

AMD: Safety and Support Equipment for Public Health Nurses, Probation Officers and Social Workers

FY2004 Request: \$831,000
Reference No: AMD 32446

AP/AL: Appropriation

Project Type: Equipment

Category: Health/Human Services

Location: Statewide

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House District: Statewide (HD 1-40)

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Estimated Project Dates: 07/01/2003 - 06/30/2008

Brief Summary and Statement of Need:

Project provides funds for critical equipment needed by the Department to enhance security, improve program efficiency and replace aging or dysfunctional equipment for the Department's statewide operations. Older or unsuitable vehicles have been identified as the most dangerous equipment and as a priority for replacement. There is an urgent need for this equipment so that Family and Youth Service social workers, Juvenile Justice detention and probation officers and Public Health nurses can perform their duties safely and effectively. Failure to fund some equipment purchases will mean that they may not be able to do their job or that they may be placed in danger.

Funding:	FY2004	FY2005	FY2006	FY2007	FY2008	FY2009	Total
Fed Rcpts	\$431,000	\$400,000	\$400,000	\$400,000	\$400,000		\$2,031,000
G/F Match	\$259,500	\$1,500,000	\$1,500,000	\$1,500,000	\$1,500,000		\$6,259,500
Gen Fund	\$140,500						\$140,500
Total:	\$831,000	\$1,900,000	\$1,900,000	\$1,900,000	\$1,900,000	\$0	\$8,431,000

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> State Match Required	<input type="checkbox"/> One-Time Project	<input type="checkbox"/> Phased - new	<input type="checkbox"/> Phased - underway	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> On-Going
48% = Minimum State Match % Required		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Amendment	<input type="checkbox"/> Mental Health Bill	

Operating & Maintenance Costs:

	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Staff</u>
Project Development:	0	0
Ongoing Operating:	19,800	0
One-Time Startup:	0	
Totals:	19,800	0

Additional Information / Prior Funding History:

CH1/SSSLA02/P40/L26 – \$400 GF and \$714.2 Federal
 CH61/SLA01/P19/L11 – \$200.0 GF and \$2,331.0 Federal
 CH135/SLA00/P14/L21 – \$163.2 AHFC Dividends and \$38.9 Federal

Project Description/Justification:

This project includes a broad range of equipment needed for the Department's operations. It is the intent of the Department that funds will be used for the acquisition of equipment necessary to improve security for Public Health nurses, Family and Youth Services staff, and staff and clients at all facilities operated by the Department. Funds would also be available for items such as needed clinical equipment at public health centers and transportation equipment.

The Department's need for equipment is considerably greater than what is listed here. Included in this request is only the absolute minimum equipment needs to maintain security and services for clients and staff. Due to the changing nature of priorities and emerging situations, funds may be shifted between divisions if warranted.

The need for transportation is a high priority for two reasons—the reduced amount that was appropriated in previous years for vehicles, and because worker's case loads continue to increase, requiring more frequent use of vehicles for longer periods of time for State employees in highly contentious situations. The amounts requested represent the minimum safety and support equipment needed for Department staff to function. The items in this request are urgently needed.

Worker safety and efficiency demand that staff be adequately equipped. While many needs can be postponed, the current request involves items that are needed for workers to function safely and effectively.

Vehicle Needs Analysis

The Department surveyed available vehicles in the *DHSS Comprehensive Vehicle Analysis* report (copies of the report are available upon request.) The report identified, by division and field location, the number of vehicles available and the ratio of relevant field staff to vehicles. The study identified which vehicles the Department leased and which were owned. In some cases vehicle credits are available to replace aging vehicles. In the following cases, however, capital funds may be needed for vehicles:

- ? to replace leased vehicles
- ? to acquire additional vehicles because of increased work loads, staffing levels or new facilities;
- ? to replace existing vehicles that have already been depreciated out, where replacement credits were used for another vehicle.

The ratio of relevant direct field office staff to vehicles in some locations is 12.6 and higher, which is clearly unacceptable. This request attempts to alleviate only the major deficiencies documented in the *Comprehensive Vehicle Analysis* report.

A. Division of Family and Youth Services (DFYS) - \$227.3

The Division of Family and Youth Services (DFYS) requests \$227.3 of capital funds for front line workers basic operating equipment and for safe, reliable vehicles. Aging and unreliable equipment is counterproductive.

Office Automation and Replacement of Dysfunctional Equipment

The Division needs to provide basic operating and safety equipment for the 29 field offices located in the four DFYS regions (Anchorage, Southcentral, Northern, and Southeast). Nearly \$200,000 in equipment needs have been identified statewide. Basic operating equipment in the field offices is aging and needs to be replaced. For example, field office copiers and faxes are frequently more than 10 years old years old. The inability to replace this basic equipment is an impediment, which undermines our front workers' ability to perform their function of protecting Alaska's children from abuse and neglect. The Division also needs to upgrade and replace out-dated computer related items in several regions.

Vehicles

Vehicles are needed for three DFYS regions – the Anchorage, Southcentral and Northern regions. Currently the Division has an inadequate number of vehicles given the Statewide presence of DFYS and the number of front line workers that need access to vehicles. DFYS social workers and social services associates typically spend between 50-60% of their work week out of office performing investigations, conducting home visits, going to court, transporting children, attending case planning meetings and performing case-related activities. With the exception of transporting children, field workers must frequently use their personal vehicles to conduct these activities when a state-owned vehicle is not available.

Real hazards faced by workers and the children they transport include heavy snowfall, extreme temperatures, and bad roads. Our workers must have the basic resources including a sufficient number of vehicles to enable them to perform their jobs as well as transport themselves and the children that they are charged to protect out of potentially dangerous situations. Reliance upon the use of employee-owned vehicles to respond to reports of harm or to transport children also exposes the employee and the State to potential liability.

The shortage of vehicles is not a matter of simple inconvenience, but rather is one of safety and liability. For example, a social worker performs a routine home visit, finds that children are being abused or neglected and determines that the children must be taken into emergency custody. Unfortunately, because a vehicle was unavailable, the worker had to use their personal vehicle. The worker must then contact the field office to request a transport. In the meantime, the children's parent becomes agitated and hostile. The emotionally charged nature of these types of situations can quickly escalate into violence.

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The following table outlines the minimal need for additional DFYS vehicles in FY04:

	Current Number of Vehicles	Number of Direct Staff	Current Number of Direct Staff per Vehicle	Number of Vehicles Requested	Amount Requested
Anchorage	17	102	6	1	\$29.2
Kenai	2	12	6	1	\$29.2
Palmer	2	12	6	1	\$29.2
Totals:	21	126	6	3	\$87.6

The number of Division of Family and Youth Services Direct Staff includes Social Services Associates I-III, Social Workers I-V and Community Care License Specialist I-II only.

B. Division of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) - \$126.8

This project will provide for statewide equipment and office replacements as well as safety and security equipment improvements for staff probation officers and youth corrections workers.

Personal Safety and Security Equipment

This requests includes safety and security cameras, and equipment for front line probation officers. The Division has identified \$18.2 of immediate equipment needs. Threat Level III safety vests for juvenile probation officers and social services associates are necessary for their personal protection while arresting juveniles and performing secure escorts. Waist belts, hand held metal detectors and handcuff cases are needed to ensure that juvenile offenders are under the control of probation officers at all times and will not pose a risk to the public. Communication equipment is vital for the safety and security of our front line workers. This request includes funding for VHF radios and satellite phones for offices in Dillingham and Craig.

Facility Safety and Security Cameras and Equipment

During the 1999 American Correctional Association accreditation audit, McLaughlin Youth Center failed a training school standard because it lacks a central control station that can monitor all nine living units. The auditors recommend installing a closed circuit camera system to expand security coverage of the training school units. This would improve internal monitoring without the need for staffing an additional control station. Additional cameras are requested to monitor a secure hallway, the Detention entrance, and the North side of the administration building. These areas have been identified as vulnerable to unauthorized access and escape. The following table is a listing of cameras and other safety equipment needed at other youth facilities around the state.

Location	Amount	Quantity	Description
McLaughlin Youth Center	\$11.5	1	Security cameras to monitor closed units, hallway and detention entrance
Mat-Su Youth Facility	\$2.6	1	Security camera upgrades for pan and zoom view to parking lot.
Johnson Youth Center	\$2.6	1	Security camera to monitor the large kitchen at JYC. Often staff and 3 to 4 youth work alone. This camera would provide staff and youth security
Bethel Youth Facility	\$10.4	3	Purchase of 3 exterior security cameras with monitor
McLaughlin Youth Center	\$6.3	1	Security camera to monitor North side Administration building
McLaughlin Youth Center	\$10.4	10	Replace ten handheld radios
McLaughlin Youth Center	\$5.2	1	Software for key control
Mat-Su Youth Facility	\$2.6	1	Intercom replacement between Ctrl room & Lobby
Mat-Su Youth Facility	\$4.7	1	Radio base station
Total	\$56.3		

Vehicles

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The Division of Juvenile Justice is required to transport juvenile offenders who are often hostile and dangerous. The vehicles must be modified to cage off the back area to make it secure for the juvenile and probation officer during the transport. Transportation primarily occurs when the juvenile needs to go to attend a Court appointment, a specialty medical appointment or is arriving from a remote community. The following chart outlines the need for additional DJJ vehicles.

New vehicles requested

	Current Number of vehicles	Number of Direct Staff	Current Number of Direct Staff per Vehicle	Number of Vehicles Needed	Amount Requested
Kenai/Homer	3	7	2.33	1	\$26.2
Mat-Su/Valdez	2	8	4.00	1	\$26.2
Total	5	15	3.16	2	\$52.3

The most striking information about current need versus resources is that although the Kenai District staff/vehicle ration is 2.33, the staff in these two offices (Kenai & Homer) covers a 25,000 square mile area. Communities served by these offices stretch 200 miles from one end (Homer) to the other end (Seward). In the Homer area staff serve principle population areas from Ninilchik to Fritz Creek, which stretches some 60 miles over the road system. The Kenai Central area, serviced by the Kenai office, serves communities from Cooper Landing to Nikiski or Coho, which is essentially a 50 mile radius by road system, and extends to 115 miles when Seward and Hope are included.

C. Division of Public Assistance - \$139.2

Front-Line Public Assistance Worker Safety and Support Equipment

This request will help in ensuring the security of the agency's resources and records and compliance with Titles I and II of the Americans with Disabilities Act. Providing functional and ergonomic working environments for staff is a major factor in keeping employees healthy, safe, and productive. Funds are requested to provide secure and safe work surfaces in four regions: Anchorage; Coastal; Southeast and Northern. This request will be utilized to ensure that these offices have the resources they need to perform the critical function of providing Alaskans with safety net programs and opportunities to achieve an improved quality of life. This project is intended to make records more secure and offices safe and more efficient by providing work surfaces that reduce workplace hazards and fatigue of staff using a computer workstation more than four hours per day.

In general, field offices have not had work surface upgrades in most offices in over a decade. Currently, field offices have a mixture of old conventional furniture of varying colors and sizes. They do not have adjustable keyboard trays or functional working environments. Some offices have a mixture of various height and colored partitions. Some offices, such as Nome, have desks over 20 years old and in extremely poor condition.

The conventional work surfaces and storage in field offices does not support proper ergonomics, and limits the productiveness of staff. The use of non-ergonomically adjustable work surfaces along with an increase in the amount of staff time spent at a computer workstation increases the cost to the State in Workers Compensation claims, absenteeism, and requests for costly special accommodations.

The table below shows the amount of funding that is needed to address the equipment needs for each of the regions shown.

Region	Office /Item	Unit Cost	Quantity	Total
Northern	Fairbanks			
	Work Surface, Chair, Storage	4,033	12	\$48.4
Southeast	Juneau			
	Work Surface, Chair, Storage	4,033	12	\$48.4
Central	Anchorage			

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	Desks/Chairs	849	35	\$29.7
	Moveable computer stations	420	5	\$2.1
Coastal	Nome, Bethel, Kodiak			
	Work Surface, Chair, Storage	4,033	3	\$10.7
	Total:			\$139.2
	Federal Receipts:			\$61.5
	GFMATCH:			\$64.0
	GF:			\$13.7

D. Division of Public Health Nursing - \$19.4

New Safe Vehicle and Replacement Vehicles

Many older vehicles leased from DOT are plagued by repeated mechanical problems. Because nursing staff needs to drive over difficult roads in isolated, rural and remote areas, during all seasons, there is cause for concern for their safety and the state's liability. The lack of vehicles has been documented in the recent *DHSS Comprehensive Vehicle Analysis* report. Costs for new vehicles are estimated at \$27,100 each per 4WD utility vehicle. This request will provide funds for vehicles that have no vehicle credits available and vehicles for which credits will partially pay for the reimbursement.

While the need for new vehicles for Nursing is greater than just this one, the need in Delta Junction has priority for FY 04. There is a full time nurse in Delta Junction who also provides services to the surrounding road areas, travels to Fairbanks regularly, picks up vaccines and supplies, and there is no state vehicle for her to use for this work travel.

Replacement Vehicles

The vehicles on the following list are a concern and cannot be replaced with the limited funding received in FY2003.

<u>Location</u>	<u>Purpose</u>	<u>Replacement credits</u>
	Cost to replace 4 vehicles	\$101.7
	Vehicle Credits Available (Estimated):	
Mat Su	Replace 1991 Sedan with 4 WD Utility	(\$16.7)
Kenai	Replace 1991 4WD with 4WD	(\$22.2)
Haines	Replace 1995 Utility Wagon 4WD	(\$24.1)
Mat Su	Replace 1993 Minivan with 4WD Utility	(\$19.3)
	Funds Needed	\$19.4

The approximate cost to replace these 4 aging vehicles with new vehicles is \$101.7. When the estimated replacement credits of \$82.3 are applied, the total cost is reduced to \$19.4. The division will purchase as many replacement vehicles as funds will allow.