

State of Alaska FY2004 Governor's Operating Budget

Department of Natural Resources Public Services Office Component Budget Summary

Component: Public Services Office

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Component Mission

The Public Services Office provides the public/agency interface for DNR for obtaining service and information.

Component Services Provided

The two Public Information Centers (PICs) provide a place for the public to go to ask questions, pay bills, get forms, obtain services, and complete research. The PICs are the difference between a complex agency understandable only to experts, and a public-friendly agency where forms, permits, and answers to questions are easily available to everyone.

The services provided under this component allow the department to efficiently conduct business with the public. These centers provide basic essential business functions and services that insure timely processing of applications and payments. They also provide the time consuming public interface to allow other DNR employees to more efficiently conduct their assigned duties without interruption. The PICs make sure the public is able to find and obtain what they need from DNR while at the same time making the public aware of the need, purpose, and value of the State's land and resource assets and their appropriate management.

The Public Information Center's services provide two primary outputs.

- Provide essential services to the public.
- Keep the public informed of DNR programs, policies, regulations, and activities.

Output 1. Provide essential services to the public. The PIC operates two Public Information Centers. The main center is in Anchorage. A smaller center operates in Fairbanks.

The public information centers receive payments from the public for sales, rents, leases, bond pools, royalties, and other activities. They have full receipting capability for any payments made to the divisions. The PICs receive and process applications for land and resource use. In order to alleviate public frustration and lower application processing cycle times, the knowledgeable PIC staff provide the correct application for the desired use and insure that the applicant correctly fills out the application and attaches necessary documentation. The PICs reserve public use cabins throughout the state, sell annual park passes and decals, and provide park information requested. PIC staff provide land research assistance to the public. Not only do they sell land status plats, interpret area plans, and pull case file abstracts, but they provide the personalized assistance required to help the public understand the information given. The public can obtain and purchase maps and publications that help people to understand the resources and management of Alaska's lands. The PICs also provide the primary public contact for department land sales, marketing, informing, selling, and processing applications.

Output 2. Keep the public informed of DNR programs, policies, regulations, and activities.

The PIC staff maintain and improve brochures and fact sheets about state land programs and activities requiring authorizations. These fact sheets must be kept current and accurate as programs and regulations change. The public also must be informed of the regulations to facilitate appropriate use of State land and facilities. The PICs utilize current technology to better disseminate DNR information including maintaining the DNR front door web pages. This requires daily upkeep of the web pages to insure accurate and timely information is provided. Through media releases, public service announcements, and interviews the PICs insure effective media coverage on current DNR actions and issues. Through coordination with other agencies and information centers the PICs help the public to understand DNR's interagency relationships and to insure accurate and current DNR information is disseminated. The PICs also provide feedback to DNR employees about public concerns, requests, desires, or misunderstandings. Essentially the PICs act as two-way information brokers and often as interpreters to "governmentese."

Component Goals and Strategies

Outcome: Public and private use and enjoyment of State land, and resources.

Goals:

1. Provide essential services to the public.

Accurately receipt all payments received in the PIC from the public for sales, contracts, rents, leases, bond pools, royalties, and other activities.

Receive and process applications for land and resource use within a two-day cycle time and insure that applicants submit the correct applications necessary for their situation.

Streamline application process when possible.

Provide as many business functions as possible on the internet.

2. Keep the public informed of DNR programs, policies, regulations and activities.

Provide personal assistance and dispense information to the public to insure that they obtain necessary understanding for that which they are seeking.

Maintain easy to understand fact sheets about DNR programs and authorized activities and distribute other related printed material.

Utilize current technology to better disseminate DNR information including maintaining the DNR front door web pages.

Insure effective media coverage on current DNR actions and issues.

Key Component Issues for FY2003 – 2004

As much of the public is becoming computer literate, DNR is attempting to shift some of its business practices to be available by internet. The PIC will maximize the use of the internet where possible to disseminate information and to conduct business. The PIC will be integrally involved in maintaining internet sites to keep them current and accurate, but the human component will not be overlooked as this is what most people want. Most people still want that personalized service to help them through the appropriate government channels that seems so overwhelming to many. That is where the PIC will continue to be crucial in maintaining the business traffic into the future.

The PIC will continue to assist in any projects that streamline government processes for the public and utilize current and future technology to increase efficiencies. We will continue to work with other divisions and sections on a web based application process, GIS utilization, imaging data for easy storage and retrieval, mining claim submission improvements, web based land sale improvements, and a restructuring of the DNR web pages. Then we will move to other e-commerce functions such as making public use cabin reservations via the internet.

The PIC will also be closely involved in the expanded land sales program. The PIC will assist in marketing, sales, and implementation of the new and existing land sales programs.

Major Component Accomplishments in 2002

The Public Information Centers (PICs) have produced multitudes of satisfied DNR customers, even when they were paying bills. That is because the PIC staff emphasizes customer service. Regardless of the issue or the nature of the contact, the staff endeavors to see customers leaving satisfied knowing they were treated well, professionally, and with respect. This helps improve the overall image of state government that we are here to serve the people of this state.

The PICs help support the tourism industry by promoting the use of Alaska State Parks. Many non-residents and residents alike use the PIC services to plan their trips, bringing tourism dollars into the economy. The majority of the Alaska State Park public use cabins were rented by the PICs. The knowledgeable PIC staff spent the time necessary to

make sure people rented the cabins or visited the park best suiting their needs and abilities. People want so much more than just base information. They want local knowledge of conditions, when the fish run, how's the hike, is the beach nice for kids, and much more. From the comments the PIC receives, it is obvious that they help make those recreational visits safe and enjoyable.

The PICs help promote use and development of state lands and resources. Many people came to the PICs not knowing exactly what they wanted or not understanding how to get something from DNR. The PIC worked with the customers to provide the information needed and helped people through the permitting and regulatory process as needed. The PIC staff have spent the hours necessary to assist people researching land status or teaching customers how to conduct their own research. If customers had to speak with others beyond the PIC, the PIC staff refined the questions to focus the time spent with other DNR staff. This has prevented numerous hours of interrupted DNR staff time. This in turn helped produce efficiency in DNR by improving cycle times.

The customer load and receipting quantities remained level from FY01 to FY02. The PICs assisted almost 25,000 customers in person during FY02. The PIC also receipted over \$7.6 million in revenues in FY02. In addition, the PIC produced or assisted in distribution of over 120 media releases. The PIC assisted in the marketing, implementation, and in-person sales for seven new land sales and five other continuing sales, each with different rules of participation. The PIC assisted in developing and maintaining the over 50 DNR web pages that more efficiently relay information to the public. In addition, the PIC staff assisted in the development of new technology developed internally to improve customer service. The PIC web page alone received over 57,300 unique visits in FY02 and the DNR site as a whole received over 360,000 unique visits during the same time. Web used has almost doubled in one year. The PIC was able install appropriate technology hardware to utilize the technology improvements.

Statutory and Regulatory Authority

The PIC provides the public, contact and outreach required by the statutory authority of other components. It has no specific statutory authority.

Public Services Office
Component Financial Summary

All dollars in thousands

	FY2002 Actuals	FY2003 Authorized	FY2004 Governor
Non-Formula Program:			
Component Expenditures:			
71000 Personal Services	296.5	350.4	361.7
72000 Travel	3.6	3.0	3.0
73000 Contractual	32.1	25.5	25.2
74000 Supplies	10.5	7.0	4.0
75000 Equipment	15.2	3.0	0.0
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	357.9	388.9	393.9
Funding Sources:			
1007 Inter-Agency Receipts	357.9	388.9	393.9
Funding Totals	357.9	388.9	393.9

Public Services Office

Proposed Changes in Levels of Service for FY2004

No service changes anticipated.

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	0.0	0.0	388.9	388.9
Adjustments which will continue current level of service:				
-Annualize FY2003 COLA Increase for General Government and Supervisory Bargaining Units	0.0	0.0	5.0	5.0
FY2004 Governor	0.0	0.0	393.9	393.9

Public Services Office

Personal Services Information

	Authorized Positions		Personal Services Costs	
	<u>FY2003</u> <u>Authorized</u>	<u>FY2004</u> <u>Governor</u>		
Full-time	6	6	Annual Salaries	266,382
Part-time	0	0	Premium Pay	0
Nonpermanent	2	2	Annual Benefits	95,611
			<i>Less 0.08% Vacancy Factor</i>	(293)
			Lump Sum Premium Pay	0
Totals	8	8	Total Personal Services	361,700

Position Classification Summary

Job Class Title	Anchorage	Fairbanks	Juneau	Others	Total
Information Officer III	1	0	0	0	1
Natural Resource Spec I	1	1	0	0	2
Natural Resource Tech II	2	1	0	0	3
Student Intern I	1	1	0	0	2
Totals	5	3	0	0	8