

State of Alaska FY2004 Governor's Operating Budget

**Department of Administration
Office of Public Advocacy
Component Budget Summary**

Component: Office of Public Advocacy

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Component Mission

To provide legal advocacy and guardian services to vulnerable Alaskans.
(Differs from CH 124, SLA2002).

Component Services Provided

The Office of Public Advocacy (OPA) provides legal, guardian ad litem, and public guardian representation, upon court orders of appointment, for:

- Abused and neglected children involved in protective proceedings;
- Mentally incapacitated adults, most commonly the chronically mentally ill, developmentally disabled, and those who suffer from age-related dementia;
- Individuals accused of crimes where the Alaska Public Defender Agency has a conflict of interest.

Component Goals and Strategies

CONTINUE TO ENSURE EFFECTIVE AND CONSISTENT IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NEW CHILD PROTECTION LAW

- Provide additional statewide training of guardians ad litem;
- Collaborate with the Alaska Court System, Department of Law, Public Defender Agency;
- Work to assure a shorter timeframe from permanency planning for abused and neglected children to actual adoption where that is the goal.

HELP DEVELOP THE FAMILY DRUG COURT THAT FOCUSES ON SUBSTANCE ABUSING PARENTS OF YOUNG CHILDREN

REDUCE THE TIME LIMIT FOR ADJUDICATION IN CHILD ABUSE CASES FROM 120 DAYS TO 30 DAYS

ENHANCE STAFF GUARDIAN AD LITEM REPRESENTATION OF ABUSED AND NEGLECTED CHILDREN

- Continue to develop new team approach that includes a lawyer, two staff guardians ad litem, and associated Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASAs);
- Expand "frontload" approach that focuses on gathering information about the child early in the process and accelerating initial court proceedings;
- Continue development of a new model for more effective use of experienced volunteer guardians ad litem (CASAs).

CONTINUE IMPROVEMENTS IN THE QUALITY OF GUARDIAN AD LITEM REPRESENTATION IN JUNEAU AND FAIRBANKS BY EXPANDING THE USE OF VOLUNTEERS

- Expand the volunteer guardian programs that will allow OPA to devote significantly greater total professional and volunteer time to each case.

ENHANCE SERVICE TO FAMILY AND OTHER INDIVIDUAL GUARDIANS

- Continue to use new position (funded by Mental Health Trust Authority) to provide guidance and advice to private guardians as well as travel the state to provide local forums for private guardians who are attempting to serve their friends and loved ones.

Key Component Issues for FY2003 – 2004

NEED FOR FY2003 SUPPLEMENTAL

Because of the difficulty in projecting case types and costs 18 months out, the Alaska legislature has traditionally funded OPA workload and caseload increases through supplemental appropriations. From 2001 to 2002, OPA experienced an overall caseload increase of 12% and 64% for pending cases. Even more striking, the increase in active cases (those cases in which OPA provides labor or paid costs) was 20% between FY2000 and FY2001 and 26% between FY2001 and FY2002. The FY2002 supplemental appropriation was \$2,270.0 in contractual services but this number was not rolled into the FY2002 budget. The FY2003 supplemental is \$3,300.0 in contractual services. Additional supplemental funding could be required depending on caseload growth through the remainder of the fiscal year.

Major Component Accomplishments in 2002

- OPA continued to play a leadership role in advocating early and effective intervention in child abuse cases in many fora as well as the Alaska Child Protection Commission.
- OPA expanded its CASA (volunteer guardian ad litem) program to the Fairbanks and Palmer Superior Courts.
- OPA successfully established the Family CARE (Court Assisted Recovery Effort) Court to provide immediate, court monitored substance abuse treatment for parents whose children are in state custody.
- OPA's guardians ad litem effectively met the challenge of dramatically increased child abuse caseloads with few additional resources.
- OPA advocated in numerous fora for the development of more effective means to address alcohol abuse - - the primary precipitating cause of child abuse and neglect and crime in Alaska.
- OPA provided timely, cost effective and quality representation in more than 11,000 cases involving Alaska children and adults.

Statutory and Regulatory Authority

AS 44.21.400 et seq. Office of Public Advocacy

Office of Public Advocacy
Component Financial Summary

All dollars in thousands

	FY2002 Actuals	FY2003 Authorized	FY2004 Governor
Non-Formula Program:			
Component Expenditures:			
71000 Personal Services	4,128.5	3,823.4	3,952.5
72000 Travel	202.1	102.2	102.2
73000 Contractual	7,829.3	6,018.8	9,318.8
74000 Supplies	120.7	25.8	25.8
75000 Equipment	109.3	16.4	16.4
76000 Land/Buildings	0.0	0.0	0.0
77000 Grants, Claims	0.0	0.0	0.0
78000 Miscellaneous	0.0	0.0	0.0
Expenditure Totals	12,389.9	9,986.6	13,415.7
Funding Sources:			
1002 Federal Receipts	50.0	52.1	52.1
1004 General Fund Receipts	10,001.8	7,731.8	11,047.7
1005 General Fund/Program Receipts	95.1	95.1	95.1
1007 Inter-Agency Receipts	647.5	562.1	564.6
1037 General Fund / Mental Health	1,400.5	1,400.5	1,406.2
1092 Mental Health Trust Authority Authorized Receipts	95.0	45.0	150.0
1108 Statutory Designated Program Receipts	100.0	100.0	100.0
Funding Totals	12,389.9	9,986.6	13,415.7

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Proposed Changes in Levels of Service for FY2004

The FY2004 budget provides additional funding to reduce the public guardian caseloads to levels recommended by the National Guardianship Association, and to provide additional training and assistance to family and private guardians.

**Summary of Component Budget Changes
From FY2003 Authorized to FY2004 Governor**

All dollars in thousands

	<u>General Funds</u>	<u>Federal Funds</u>	<u>Other Funds</u>	<u>Total Funds</u>
FY2003 Authorized	9,227.4	52.1	707.1	9,986.6
Adjustments which will continue current level of service:				
-Annualize FY2003 COLA Increase for General Government and Supervisory Bargaining Units	0.0	0.0	1.0	1.0
-\$75 per Month Health Insurance Increase for Non-covered Staff	21.6	0.0	1.5	23.1
Proposed budget decreases:				
-Discontinued MHTAAR Funding for Guardian Resources	0.0	0.0	-45.0	-45.0
Proposed budget increases:				
-Continuation Funding	3,300.0	0.0	0.0	3,300.0
-Add Public Guardian Positions	0.0	0.0	150.0	150.0
FY2004 Governor	12,549.0	52.1	814.6	13,415.7

Office of Public Advocacy
Personal Services Information

	Authorized Positions		Personal Services Costs	
	<u>FY2003</u> <u>Authorized</u>	<u>FY2004</u> <u>Governor</u>		
Full-time	60	64	Annual Salaries	3,614,512
Part-time	1	1	Premium Pay	4,858
Nonpermanent	0	0	Annual Benefits	1,240,563
			<i>Less 18.84% Vacancy Factor</i>	(915,427)
			Lump Sum Premium Pay	7,994
Totals	61	65	Total Personal Services	3,952,500

Position Classification Summary

Job Class Title	Anchorage	Fairbanks	Juneau	Others	Total
Accountant III	1	0	0	0	1
Accounting Tech II	2	0	0	0	2
Administrative Assistant	1	0	0	0	1
Administrative Clerk II	2	1	0	0	3
Administrative Manager III	1	0	0	0	1
Assoc Attorney II	12	3	0	0	15
Attorney III	1	0	0	0	1
Attorney IV	9	2	1	0	12
Attorney V	3	1	0	0	4
Attorney VI	1	0	0	0	1
Chf Public Guardian	1	0	0	0	1
Investigator III	1	0	0	0	1
Law Office Assistant I	2	1	0	0	3
Law Office Assistant II	1	0	0	0	1
Paralegal I	2	0	0	0	2
Public Guardian	10	2	2	0	14
Social Services Specialist III	1	0	0	0	1
Social Worker II	1	0	0	0	1
Totals	52	10	3	0	65