Mandatory Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information and Billing System Improvements | **FY2008 Request: $1,500,000** | **Reference No: 6816**

AP/AL: Appropriation
Project Type: Information Systems
Category: Health/Human Services
Location: Statewide
Contact: Janet Clarke
House District: Statewide
Contact Phone: (907)465-1630
Estimated Project Dates: 07/01/2007 - 06/30/2012

Brief Summary and Statement of Need:
Ongoing Alaska's Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System development and enhancements as required by federal and state law and resulting changes in practice.

Funding:	FY2008	FY2009	FY2010	FY2011	FY2012	FY2013	Total
Fed Rcpts	$750,000						$750,000
G/F Match	$750,000						$750,000
Total:	$1,500,000	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$1,500,000

☑ State Match Required ☐ One-Time Project ☐ Phased - new ☑ Phased - underway ☐ On-Going
50% = Minimum State Match % Required ☐ Amendment ☐ Mental Health Bill

Operating & Maintenance Costs:

	Amount	Staff
Project Development:	0	0
Ongoing Operating:	0	0
One-Time Startup:	0	
Totals:	0	0

Additional Information / Prior Funding History:
CH159/SLA04/P26/L11 $240.3 Federal Unrestricted and $240.3 Federal
CH82/SLA03/P28/L15 $1,684.5 GF/Match and $1,684.5 Federal
CH1/SSSLA02/P40/L12 $2,372.3 ACPE funds and $2,372.3 Federal
CH135/SLA00/P14/L14 $2,700.0 AHFC funds and $2,700.0 Federal
CH123/SLA96/P53/L24 $1,520.0 Federal
In addition, $13.5 in Federal funds from an SLA 96 appropriation were set aside by the Department for this project.
CH103/SLA95/P37/L23 $1,240.0 GF and $250.0 Federal

Project Description/Justification:

Information Technology Capital Project Review Form FY2008

1. Has this project been previously approved?

   Yes

2. What is the purpose of the project? Continued mandatory development, improvement, and updates to Alaska's Statewide Automated Child Welfare System known as ORCA (Online Resources for the Children of Alaska) through contract services.

   The Online Resources for the Children of Alaska (ORCA) child protection services case management system is a federally mandated system required to support child protective services case management and federal reporting. It was

developed for and is used by the State of Alaska. ORCA Implementation was in two phases: 1) Case Management was implemented in September, 2004 and 2) Financial Management was implemented in February, 2005.

As part of the overall strategy, sole responsibility by state personnel for ORCA was anticipated within one year of implementation. Since that time, the agency has learned that the implementation of ORCA and its impact on the fundamental way child protection services does business has taken much longer than anticipated and will be continual.

In addition, the ORCA software development environment is far larger and far more complex than anticipated. It has become apparent that the agency must continue to rely on contractual services to augment state resources. Without augmented contractual services, the need for ongoing ORCA system changes related to federal mandates, new state laws, and related practice changes cannot be met.

ORCA is a living system that must respond to a service environment that is in continuous change and growth. A static, unresponsive system would lose its value and relevance to the agency. System operation must include enhancement, modification and improvement over time. Systems like ORCA are called Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information Systems (SACWIS) by the federal government. A compliant SACWIS represents the single most important investment for child welfare agencies.

Alaska is not alone in the need for contracted development services. Most states have the desire to take ownership of their SACWIS, but, few, if any, have the capacity to do so. Existing models vary from contracted services that assume all SACWIS maintenance and development roles to the Alaska proposed augmentation solution.

Project cost:	**Capital:**			**Annual O&M costs or savings**
	Prior Years	**FY 2007**	**FY 2008**	
General Funds	$1,240,000	0	0	0
General Fund Match	$1,684,500	0	$750,000	0
General Fund Program Receipts	0	0	0	0
I/A Receipts (dept. and fund source)	0	0	0	0
Other Funds (ACPE 1150/AHFC 1139)	$5,072,300	0	0	0
Federal Funds	$9,020,900	0	$750,000.00	0
Total	$17,017,700	0	$1,500,000.0	0

3. Is this a new systems development project? No.

Upgrade or enhancement to existing department capabilities?

Yes

4. Specifically, what hardware, software, consulting services, or other items will be purchased with this expenditure? (Include a line item breakdown).

There are six major areas of continued contractual need:

1. *Business process redesign* for SACWIS management of services to our children mandated by Title IV-E of the Social Security Act, as amended, requires a comprehensive realignment of complex system functionality. System modules and tables require a large volume of changes in relation to any change in practice and/or federal and state requirements.

Examples of current changes in queue after implementation of the ORCA system are:

1) new federal reporting requirements for the Independent Living Program that include data the Office of Children's Services does not currently collect;

2) data that became federally mandated in October of 2006 (and will be required no later than October of 2007) under the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children that is not currently collected;

3) federally required disaster recovery capabilities; and

4) agency implementation of a new practice centered around safety assessments that focus on the entire family and their overall functioning rather than just maltreatment. This change in practice is in keeping with legislative intent to keep children safe in their own homes.

The agency believes these types of changes will be ongoing and will need to be addressed annually rather than occasionally.

Estimated annual need: 3,840 contractual hours at an estimated cost of $480.0 50% federal funds; 50% general fund match.

2. *Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS).* Submission of data to this federal system is mandatory. The AFCARS business process will require continual re-engineering to bring it into compliance with federal mandates such as increased data elements and data definition changes. This process will require continual use of contracted developers to update AFCARS data and submissions in order to remain in compliance. We have learned that this is common among other states as well.

Estimated annual need: 1,920 contractual hours at an estimated cost of $240.0 50% federal funds; 50% general fund match.

3. *Reporting.* As business practices, federal reporting requirements, and SACWIS requirement changes occur, there will be necessary adjustments to existing reporting capability and new reporting needs. These changes require continual unmet needs analysis, development of requirements, design, testing, and implementation. While state ORCA staff can do some of this work, the level of effort far exceeds existing resources.

Estimated annual need: 3,840 contractual hours at an estimated cost of $480.0 50% federal funds; 50% general fund match.

4. *Development and maintenance for continual data analysis and clean-up.* This tool will allow access to data within ORCA that cannot otherwise be changed or updated in compliance with HIPAA statutes and regulations. This tool attaches to the ORCA database, affording high-end users the ability to make corrections to a limited set of data that cannot be accessed by any other means and allows for an audit trail for all data changes. This requires contractual resources to develop, update, and maintain.

Estimated annual need: 960 contractual hours at an estimated cost of $120.0 50% federal funds; 50% general fund match.

5. *Continuous ORCA implementation and training for mandatory updates and changes.* The ability for state staff to offer continuous training under ORCA is severely limited to current subject matter experts who also carry additional workload. The need for development and updating of this training element through contractual services is essential to the success of ORCA.

Field staff is required to enter both case management data and financial data. When workers do not know how to properly enter data into ORCA, the overall reporting capacity of the system is severely limited. This, in turn, decreases ORCA's ability to provide the agency with accurate and reliable output to support the practice or comply with federal and state mandates. The need for continual ORCA subject matter expertise is exacerbated by the agency's on-going struggle to hire and retain field staff. In FY 2006, child protection services staff turned over at a rate of more than 28 percent – or about 125 staff.

Estimated annual need: 480 contractual hours at an estimated cost of $60.0 50% federal funds; 50% general fund match.

6. *Underlying support of ORCA electronic systems*, products and technical architecture is required. Support for some of the platform tools in which ORCA resides are already no longer available or will soon to be off the market. This is just one simple example: ORCA form templates are developed utilizing a Microsoft Word product. There are more than 150 Word templates within ORCA. When developed, the product utilized MS Word 2000. Within the next 12 to 18 months, it is expected that Microsoft will no longer support Word 2000. While this type of software is purchased under the state Enterprise relationship with Microsoft, the integration of these products to the ORCA application system is not. Updates of this nature will be continual.

Estimated annual need: 960 contractual hours at an estimated cost of $120.0 50% federal funds; 50% general fund match.

5. How will service to the public measurably improve if this project is funded? The Office of Children's Services will be able to comply with federal regulations for safety of children at risk of abuse or neglect and children in the custody of the State. Since paperwork requirements will be automated and simplified, workers will be better able to focus on supporting families and better ab le to determine which families can safely remain together. Thus, the number of children who can remain safely in their own homes will increase.

6. Does project affect the way in which other public agencies will conduct their business? No

7. What are the potential out-year cost implications if this project is approved? (Bandwidth requirements, etc.) None

8. What will happen if the project is not approved?
It the project is not approved, ORCA will be out of compliance with federal regulations and unable to meet federal reporting requirements, eventually making Alaska ineligible for federal funds for children's services. The Office of Children's Services will be unable to meet the legislative intent of keeping children safe in their own homes. The Office of Children's Services may not be capable of caring for children in the event of a disaster. New staff will not have adequate training in the use of ORCA and may enter faulty or misleading data. Parts of ORCA will not be supported and may become unusable. The State may lose a significant part of its investment in ORCA.

Department's Mission: *To promote and protect the health and well being of Alaskans.* This project supports the Department's mission by meeting all federal standards of best currently accepted practices for protecting the children of Alaska.

The end result to which this project contributes is "Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse or neglect."