

Safety and Support Equipment for Public Health Nurses, Probation Officers and Social Workers **FY2005 Request: \$480,200**
Reference No: 32446

AP/AL: Appropriation **Project Type:** Equipment
Category: Health/Human Services
Location: Statewide **Contact:** Larry Streuber
House District: Statewide (HD 1-40) **Contact Phone:** (907)465-1870
Estimated Project Dates: 07/01/2004 - 06/30/2009

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 Office of Children's Service social workers, Juvenile Justice detention and probation officers, front line Public Assistance workers and Public Health nurses can perform their duties safely and effectively. Failure to fund some equipment purchases will result in workers being unable to perform their jobs or placing them in danger.

Funding:	FY2005	FY2006	FY2007	FY2008	FY2009	FY2010	Total
Fed Rcpts	\$130,200	\$250,000	\$250,000	\$250,000	\$250,000	\$250,000	\$1,380,200
G/F Match	\$304,542	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000	\$5,304,542
Gen Fund	\$45,458	\$48,094	\$48,094	\$48,094	\$48,094	\$48,094	\$285,928
Total:	\$480,200	\$1,298,094	\$1,298,094	\$1,298,094	\$1,298,094	\$1,298,094	\$6,970,670

<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
73% = Minimum State Match % Required		<input type="checkbox"/> Amendment	<input type="checkbox"/> Mental Health Bill	

Operating & Maintenance Costs:

	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Staff</u>
Project Development:	0	0
Ongoing Operating:	4,800	0
One-Time Startup:	0	
Totals:	4,800	0

Additional Information / Prior Funding History:

CH82/SLA03/P29/L8 – \$260.0 GF and \$135.0 Federal
 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, Office of Children's Services staff, Juvenile Justice Probation Officers and staff and clients at all facilities operated by the Department. Funds would also be available for items such as 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 the minimum amount of equipment needed to maintain security and services for clients and staff. Actual allocation of funds to particular equipment will depend on a determination of current need priorities at the time that funds become available.

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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.

A. Office of Children's Services

The Department of Health and Social Services requests capital funds for the Office of Children's Services (OCS) to provide OCS front line workers with basic operating equipment and safe, reliable vehicles. Aging and unreliable equipment is counterproductive and increases the burden that is already placed on DFYS workers.

Office Automation and Replacement of Dysfunctional Equipment – OCS needs to provide basic operating and safety equipment for the 29 field offices located in the four OCS regions (Anchorage, Southcentral, Northern, and Southeast). In these field offices, basic operating equipment is aging and needs to be replaced. The inability to replace this basic equipment is an impediment that undermines our front line workers' ability to perform their function of protecting Alaska's children from abuse and neglect. The Office also needs to upgrade and replace out-dated computer-related items in several regions.

Transportation – The Office of Children's Services requests capital funds to provide adequate means of transportation in the Southeast and Southcentral region. The Office requests one vehicle for each of the two regions. OCS social workers and social services associates typically spend 50-60% of their work week out of the office performing investigations, conducting home visits, going to court, transporting children, attending case planning meetings, and performing other case-related activities. Except when transporting children, field workers must frequently use their personal vehicles to conduct these activities because 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. OCS workers must have a sufficient number of vehicles to enable them to perform their jobs and to transport themselves and the children that they are charged to protect out of potentially dangerous situations. The use of employee-owned vehicles to respond to reports of harm or to transport children also exposes employees and the State to potential liability.

The shortage of vehicles is not a matter of simple inconvenience, but 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.

In addition to the two vehicles, OCS intends to purchase transportation including two snow machines, one all-terrain vehicle and three boats with motors. This transportation will be used in the Southcentral region where the only existing road systems are in the towns. In these areas, travel between villages is limited to commercial commuter airlines. The ability to travel via snow machine and/or boat will enable OCS front line workers to travel to the closer villages without depending on the airlines and in times when air travel is unavailable due to weather.

B. Division of Juvenile Justice

This project will provide for statewide safety, security and equipment improvements for probation officers and youth corrections workers.

Probation Officers Safety, Security and Equipment Improvements

Equipment This request includes safety and security equipment for front-line probation officers. 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 ensure that juvenile offenders are under the control of probation officers at all times and will not pose a risk to the public.

Vehicles The Division of Juvenile Justice is required to transport hostile, dangerous juvenile offenders. 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 a court appointment. Other examples include when the juvenile needs to go to a specialty medical appointment or is traveling in from a remote community. At the Nome Youth Facility, the juveniles have to be driven to a local school for recreation, and are only allowed to use the recreation facilities at a certain time. Because meal pick-up has to be done at the same time, personal vehicles are being used for the meal pick up. A plow truck will be purchased for NYF, and it will also be used for snow removal. There is no maintenance staff at the NYF, and the NYF gets a lot of drifting snow. The staff who work with the youth shovel snow by hand. Using a truck to plow will save a significant amount of staff time. Following is a chart that outlines the need for the vehicles the division is requesting.

	Current # Of Vehicles	# Direct Staff	Current # of Direct Staff per Vehicle	# of Vehicles Needed	Amount Required
Anchorage	8	32	4.00	4	\$83.3
Kenai/Homer	3	7	2.33	1	\$20.8
Mat-Su/Valdez	2	8	4.00	1	\$20.8
Ketchikan	1	5	5.00	1	\$22.9
Nome	1	11	11.00	1	\$29.2

Safety Items and Security Cameras

During both the 1999 and 2002 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 recommended installing a closed circuit camera system to expand security coverage of the training school units (cottages). This alternative would improve internal monitoring without the need for staffing of a 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/or escape. Below is a listing of safety equipment needs at youth facilities around the state.

Safety Items

- NYF** 20' container van to help solve ongoing storage problems. This will store larger items and things of a mechanical or outside nature.
- NYF** Combustion analyzer to be used to regularly check boilers for efficiency.
- MYC** Electronic cipher lock for the Administration/C-1 gate to replace manual lock that has proven unreliable
- MYC** Electronic lock with intercom at gate and door into aftercare/state office area.
- MYC** Replace ten hand-held radios (1/2 of inventory) These radios are used constantly and are no longer reliable.
- MYC** Software for key control
- MYC** Fingerprint scanner
- MSYF** Two bullet-proof vests
- MSYF** Amplified intercom speaker for lobby
- MSYF** Camera monitor for staff duty station

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- MSYF** Touchscreen software upgrades
- JYC** Intercom system replacement

Security Cameras

- JYC** Security camera to monitor the large kitchen at JYC. Often staff and three to four youth are working alone in this area; this camera would afford security for staff and youth.
- BYF** Purchase of three exterior security cameras with monitor
- MYC** Security cameras to monitor closed units hallway and detention entrance
- MSYF** Security camera upgrade for pan and zoom view to parking lot
- MYC** Security camera system to monitor cottages from closed units (per ACA auditor's recommendation) If the cottages are renovated or replaced, there may need to be some changes made, but in general, the system should still be able to be used. Monitors are placed within the unit at a central location. The cameras are placed in both both internal/external locations, mounted on the building.
- MYC** Security camera to monitor north side of the administration building

C. Division of Public Assistance

Work Stations

Safety, health, and productivity of staff and security of client records are major factors. Funds are needed to provide secure and safe work surfaces in four regions: Anchorage; Coastal; Southeast and Northern. Capital funds 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 Public Assistance 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: desks, data tables of various sizes. They do not have adjustable keyboard trays. Other furniture is of various ages, types and colors, such as of bookshelves, and unsecured (no locks) older two and four drawer file cabinets. Some offices have a mixture of various height and colored partitions. Offices such as Nome have desks over 20 years old.

The conventional work surfaces and storage in field offices are so old that they do not support proper ergonomics. 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.

Of particular importance is ensuring the security of the agency's resources and records and compliance with Titles I and II of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

D. Division of Public Health

New Safe Vehicle and Replacement Vehicles

Many older vehicles leased from DOT are plagued by repeated mechanical problems. Because nursing staff need 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 \$27.3 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.

Replacement Vehicles

The following list of vehicles are a concern and cannot be replaced with the limited funding in FY04.

Location	Vehicle request	Vehicle Cost	Replacement Credits	Cost Reduced by Vehicle
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			(Estimated)	Credits
Haines	Replace 1995 Utility Wagon 4WD	27.3	24.3	3.0
Mat Su	Replace 1991 Sedan with 4 WD Utility	27.3	19.5	7.8
Mat Su	Replace 1993 Minivan with 4WD Utility	27.3	19.5	7.8
Bethel	Replace 1991 Utility Wagon 4WD	27.3	20.0	7.4
Juneau	Replace 1995 Utility Wagon 4WD	27.3	24.2	3.2
Kodiak	Replace 1995 Utility Wagon 4WD	27.3	24.2	3.2
	Total	163.9	131.6	32.3

Department's Mission: *To promote and protect the health and well being of Alaskans.* This project supports the Department's mission by providing vehicles and equipment that will allow staff to carry out their responsibilities effectively and in a safe manner.