☑ State Match Required	☐ One-Time Project	☑ Phased Project	☐ On-Going
50% = Minimum State Match % Required	☐ Amendment	☐ Mental Health Bill	

Operating & Maintenance Costs:

	Amount	Staff
Project Development:	0	0
Ongoing Operating:	0	0
One-Time Startup:	0	
Totals:	0	0

Additional Information / Prior Funding History:
In SLA 95, $1,240,000 of GF and $250,000 of Federal funds were appropriated for Adoption and Foster Care Analysis Reporting System. In SLA 96, $1,520,000 of Federal funds were appropriated for AFCARS. In addition, $13,500 in Federal funds from an SLA 96 appropriation were set aside by the Department for this project.

Project Description/Justification:
On Line Resources for the Children of Alaska
Child Protection Information Technology for the 21st Century

DETAIL PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND JUSTIFICATION

The Federal Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families (ACF) has been mandated through federal legislation to oversee and assist in the development of Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System and Adoptions and Foster Care Analysis Reporting System (SACWIS)/(AFCARS) systems on a nationwide basis. ACF has provided the Department with federal matching funds initially at a 75% level and now at a 50% level for design and implementation of the State's SACWIS/AFCARS reporting system referred to as ORCA (Online Resources for the Children of Alaska).

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Completion of the ORCA project is crucial and cannot be further delayed. Federal funding for the ORCA project was granted based on an approved planning document submitted to the ACF. Failure to meet all of the specific goals of the planning documents, including submission of the required adoptions and foster care data to ACF, could result in the Department having to return over $3,700,000 to the Federal government. ACF representatives have stated in the past that as long as the State continues to make reasonable progress toward implementation, ACF will not require repayment of funds. After a delay of over 2.5 years with what could be called minimal progress at best, failure to make substantial progress as defined by issuing a new RFP and signing a long term development contract, could result in that demand being issued. In addition to providing the incentive of match funding, failing to submit the required adoption and foster care data results in a penalty. Since April 1,1998, the State of Alaska has incurred a penalty of approximately $16,000 every six months for failing to report the required Foster Care data. (The required Adoptions data that are less complicated are being submitted saving the State that penalty.)

An automated case management information system is essential to improve child safety, refine decision-making, and streamline work processes. The automated case management system for Alaska's child protection agency, On Line Resources for the Children of Alaska or ORCA, will have the capacity to provide timely information about the case management, status of cases, activities completed, services needed, and outcomes achieved. ORCA would also connect foster care licensing and provider payment systems to put state-of -the-art child protection information in place.

ORCA will replace a 1976 provider payment system, and a child protection case management system developed in 1989. This project will also replace old computers for child protection workers throughout the state, some of whom are currently operating old model 286 personal computers.

Additionally, the last two Legislative Audits recommended that DFYS replace the current case management system, which is called PROBER. The auditors found numerous problems with collecting child protection case information in PROBER.

ORCA will improve child safety, refine decision-making, and streamline work processes for front line, child protection workers throughout the state.

Improve Child Safety.
· Information links to Alaska Public Safety Information System will allow law enforcement agencies to know when they are responding to currently licensed foster homes.

· Front line workers who are deciding on where to place children will be able to access current complaint investigations of licensed foster homes and residential facilities.

· Information will be real time, eliminating delays in data entry and allowing for immediate access by other front line workers.

Refine Decision-Making.
· Policies, procedures, and eligibility requirements will be retrieved electronically by front line workers resulting in consistent decision-making. Changes will be distributed to all front line workers instantaneously.

· Resource directory will be regularly updated to show availability of services, residential care beds, and foster homes. Front line workers will know what foster homes are currently available to accept a child in their home, which will eliminate series of telephone calls made by the worker.

Streamline Work Processes.
· Built around the functions social workers and supervisors perform, ORCA will replace archaic and time consuming work processes.

· ORCA will take the way things are done now - the files, forms, and their handling - and merge them with the world of information technology where information flows over barriers that can stop or delay paper.

· All paper and related processing delays will be eliminated. No more handwriting client information on every form.

· Paperwork will be reduced when forms are placed on ORCA, filled out online, and electronically submitted.

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· Worker information on billing and payments will feed directly to the accounting system, reducing delays in payments to foster parents and service providers.

· Scheduling for appointments, family conferences, court hearings, and team meetings will be all electronically based, with built in reminder notices for front line workers.

Computers. It is important for front line workers to have adequate equipment to access the information. In addition, it is critical for the Division to be able to upgrade and replace existing computers, networks, software and associated peripherals for front line workers. Over one-third of the DFYS inventory of PCs will be five years old in April of 2000. There are field offices with old 286 computers. As the industry has moved forward, it is becoming increasing difficult to find the necessary components to upgrade or repair these computers. The degree and severity of the incompatibilities between the old equipment and new software and components is fast approaching the point of total failure.

The funding for purchase of servers and personal computers for front line workers will be requested in subsequent fiscal years, after work on acquisition of a SACWIS has begun.

PROJECT BUDGET QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

What is the purpose of the project?
The purpose of this project is as follows:
· to complete development and implementation of an information system to meet the needs of the front line workers and management;
· to address the federal and state requirements for a federally mandated SACWIS and AFCARS; and
· to ensure that workers have functional equipment that will allow them to perform their responsibility, which is to protect the children of Alaska.

 The goals of the system include the following:
· provide each worker with the ability to electronically capture critically required data in a timely manner;
· allow methods for retrieving that information in an useful format, including the automated generation of the multitude of forms workers are currently completing manually;
· fulfill Federal requirements for SACWIS; and
· have the flexibility to grow and change as the requirements change.

Has this project been previously approved by TIC/TAC?
The development of a new information system was previously approved by TIC/TAC, although the vision of that system has changed. Due largely to pending federal legislation and the enactment of HB 6, effective September 2, 1997, which redefined the mission of Youth Corrections, a separate division for Youth Corrections, the Division of Juvenile Justice (DJJ), has been created. The Youth Correction portion of the original system will now be largely deleted, and the new system to be developed by DJJ will be one of the interface systems. Additionally, since several states have recently implemented SACWIS systems, the possibility exists to transfer a system as opposed to a new development project.

What is the project cost past, present, and future?
Past/Present
The DFYS Information System Project has an existing budget of approximately $4,000,000, which was approved in FY94. This budget has been used to purchase and install the necessary hardware and communications infrastructure. This has allowed for the installation of computer networks in all DFYS offices with the standard offices automation applications (word processing, spreadsheets, e-mail, etc). It also funded the development of a requirements definition document, and the beginning of the development effort.

Future
Changes in technology in the last several years have dramatically altered the options available to DFYS for implementing a new information system. Additionally, since DFYS started this project several states have completed their systems and this, combined with the advances in technology, now make transferring a system from another state a viable, and logical, option. The total cost of selecting a new system and making the required changes is expected to be approximately $5,400,000 (50% Federal/50% State), excluding infrastructure (equipment). This figure is based on estimates provided from an assessment contract that was completed in June of 1998. The assessment contract analyzed a variety of options

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available to the State to complete this project. The recommended option was to transfer a system from another state with similar requirements. This was seen as the most practical option in terms of achieving the most functionality for the lowest price. The following quotes are excerpts from the Assessment contract document.

"The development costs for the 6 transfer systems ranged from $6.7 million to $18 million. The highest amount is for a system that has been heavily customized and that includes hardware costs as well. The lowest amount is for a system that follows the processes of the original system closely and where the business processes were adjusted as necessary. These two costs will be used throughout for preparing estimates for Alaska."1

"The prices include contractor development cost as well as State staff cost, but no hardware cost except where noted differently." 2

"DFYS will benefit most from transferring a SACWIS that most closely matches the business processes of the Division and requires the least amount of customization. DFYS can keep costs down by changing its business processes to match the transfer system where not prohibited by Statute or Regulation" 3

Is this a new systems development project, upgrade, or enhancement?
This is a new systems development, equipment upgrade and replacement project.

What specific hardware, software, consulting, etc. will be purchased?
This project will fund contracts to provide for the transferring and modification of a case management information system for DFYS. Additionally it will fund the purchase of computer replacements and network equipment.

The estimated cost of the application is based on estimates provided from an assessment contract that was completed in June of 1998. The assessment contract analyzed a variety of options available to the State to complete this project. The recommended option was to transfer a system from another state whose business processes most closely match the Division's and would therefore have similar requirements. This was seen as the most practical option in terms of achieving the most functionality for the lowest price. The following quotes are excerpts from the Assessment contract document.

"The development costs for the 6 transfer systems ranged from $6.7 million to $18 million. The highest amount is for a system that has been heavily customized and that includes hardware costs as well. The lowest amount is for a system that follows the processes of the original system closely and where the business processes were adjusted as necessary. These two costs will be used throughout for preparing estimates for Alaska." 1

The development cost for SACWIS projects of twelve states that were considered are included in the table below. The prices include contractor development cost as well as state staff cost, but with the exception of West Virginia and California do not include hardware cost.

State	Custom/ Transfer	Work stations	Sites	Cost to date in Millions
Maine	Transfer	700	14-18	6.7
New Mexico	Transfer	1954	50	8
New Hampshire	Transfer	400	?	8.5
Rhode Island	Transfer	700	15	11.3
Indiana	Custom	1400	92	13
Utah	Custom	700-800	?	13
Connecticut	Custom	2500	?	14.5
Massachusetts	Custom	3600	28	18
West Virginia	Transfer	800-1100	40	18
Oklahoma	Custom	1400	80	19.5
Texas	Custom	6500	250	52
California	Custom	12482	200	230

"The prices include contractor development cost as well as State staff cost, but no hardware cost except where noted differently." 2

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The following chart provides an estimated breakdown of how the funds will be allocated

Total Project	Total Hours	Total Cost
Systems Analysis	3,100	$488,750
Final Work Plan and Schedule	650	$127,500
Requirements Validation	975	$176,250
Detailed Systems Design	1,050	$190,000
Systems Programming	18,825	$2,853,750
Systems Testing	2,350	$446,250
Data Conversion	1,675	$259,375
Acceptance Testing	850	$137,500
User Training	800	$127,500
	30,275	$4,806,875
Software Licenses	400	$200,000
Planning/Management		$393,125
Total Cost		$5,400,000

How will service to the public improve if this project is funded?
An automated case management information system is essential to improve child safety, refine decision-making, and streamline work processes.

How does project fit into the department's long-range technology plans?
The implementation of a new child protection information system is consistent with the Department's long-range technology plans, and in fact, failing to pursue this project would be contrary to the Department's plan. Improving the safety of children and providing front line workers with the necessary technology tools for them to perform their duties in an efficient and timely manner is an exact fit in the Department's technology plan.

How does the project fit into the technology goals of the Knowles/Ulmer administration?
(They are: Improve public access to information; Maximize service to the public through voice, video and data systems; Optimize government efficiencies; Explore innovating and cost-effective services that meet Alaska's challenges; Stimulate the development of private and public services.)

One of the primary of goals of ORCA is to improve the ability of workers to do their jobs through the use of technology, i.e., maximize service to the public through data systems, and optimize government efficiencies.

Does the project affect the way in which other public agencies will conduct their business?
Although law enforcement, prosecutors and the courts might continue to operate as they do now, this new system could lead to greater efficiencies and more appropriate responses by these agencies because of greater access to information related to child safety and protection.

What happens if the project is not approved?
Over time, the current system will be less and less able to provide current or meaningful information. Given the inherent limitations of the current MIS and as the hardware continues to age, malfunctions will become increasingly more common and the flow of information will diminish and eventually grind to a halt. In an age of automation, without a system that can provide ready access to vital information, children will be placed at greater risk of harm and the public safety will be compromised.

Additionally, the State will face making restitution to the federal government for matching funds, which the federal government provided for the development and implementation of a SACWIS information system, including networks and

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support staff. This restitution could amount to more than $3,700,000. The state will also face financial penalties for failing to report federally required information. These penalties will amount to approximately $32,000 per year. The federal government continues to pay for the maintenance, which would also be jeopardized if the project is not approved.

What, if any, impacts are anticipated to ITG services?
The biggest impact to ITG services will be related to an increase in WAN traffic. This increase will come from two areas. One will be an increase in the number of DFYS offices accessing the State's WAN. This will result in an increase in e-mail, mainframe and Internet traffic. The other will be the result of implementing the new child protection system and the increase in the amount of child protection related data transmitted between offices.

The Division of Family and Youth Services is well aware of the issues with telecommunications in the State. It has been running a DOS-based distributed database since 1988 that replicates information to remote offices on a nightly basis. In the past dial-up phones have been used to facilitate this data transfer. A series of upgrades, first to X.25 and then to WAN connectivity have lead to much greater reliability, but there are still a couple of sites utilizing the original communications links. This experience has provided the agency with very detailed understanding of the issues surrounding communications issues such as bandwidth and processing "windows". DFYS will implement a solution that will function reliably under the constraints of the telecommunications environment of Alaska. This issue was also addressed in a Project Assessment contract the Division had performed in June of 1998. The assessment contractor noted that "Alaska will require special system architecture to allow the replication to and from remote sties. This cost is unavoidable since no other State system currently performs replication other than for backup purposes." Solutions that will be evaluated and analyzed will include not only "thin-client" and mainframe-based systems, but also web enabled technologies.

PHASED PROJECT - CURRENT STATUS

1. Is the project on schedule?

In 1995 DFYS began working on the development of a new information system referred to as ORCA. In January 1998, the development contractor notified the Division that it was going to be unable to fulfill its obligation. After a settlement agreement was negotiated, the Division began evaluating alternatives for completing the project. To assist in this evaluation effort, the Division entered into a contract to provide an assessment of work already done, and to provide recommendations for completing the project. That contract was completed in June of 1998.

In addition to the assessment contract, network infrastructure upgrades have continued. These infrastructure upgrades are deemed a critical component of implementing a new information system. By the end of Calendar Year 1999, 26 of 31 DFYS offices will be connected to the Department of Administration's (DOA's) wide area network (WAN). Out of 371 computer users, all but ten (10), or 97.3%, will have access to the WAN and all of the benefits that come with it.

By mid-October 1999, it is planned that a new project manager will be hired. Among numerous other tasks with which that person will be charged is the development of a new plan for implementing the project. Part of that planning process will include the development of a new schedule.

2. What are the minimum funding requirements to keep the project on track?

The minimum funding requirement to keep the project on track is $5,400,000 for FY01.

In order to enter into the required multi-year contract, the Division must have the full amount of the estimated $5,400,000. We anticipate three different contracts: one for system development, one for quality assurance, and one to develop the federal requirements document. The division cannot start without full funding these contracts. This also will fund the project management and required planning that must take place.

Additionally, the Division's existing computer equipment and networks must be upgraded in the future at a cost of $1,689,000. As of September 1999, most of the equipment is over five years old and the failure rate is beginning to increase. What hasn't failed is rapidly becoming obsolete. The Division has been forced to upgrade software and as a result is only one generation behind the most current versions. The problem that this has caused however it that the requirements of the software are beginning to outstrip the capabilities of the hardware. In the future it is anticipated that due to failure or obsolescence, it will be necessary to repair or replace almost 100% of the current DFYS desktop

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personal computers and network inventory.

3. What is the minimum effort needed to meet any federal requirements and avoid potential penalties, etc.?

Federal funding was granted based on an approved planning document that was submitted to the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) by the Division. Failing to meet all of the specific goals of the planning document, which include submitting the required adoptions and foster care data to ACF, could result in being required to return over $3,700,000 to the Federal government.

ACF representatives have stated in the past that as long as the State continues to make reasonable progress toward implementation, ACF will not require repayment of funds. After a delay of over 2.5 years with what could be called minimal progress at best, failure to make substantial progress as defined by issuing a new RFP and signing a long term development contract, could result in that demand being issued.

As part of the AFCARS (Adoption and Foster Care Reporting System) legislation, all states are required to submit to ACF specific adoption and foster care data. While the Division has been able to implement a relatively small system for gathering the required adoptions data, the requirements for the foster care data are much more extensive and the number of cases are far larger. Until the system is developed and implemented, the State will continue to be unable to submit all of the required foster care data. The State has incurred the penalty for this failure, which is $32,000 per year, since April 1, 1998.

Footnotes
1 Wostmann & Associates, Inc., Requirements Analysis for the Completion of the Alaska SACWIS, pg. 73, June 1998
2 Wostmann & Associates, Inc., Requirements Analysis for the Completion of the Alaska SACWIS, pg. 72, June 1998
3 Wostmann & Associates, Inc., Requirements Analysis for the Completion of the Alaska SACWIS, pg. 72, June 1998

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