

**State of Alaska
FY2003 Governor's Operating Budget**

**Department of Health and Social Services
Front Line Social Workers
Component Budget Summary**

Component: Front Line Social Workers

Contact: Janet Clarke, Director, Administrative Services

Tel: (907) 465-1630 **Fax:** (907) 465-2499 **E-mail:** Janet_Clarke@health.state.ak.us

Component Mission

The mission of the Division of Family and Youth Services (DFYS) is to protect children who are abused and neglected or at risk of abuse and neglect.

Component Services Provided

The Front Line Social Workers component provides services to carry out the legal mandates of the Department to prevent and remedy abuse, neglect, and the exploitation of children. For child protective services, primary activities include investigation of reports of harm; crisis intervention; assessment of the risk of future harm in the absence of intervention; family strength and needs assessment, and case planning. Additional functions are assessing progress toward achieving case plan goals; initiating legal action to protect clients, monitoring implementation of treatment plans, and coordinating services. Services of the Front Line Social Workers component also include arranging out-of-home care, when appropriate and necessary, in the least restrictive setting and arranging alternative permanent placement for children when a return home is not possible.

Primary service activities include elements for child protection such as family-centered services that focus on the family rather than the individual. These services assist client families in regaining or maintaining autonomy; arranging for family preservation and family reunification services by grant and contract agencies; and licensure of foster homes, residential care facilities and child care facilities.

Component Goals and Strategies

1) PROVIDE SERVICES TO ALASKA CHILDREN AND THEIR FAMILIES TO PREVENT AND ELIMINATE REPEATED ABUSE, NEGLECT, AND EXPLOITATION OF CHILDREN:

- The Division, through the Front Line Social Workers component, maintains approximately 387 permanent positions, including 254 social workers and social services associates, located in four regional offices and twenty-nine field offices spanning from Ketchikan to Barrow. These positions deliver direct services to abused and neglected children and their families.
- DFYS provides a range of resources to prevent and remedy child abuse and neglect including child protective services, foster care, residential care, family support/family preservation services, permanency planning, and community care licensing.
- As of October 1, 2001, the Department was providing services to 1,864 children in custody and in out-of-home care.
- There were approximately 1,950 licensed foster care providers and 938 children in non-relative foster care and 621 placed in relatives' homes.
- The Subsidized Adoption & Guardianship program provides permanent homes for children that have been placed in permanent custody of the State. This program has been very successful due to increased emphasis on permanency planning and the State initiatives Project SUCCEED and the Balloon Project. From FY1992 to FY2001 the number of children removed from the foster care system and placed in a permanent home increased 348%, from 338 to 1,515 (a net increase of 183 children from FY2000). Meeting the continuing caseload growth continues to be a significant accomplishment of this program. At the close of FY2001, there were 1,515 children in the Subsidized Adoption & Guardianship program. The Department anticipates the number of children in the Subsidized Adoption & Guardianship program to increase by 14% to 1,727 in FY2002, with an additional 14% growth to 1,969 in FY2003.
- For FY2002, the Department has purchased approximately 312 treatment beds providing a continuum of five levels of residential treatment ranging from day treatment to psychiatric diagnostic treatment center services. The current

foster care system is overcrowded, with many foster care children that experience severe emotional and behavioral problems. These children often fail in foster home settings, resulting in multiple placements for children and often the loss of foster care providers. For many of these children, group care, a treatment environment with 24-hour professional staff, is a more appropriate placement. Residential care providers are located throughout the state, and the front line social workers make every effort possible to provide residential services as close to a child's home community as possible. This enables the child's parents and significant others to be involved in the treatment process.

The Department provides thirty-one Family Support, Family Preservation, and Time Limited Family Reunification grants to twenty-six non-profit grantees located across the state. DFYS social workers utilize these grantees and refer clients for crisis intervention; parenting skills; prevention of out-of-home placement; and other services to support children in DFYS custody and their families (including foster and adoptive families).

2) PROVIDE TRAINING TO INCREASE PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE AND REDUCE EMPLOYEE TURNOVER:

- The Division, through the Family & Youth Services Staff Training Academy, will continue to provide new social workers with two weeks of training prior to assigning them a caseload and a third week of training within their first six months of work with DFYS. Training increases the workers' ability to recognize symptoms of abuse and neglect. It also increases their skill in working with abused and neglected children and their families to prevent further abuse and neglect; and strengthens their ability to assess when it is necessary to remove children from potentially harmful situations before physical or mental injury occurs or is repeated.

- Training is not limited to new social workers. On-going training is also provided to current DFYS social workers, social service aides, licensing workers, and managers. These workers are provided with specialized and advanced training such as Advanced Indian Child Welfare Act training and Advanced Assessment of Risk.

- Training is provided to supervisors and managers in areas such as basic supervision, management, and program administration so that they can better manage and direct the field workers.

3) INCREASE THE DIVISION'S ABILITY TO RECRUIT AND RETAIN PROFESSIONAL-LEVEL SOCIAL WORKERS:

- The Division will continue efforts to reduce employee turnover and to recruit new employees. Such efforts include training provided by the Family & Youth Services Staff Training Academy, the Bachelors of Social Work stipend program, and the "back-to-school" Masters of Social Work program.

- The Department provides a stipend program, through the Family & Youth Services Staff Training component, for recruitment of Bachelor of Social Work students at the University of Alaska, Anchorage, and the University of Alaska, Fairbanks. The students spend their senior year practicum assigned to special DFYS field units in the Anchorage and Fairbanks Family Services offices. DFYS pays the student a monthly stipend while they are in school and doing the practicum. After graduation, they are legally obligated to accept employment as DFYS Social Workers. This provides new workers who are already trained and mentored to fill vacancies in the DFYS workforce.

- The Department, through the Training component, provides a "return to school" program for existing staff. Staff members may apply for a Masters of Social Work at UAA or a Bachelors of Social Work at UAA or UAF. Once accepted by the University and attending the program, the Division will pay the employee an educational stipend. Upon completion of the degree, the employee is legally obligated to return to work within DFYS. This arrangement gives the staff professional enhancement and increased expertise to conduct the best child welfare/child protection practices.

4) INCREASE THE DIVISION'S ABILITY TO RESPOND TO REPORTS OF HARM:

- The Report of Harm response is up all over the state. The Division will continue the Early Intervention for Family Support or Dual Track grant program for the Mat-Su Valley area. DFYS implemented the Early Intervention for Family Support pilot program in the Mat-Su Valley area in FY1999 in response to an unacceptably high rate of "low priority" (Priority Three) reports of harm that went uninvestigated. The program provides Family Preservation grant funding to a non-profit community partner agency to perform intervention and follow-up work for cases that DFYS has assessed as low risk. This collaboration allows for earlier intervention that minimizes the risk to the children and often negates the need for out-of-home placement or further agency intervention. This program enables the Division to focus more social worker staff resources on investigating higher priority reports of harm. Without the Early Intervention for Family

Support program many of these cases would go uninvestigated, potentially resulting in further harm to children.

- Due to the success of the pilot program in the Mat-Su Valley, the Department plans to expand the Early Intervention for Family Support program to Fairbanks, Bethel, and Kenai.
- More efficient work processes are needed: The Division is working on a new MIS system that its Data Processing Unit is assisting in the development and implementation of. The Division's new client management information system ORCA (Online Resources for the Children of Alaska) will integrate the case management workload accounting system and the provider payment system on a common platform.

5) CONTINUE THE PSYCHIATRIC NURSE PROGRAM:

- The Division of Family and Youth Services has five Psychiatric Nurses, one each assigned to the Northern, Southcentral and Southeast region and two assigned to the Anchorage region. The establishment of the Psychiatric Nurse program has made a significant improvement on determining placement options for children in the Department's custody. In addition, it has strengthened the existing Regional Placement Committee structure, the current process for determining the placement and treatment of children and youth that present complex psychiatric needs. The psychiatric nurses serve as chairs for the Department's Regional Placement Committees and play an essential role in determining whether medical necessity for psychiatric residential services is met. They further ensure that all children recommended for residential placement are referred to the facility most appropriate to meet their treatment needs, and that out-of-state referrals are made only when a child's treatment needs cannot be met in the state.

6) REDUCE THE LENGTH OF TIME BETWEEN INITIAL OUT-OF-HOME PLACEMENT AND ALTERNATE PERMANENT PLACEMENT:

- Permanent Placement: Permanent placement must be accomplished within the shortened time frames mandated by State and Federal law, including Alaska's HB 375 (Chapter 99, SLA 98) and the Federal Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997. The Department will continue to dedicate resources and concentrate on initiatives such as Project SUCCEED and the Balloon Project to comply with these laws and move children waiting in the child welfare system to a permanent home. Project SUCCEED is a multi-agency project that target funds to the Department of Law, Office of Public Advocacy and the Public Defender Agency. The Balloon Project targets funds to these agencies as well as the Alaska Court System. These agencies focus on the legal proceedings needed for children who have been in custody the longest period of time. Project SUCCEED also provides funds to two community grants to help prepare the child and family for final adoption and guardianship and to follow the child and family for up to one year after the final adoption or guardianship court hearing.
- Continue the Balloon Project or Statewide Adoption Planning Function: The Balloon Project has enabled DFYS to hire social workers specifically to focus on the "transition" list of children that have been in custody the longest. The continuation of this effort is critical to assure every child in state custody receives timely case plans and services, and exits custody within the statutory time limits. This program serves to further reduce backlogged cases and prevent future backlogs from occurring. The Balloon Project has been extremely successful in reducing the foster care caseload backlog. One measure of the Balloon Project's success can be seen in the reduction of the growth of the foster care caseload. In FY1999 the foster care caseload increased by 16.4%. In FY2000, the growth rate decreased to 5.8%. In FY2001 the foster care caseload decreased 6.2%. Long-term benefits of this program include savings from reduced foster care caseloads, increased compliance with Federal and State permanency planning laws and prevention of a backlog of cases from happening again. Continued collaboration between DFYS and the State legal entities to process child protective services cases on a timely basis as well as more efficient operations, timely client case handling helps to prevent "problem" cases, and a child protection system that works better overall are additional benefits.

Key Component Issues for FY2002 – 2003

- Continue the Adoption Placement Program (Balloon Project): The Division's FY2003 budget includes provisions to continue the State's statewide adoption placement initiative, formerly known as the Balloon Project. The Adoption Planning Program is a collaborative effort of the Department of Health and Social Services, the Department of Law, the Office of Public Advocacy and the Public Defenders Agency. The project focus is to move children who have

lingered in the child protection system for more than three years into permanent placements. The project provides dedicated funding so that these agencies will work as a team to move these children into permanent homes.

- Continue Technology and Efficiency Efforts: In January 2000 DFYS initiated Transcription Services, a pilot project that eight social workers in three DFYS offices participated in. Transcription Services is a telephone dictation service that allows social workers to maintain current, accurate case files without increasing the need for internal clerical support. Preliminary review of the pilot project shows that workers using transcription services spend on average 7.5 hours, or one work day per week, less completing paperwork. Transcription Services allows DFYS social workers to spend more time with clients, families and service providers, including foster parents. Transcription Services also accurately document the case actions and activities, and improve communications with system partners and other service providers. Based on the success of the pilot project, the Department has submitted an increment request to provide Transcription Services to all DFYS front line social workers.
- Mental Health Clinicians in Licensing Units: The Division has the responsibility of licensing foster homes. Mental Health Clinicians in the licensing units will help prepare foster parents for the children placed in their home. The Mental Health Clinicians will review documentation on the child, provide child-specific information to the foster parents along with information on how to manage the special needs of the child. Additional assistance Mental Health Clinicians will provide include identifying appropriate behavioral modification techniques, providing expectations to the parents regarding the child and assistance with mental health issues. The Division expects to see a reduction in the number of placements foster children experience and an increase in retaining foster parents through increased support of foster placements and improved matching of needs of children with skills of foster parents.
- Social Worker Licensing Requirements: AS 08.95.100 requires persons using the title “social worker” to be licensed unless the person is exempt from licensure requirements under AS 08.95.911. The new social worker licensing requirements have “raised the bar” for entry into the social worker profession by imposing minimum educational and professional requirements for persons holding themselves as social workers. The Department supports the existing law and believes it will improve the professionalism of the State’s child protection workers. However, this law may impact the ability of the DFYS to recruit social workers. The Division is working with the Division of Personnel on a salary study for social workers as one means of compensating workers.
- Anchorage and MatSu Leases: The Division has submitted an increment of \$550.0 for increased lease costs for the Anchorage and MatSu field offices. Without adequate space crowded conditions in these offices require many professional staff to share an office. This prevents clients from meeting one-on-one with the social worker and affects confidentiality and rapport building between the client and social worker, as clients are more likely to communicate openly and effectively when they have privacy.
- Relative Navigators: The Department proposes to implement the Relative Navigators pilot project at one site. This project, at a cost of \$60.0, provides assistance to regional staff and workers in locating adult relatives of children who are in state custody, and will work with these relatives in becoming foster and adoptive families. The Relative Navigator will be dedicated solely to identifying possible relatives, locating and contacting them, and wherever appropriate, helping to place the children in relatives’ homes. Children who are placed in relative care will find a more stable, long-term placement, thereby decreasing the average number of placements per child in Alaska’s custody. Children will reach relative homes sooner thereby reducing the need for foster care.

Major Component Accomplishments in 2001

1) PROVIDED TRAINING TO NEW AND ONGOING WORKERS:

- In FY2001 the Division, through the Training Academy, provided new social workers with two weeks of training prior to assigning them a caseload and a third week of training within their first six months of work with DFYS. Approximately 73 new workers completed the original two week training, Training and Orientation for New Employees (TONE) and 59 workers attended the third week of training, Core 103 training, Identification of Abuse and Neglect.
- In FY2001 the Family Services Training Academy delivered 44 training sessions, representing 252 days of in-service training to 289 DFYS workers. The Separation, Placement and Reunification training, held at the Training Academy, was attended by 50 DFYS workers. Training sessions also occurred at the Anchorage site, and throughout the state in Ketchikan, Juneau, Palmer, Fairbanks, Nome, Kenai, and Bethel. One course was distance-delivered

throughout the state. Curricula were developed in Advanced Related Topic: Legal Issues for CPS Workers, Advanced Related Topic: AOD/FAS/FAE, Advanced Specialized Intensive Sexual Abuse Interviewing Skills Training, Advanced Specialized Foster Care and Adoption, and Advanced Related Topic: Domestic Violence Issues for CPS Workers.

2) RECRUITED AND RETAINED PROFESSIONAL LEVEL SOCIAL WORKERS:

- DFYS and the University of Alaska have partnered to provide three primary programs of this component, the Family Services Training Academy, the "return to school" program and the student recruitment program. The "return to school" program gives DFYS staff the opportunity to complete either a Bachelor of Social Work or Master of Social Work at UAA or UAF while on educational leave. The staff member is obligated to return to DFYS to work upon completion of the degree. Nine persons have completed their MSW's under these programs to date.
- The student recruitment program supports individuals who are completing their BSW degree program at UAA or UAF. These individuals are placed in the Anchorage or Fairbanks DFYS offices in special units with a practicum instructor. In an effort to attract new workers to rural areas of the state, the program for FY2001 continued to include an enhanced stipend for any student who will agree to fulfill their work commitment with DFYS anywhere in the state. To date, thirty persons have completed their BSW's under this program.

3) CHILDREN THAT HAVE BEEN IN CUSTODY THE LONGEST ARE MOVING FROM THE FOSTER CARE SYSTEM INTO PERMANENT HOMES:

- Participation in the Alaska Adoption Exchange: In FY2001 the Division continued to participate in a third component to Project SUCCEED, the Alaska Adoption Exchange. The Alaska Adoption Exchange promotes earlier identification of children in the system waiting and potential families wanting them. The Exchange lists children in custody who are available now or soon to be available for adoption as well as potential adoptive families who are considered for placements of special needs children. The Adoption Exchange creates a mechanism for different DFYS workers to know about other children and potential adoptive families in the state. Children in custody are registered on the Exchange as soon as adoption has been identified as the permanent plan. This includes children who are not legally free but have termination of parental rights planned and the division has court approval to register.
- Statewide Adoption Placement Program (formerly the Balloon Project): The Adoption Placement Program provides funding for DFYS and partner legal agencies, the Department of Law, the Public Defender Agency and the Office of Public Advocacy, to focus on moving children on the "transition list" that have been in custody the longest from the foster care system and into permanent homes. One measure of the Adoption Placement Program's success can be seen in the reduction of the growth of the foster care caseload due to children transitioning to permanent homes. In FY1999 the foster care caseload increased by 16.4%. In FY2000, the foster care growth rate decreased to 5.8%. In FY2001 foster care caseload growth decreased by 6.2%. Long-term benefits of this program include savings from reduced foster care caseloads, increased compliance with Federal and State permanency planning laws and prevention of a backlog of cases from happening again. Continued collaboration between DFYS and the State legal entities to process child protective services cases on a timely basis as well as more efficient operations, timely client case handling helps to prevent "problem" cases, and a child protection system that works better overall are additional benefits.

Statutory and Regulatory Authority

AS 47.05	Administration of Welfare, Social Services, and Institutions.
AS 47.10	Children in Need of Aid.
AS 47.17	Child Protection.
7 AAC 50,51, and 53	
7 AAC 50	Family and Youth Services
7 AAC 53	Social Services

Titles IV-B and IV-E of the Social Security Act

Front Line Social Workers
Component Financial Summary

All dollars in thousands

Non-Formula Program:	FY2001 Actuals	FY2002 Authorized	FY2003 Governor
Component Expenditures:			
71000 Personal Services	17,719.8	18,160.7	18,979.4
72000 Travel	244.6	171.5	181.5
73000 Contractual	2,281.9	2,371.0	3,540.3
74000 Supplies	276.0	163.3	165.3
75000 Equipment	373.2	35.0	49.0
76000 Land/Buildings	0.0	0.0	0.0
77000 Grants, Claims	0.0	23.6	0.0
78000 Miscellaneous	0.0	0.0	0.0
Expenditure Totals	20,895.5	20,925.1	22,915.5
Funding Sources:			
1002 Federal Receipts	9,603.0	8,693.8	8,927.8
1003 General Fund Match	2,976.4	3,033.0	3,102.9
1004 General Fund Receipts	6,318.8	7,421.1	8,822.0
1007 Inter-Agency Receipts	1,589.0	1,628.7	1,914.2
1037 General Fund / Mental Health	150.6	148.5	148.6
1053 Investment Loss Trust Fund	119.6	0.0	0.0
1092 Mental Health Trust Authority Authorized Receipts	138.1	0.0	0.0
Funding Totals	20,895.5	20,925.1	22,915.5

Estimated Revenue Collections

Description	Master Revenue Account	FY2001 Actuals	FY2002 Authorized	FY2002 Cash Estimate	FY2003 Governor	FY2004 Forecast
Unrestricted Revenues						
None.		0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Unrestricted Total		0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Restricted Revenues						
Federal Receipts	51010	9,603.0	8,693.8	8,693.8	8,927.8	8,927.8
Interagency Receipts	51015	1,589.0	1,628.7	1,628.7	1,914.2	1,914.2
Investment Loss Trust Fund	51393	119.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Mental Health Trust Authority Auth.Rec.	51410	138.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Restricted Total		11,449.7	10,322.5	10,322.5	10,842.0	10,842.0
Total Estimated Revenues		11,449.7	10,322.5	10,322.5	10,842.0	10,842.0

Front Line Social Workers

Proposed Changes in Levels of Service for FY2003

- Continuation of the Adoption Placement Program (Balloon Project): The Department has submitted an FY2003 budget proposal that would provide for continued implementation of the Adoption Placement Program, formerly known as the Balloon Project. The continuation of this effort is critical to assure every child in state custody receives timely case plans and services, and exits custody within the statutory time limits. Long-term benefits include savings from reduced foster care caseloads, increased compliance with Federal and State permanency planning laws, and the prevention of a backlog of cases from happening again.
- Statewide Implementation of Transcription Services: DFYS proposes to use \$450.0 to implement Transcription Services to all front line social workers. Transcription Services, a telephone dictation service, allows social workers to maintain current, accurate case files without increasing internal clerical support. Transcription Services allows DFYS social workers to spend more time with clients, accurately documents the case actions and activities, and improves communications with system partners.
- Mental Health Clinicians in Licensing units: At a cost of \$172.0, the Division plans to place Mental Health Clinicians in licensing units to help prepare foster parents for the children placed in their home. The Division expects to see a reduction in the number of placements foster child experience and an increase in retaining foster parents through increased support of foster placements and improved matching of needs of children with skills of foster parents.
- Anchorage and MatSu Leases: The Division has submitted an increment of \$550.0 for increased lease costs for the Anchorage and MatSu field offices. Without adequate space crowded conditions in these offices require many professional staff to share an office. This prevents clients from meeting one-on-one with the social worker and effects confidentially and rapport building between the client and social worker, as clients are more likely to communicate openly and effectively when they have privacy.
- Relative Navigators: The Department proposes to implement the Relative Navigators pilot project at one site. This project, at a cost of \$60.0, provides assistance to regional staff and workers in locating adult relatives of children who are in state custody, and will work with these relatives in becoming foster and adoptive families. The Relative Navigator will be dedicated solely to identifying possible relatives, locating and contacting them, and wherever appropriate, helping to place the children in relatives' homes. Children who are placed in relative care will find a more stable, long-term placement, thereby decreasing the average number of placements per child in Alaska's custody. Children will reach relative homes sooner thereby reducing the need for foster care.

Summary of Component Budget Changes

From FY2002 Authorized to FY2003 Governor

All dollars in thousands

	<u>General Funds</u>	<u>Federal Funds</u>	<u>Other Funds</u>	<u>Total Funds</u>
FY2002 Authorized	10,602.6	8,693.8	1,628.7	20,925.1
Adjustments which will continue current level of service:				
-Year 3 Labor Costs - Net Change from FY2002	310.4	248.5	36.2	595.1
-Correct Funding Sources for Salary Adjustment due to Unrealized Receipts	134.5	-134.5	0.0	0.0
Proposed budget increases:				

	<u>General Funds</u>	<u>Federal Funds</u>	<u>Other Funds</u>	<u>Total Funds</u>
-Child Protection: Relative Navigator Pilot Project	50.0	10.0	0.0	60.0
-Anchorage and MatSu New Leases	440.0	110.0	0.0	550.0
-Transcription Services for Social Workers	450.0	0.0	0.0	450.0
-Child Health: Mental Health Clinicians in MatSu and Fairbanks	86.0	0.0	86.0	172.0
-Child Care Licensing Efforts	0.0	0.0	163.3	163.3
FY2003 Governor	12,073.5	8,927.8	1,914.2	22,915.5

Front Line Social Workers

Personal Services Information

	Authorized Positions		Personal Services Costs	
	<u>FY2002</u> <u>Authorized</u>	<u>FY2003</u> <u>Governor</u>		
Full-time	310	320	Annual Salaries	13,998,123
Part-time	3	3	COLA	337,932
Nonpermanent	0	0	Premium Pay	486,569
			Annual Benefits	5,366,593
			<i>Less 5.99% Vacancy Factor</i>	(1,209,817)
			Lump Sum Premium Pay	0
Totals	313	323	Total Personal Services	18,979,400

Position Classification Summary

Job Class Title	Anchorage	Fairbanks	Juneau	Others	Total
Accounting Clerk I	2	0	0	0	2
Accounting Clerk II	1	3	0	0	4
Administrative Assistant	1	2	0	1	4
Administrative Clerk I	2	1	0	0	3
Administrative Clerk II	12	6	2	13	33
Administrative Clerk III	4	1	1	2	8
Administrative Manager I	2	1	1	0	4
ChildrenS Services Manager	2	1	1	0	4
ChildrenS Services Spec I	0	0	1	0	1
ChildrenS Services Spec II	4	0	0	3	7
Community Care Lic Spec I	7	4	1	2	14
Community Care Lic Spec II	1	1	0	1	3
Mntl Hlth Clinician II	1	0	1	0	2
Mntl Hlth Clinician III	0	2	0	2	4
Nurse IV (Psych)	3	1	1	0	5
Project Asst	1	0	0	0	1
Social Services Associate I	0	0	0	4	4
Social Services Associate II	11	3	1	7	22
Social Worker I (Cs)	11	8	0	14	33
Social Worker II (Cs)	46	15	11	46	118
Social Worker IV (Cs)	14	6	3	16	39
Social Worker V (Cs)	3	2	1	2	8
Totals	128	57	25	113	323