

State of Alaska FY2006 Governor's Operating Budget

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

Component: Front Line Social Workers

Contribution to Department's Mission

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.

Core Services

The Front Line Social Worker component delivers child protective services that 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 children; monitoring the 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 activities include family-centered services that focus on the family rather than the individual. These services assist 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.

As of September 2004, the department was providing services to 2,021 children in custody and in out-of-home care. There were approximately 919 children placed in non-relative foster homes, 626 in relative homes, and 269 children in trial home visits. The remaining children were placed in residential or other settings.

FY2006 Resources Allocated to Achieve Results

FY2006 Component Budget: \$33,144,700	Personnel:	
	Full time	414
	Part time	1
	Total	415

Key Component Challenges

Reduce High Caseloads: The final Child and Family Services Federal Review included a number of recommendations to improve Alaska's child protection system. One such recommendation was the need for additional child protection workers to reduce the high caseloads carried by the front line staff. The current high number of cases prevent the division's child protection workers from responding to all reports of harm, are a significant factor in explaining high employee turnover, and bar social workers from meeting with clients even one time per month. The Federal Review also identified the need for enhancements to current programs and quality assurance. The proposed FY2006 budget includes an increment for the Front Line Social Worker component to address high caseloads and quality assurance, that is also critical to the successful implementation of OCS' federally mandated Program Improvement Plan.

Reduce Time Spent by Social Workers Completing Paperwork: Transcription Services save workers on average 7.5 hours, or one work day per week, less completing paperwork. This in turn allows 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 improves communication with system partners and other service providers.

Increase Federal Title IV-E Revenue: The Office of Children's Services is reimbursed from the Federal Title IV-E program for direct services OCS provides when removal of a child from their home is necessary to protect the child. As the

number of children certified as eligible for Title IV-E benefits increases, the federal reimbursement rate and federal receipts OCS claims increases. As part of its continuing efforts to increase the number of children qualified for Title IV-E benefits, Eligibility Technicians in the Front Line Social Worker component focus on timely and accurate Title IV-E eligibility determination and benefit authorizations for OCS clients. At the end of FY2003, the statewide penetration rate (percentage of Title IV-E eligible clients in paid foster care placements) was 48%. Through data collection improvements, extensive re-review of case files and enhanced management and supervision of OCS eligibility workers, the statewide penetration rate increased to 64% by the end of FY2004. The rate continues to increase in FY2005. As a result, the state is able to finance a greater share of foster care payments with federal receipts.

Smooth the Transition from Foster Care to Independent Living: The OCS intends to utilize federal funds to provide independent living services to youth who are transitioning from foster care to independence. Youth who "age out" of the foster care system are often ill prepared to live independently. They may not have strong family or community ties that help one shift to self-sufficiency. One goal of the Independent Living Program is to provide an individual assessment of the needs of the youth along with the skills and resources needed to become a successful adult.

Develop A Comprehensive Quality Assurance System: The office established 2 new positions in FY2005 to develop a quality assurance program that is broad in scope, able to assess practice and outcomes as well as compliance. The division's goals for a quality assurance program include the ability to use data, information and results to affect positive changes in policy and case practice as well as compliance with federal, state and agency requirements. The division's on-site Quality Assurance program is still currently under development. Due to delays in classification and recruitment of new positions, the Quality Assurance effort will experience late start-up in FY2005.

Reduce Employee Turnover: The division will continue efforts to reduce employee turnover and to recruit new employees. Such efforts include training provided by the Children's Services Staff Training Academy, the Bachelors of Social Work stipend program, a proposed increment to fund licensing fees for social workers, and the "back-to-school" Masters of Social Work program.

Significant Changes in Results to be Delivered in FY2006

The Office of Children's Services plans to improve services to children and families with the development of a Quality Assurance System as addressed in the division's Program Improvement Plan. OCS anticipates the system will focus on outcomes, involve a broad range of stakeholders, and facilitate continuous improvement in services provided to children and families.

In order to keep children safe, recruit more resource families to provide foster/adoptive homes, meet the outcomes defined in the federal program improvement plan, and enhance safety in foster/adoptive homes, the Office of Children's Services requests additional positions in FY06 to respond to growth in caseload and assign front-line workers to prevention, protection and permanency.

With the proposed addition of 31 new staff, OCS will be able to reduce caseloads for social workers. A reduction in caseloads will have a significant positive impact on OCS' progress in the Performance Improvement Plan. The division also anticipates a decline in caseloads would improve the basic function and activities performed by social workers. Services that support children and families such as investigation of reports of harm, crisis intervention and case planning would be addressed more promptly when child protection workers manage fewer cases. The office would anticipate decreased risk of harm to children, decreased stays in foster care, a decreased number of foster care placements per child, and decreased foster care costs. The division would also look for the length of time children remain in state custody to lessen, as child protection workers are better able to focus on the treatment goals, case planning, and case management functions that release children from state custody.

As more children in custody are determined to be eligible under the federal IV-E entitlement program, the statewide penetration rate (percentage of Title IV-E eligible clients in paid out-of-home placements) will continue to increase accordingly, thereby making OCS able to finance more operating expenditures for this component with federal receipts.

Progress made towards meeting the goals of the federal Program Improvement Plan (PIP) includes continual review of the Structured Decision Making tool to see if changes are needed to better identify the risk of recurrence and provide more timely intervention. (Structured Decision Making is a formal process used throughout a case to assess the risk to children and the needs and protective capacities of the family.) The agency is regularly identifying and reporting children with recurrence of maltreatment to local office supervisors for review. OCS is coordinating with the foster parent service agencies and the courts to improve training, with the Family Services Training Academy to research issues related to

substance abuse, and with communities and other partners to improve the availability and accessibility of services.

OCS continues to work to improve data quality and consistency in classifying and recording reports of harm and in timely entry of investigation outcomes to reduce data errors that lead to an over count of recurrence. OCS also plans to implement finding categories more consistent with those used in other states. These measures will reduce the recurrence due to data anomalies.

In support of consolidation efforts to centralize certification and licensing, 3 PFT positions will be transferred to the Division of Public Health in FY2006 for residential child care facility licensing.

Major Component Accomplishments in 2004

Participated in 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 will 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 OCS workers to know about other children and potential adoptive families in the state.

Statutory and Regulatory Authority

- AS 47.05.010 Administration of Welfare, Social Services, and Institutions, duties of department.
- AS 47.10 Children in Need of Aid.
- AS 47.17 Child Protection.
- 7 AAC 50 Community Care Licensing
- 7 AAC 51 Child Placement Agencies
- 7 AAC 53 Social Services
- Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996
- Titles IV-A, IV-B, IV-E and XIX of the Social Security Act

Contact Information
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Front Line Social Workers Component Financial Summary

All dollars shown in thousands

	FY2004 Actuals	FY2005 Management Plan	FY2006 Governor
Non-Formula Program:			
Component Expenditures:			
71000 Personal Services	21,264.4	25,607.6	28,493.6
72000 Travel	104.1	159.5	257.5
73000 Services	2,705.3	3,092.0	3,600.9
74000 Commodities	312.4	195.5	268.9
75000 Capital Outlay	133.4	217.0	343.0
77000 Grants, Benefits	0.0	180.8	180.8
78000 Miscellaneous	0.0	0.0	0.0
Expenditure Totals	24,519.6	29,452.4	33,144.7
Funding Sources:			
1002 Federal Receipts	11,221.3	15,441.0	13,810.2
1003 General Fund Match	2,726.5	2,834.4	2,933.7
1004 General Fund Receipts	7,299.0	8,670.7	13,894.5
1007 Inter-Agency Receipts	3,104.0	2,005.3	2,005.3
1037 General Fund / Mental Health	148.6	148.6	148.6
1108 Statutory Designated Program Receipts	20.2	352.4	352.4
Funding Totals	24,519.6	29,452.4	33,144.7

Estimated Revenue Collections

Description	Master Revenue Account	FY2004 Actuals	FY2005 Management Plan	FY2006 Governor
Unrestricted Revenues				
None.		0.0	0.0	0.0
Unrestricted Total		0.0	0.0	0.0
Restricted Revenues				
Federal Receipts	51010	11,221.3	15,441.0	13,810.2
Interagency Receipts	51015	3,104.0	2,005.3	2,005.3
Statutory Designated Program Receipts	51063	20.2	352.4	352.4
Restricted Total		14,345.5	17,798.7	16,167.9
Total Estimated Revenues		14,345.5	17,798.7	16,167.9

**Summary of Component Budget Changes
From FY2005 Management Plan to FY2006 Governor**

All dollars shown in thousands

	<u>General Funds</u>	<u>Federal Funds</u>	<u>Other Funds</u>	<u>Total Funds</u>
FY2005 Management Plan	11,653.7	15,441.0	2,357.7	29,452.4
Adjustments which will continue current level of service:				
-FY 05 Bargaining Unit Contract Terms: GGU	221.2	0.0	0.0	221.2
-Residential Child Care Facility Licensing Activities transfer to Public Health	-150.9	-128.4	0.0	-279.3
-Transfer in General Funds from SAG to Replace Social Services Block Grant & Leverage Additional Title IVE revenue	3,700.0	0.0	0.0	3,700.0
-Transfer Social Services Block Grant to SAG for Guardianship State Only Costs	0.0	-3,700.0	0.0	-3,700.0
-FY06 Cost Increases for Bargaining Units and Non-Covered Employees	722.3	0.0	0.0	722.3
Proposed budget increases:				
-Front Line Social Work Expansion and IVE Realignment	830.5	2,197.6	0.0	3,028.1
FY2006 Governor	16,976.8	13,810.2	2,357.7	33,144.7

Front Line Social Workers Personal Services Information

Authorized Positions			Personal Services Costs	
	<u>FY2005</u> <u>Management</u> <u>Plan</u>	<u>FY2006</u> <u>Governor</u>		
Full-time	385	414	Annual Salaries	19,785,281
Part-time	1	1	COLA	315,422
Nonpermanent	4	4	Premium Pay	450,033
			Annual Benefits	10,677,940
			<i>Less 5.81% Vacancy Factor</i>	(1,813,676)
			Lump Sum Premium Pay	0
Totals	390	419	Total Personal Services	29,415,000

Position Classification Summary

Job Class Title	Anchorage	Fairbanks	Juneau	Others	Total
Accounting Clerk I	0	0	0	1	1
Accounting Clerk II	2	3	1	0	6
Administrative Assistant	1	2	0	1	4
Administrative Clerk I	2	0	0	0	2
Administrative Clerk II	11	7	2	15	35
Administrative Clerk III	4	1	1	3	9
Administrative Manager I	0	0	1	1	2
Administrative Manager II	1	1	0	0	2
Childrens Services Manager	1	1	1	1	4
Childrens Services Spec I	5	3	1	8	17
Childrens Services Spec II	16	5	4	17	42
Community Care Lic Spec I	5	4	1	3	13
Community Care Lic Spec II	1	2	0	2	5
Elig Technician I	0	2	0	1	3
Elig Technician II	4	1	1	1	7
Elig Technician IV	1	0	0	0	1
Mntl Hlth Clinician II	0	0	1	0	1
Mntl Hlth Clinician III	0	1	0	1	2
Nurse IV (Psych)	2	1	1	1	5
Project Asst	1	0	0	0	1
Social Services Associate I	5	0	0	3	8
Social Services Associate II	10	3	2	8	23
Social Svcs Prog Officer	1	0	0	0	1
Social Worker I (Cs)	4	2	2	7	15
Social Worker II (Cs)	55	23	10	56	144
Social Worker III (Cs)	4	0	0	0	4
Social Worker IV	0	1	1	0	2
Social Worker IV (Cs)	18	7	4	19	48
Social Worker V (Cs)	6	2	1	2	11
System Reform Administrator	1	0	0	0	1
Totals	161	72	35	151	419