

State of Alaska FY2009 Governor's Operating Budget

Department of Health and Social Services Subsidized Adoptions & Guardianship Component Budget Summary

Component: Subsidized Adoptions & Guardianship

Contribution to Department's Mission

The Subsidized Adoption & Guardianship program facilitates permanent placements in adoptive homes or stable guardianships for the increasing number of children in state custody whose special needs make them hard-to-place. Adoption is viewed as the most permanent placement for a child and is therefore generally the preferable option.

Guardianships are considered for children who cannot be freed for adoption, but for whom a reasonably permanent home can be provided through guardianship. This is often the best choice for children who cannot live with their parents, but continue to have an important emotional tie with their families that should not be severed.

Core Services

This component provides a permanent home to children that are in the permanent custody of the state and who are unlikely to be adopted without a subsidy. These are children that have been removed from situations of abuse or neglect and that have physical or mental or emotional disturbances which place them at high risk for subsequent abuse or neglect. The adoption or guardianship subsidy covers the costs for the child's special needs and is available to the family until the child reaches age 18.

This component's efforts also focus on permanency needs that include four deliverables: recruitment of homes for children who do not already have permanent homes; home studies on potential adoptive families; pre-adoption services for the child and family; and post-adoption services for up to one year after the final adoption or guardianship court hearing.

As of September 2007, there were 2,245 continuing adoptions and 280 new adoptions and guardianships in Alaska.

FY2009 Resources Allocated to Achieve Results

FY2009 Component Budget: \$21,539,100	Personnel:	
	Full time	0
	Part time	0
	Total	0

Key Component Challenges

Address the High Number of Beneficiaries to be Served: When children leave foster care, their special needs are re-assessed to determine whether they will continue to need assistance through the Subsidized Adoption & Guardianship program. Approximately 95 percent of children exiting custody have special needs and continue to receive state benefits.

The division has recognized for some time now that the level of disturbance and complexity of problems for children in custody is increasing. These factors make it difficult to find permanent adoptive or guardianship homes without a subsidy. It is preferable that the state provides a means for children to be given a permanent home with state funding than for the state to continue to be completely responsible for the child. The special needs of these children combined with budgetary constraints make this a challenging task at best.

Resource Family Recruitment: Efforts to recruit adoptive families that reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of the children served by the OCS continues to be a challenge.

Regionalization of Adoption and Guardianship Subsidy Programs: The Office of Children's Services (OCS) provides adoption and guardianship services to between 2,200 and 2,600 children annually. The adoption and guardianship services include:

- 1) The negotiation, establishment, and maintenance of 200-250 new subsidies for newly adopted or guardianship children;
- 2) Maintenance of 2,000 to 2,200 subsidies for continuing adoptions and guardianships;
- 3) Research and advocacy for other resource services available to the child, such as Social Security benefits, Veteran's Benefits, survivor's benefits;
- 4) Information and referral for post-adoption subsidy supports for families in need of services such as counseling, mental health services, respite, or other treatment services; and
- 5) Interstate coordination of Medicaid benefits.

It is estimated that the subsidy programs will continue to grow at the current growth rate averaging 268 new children or 63 families per year.

There are currently four positions that are considered Regional Adoptions Specialists (RAS), one in each region. However, these positions are not dedicated to Adoptions alone. Each of the RAS are currently required to conduct case reviews including Family and Child Early Conferences, Administrative Case Reviews, Permanency Planning Conferences, and, in some cases, ICWA (Indian Child Welfare Act) reviews. The OCS estimates that 75% of their time is spent conducting reviews, leaving only one FTE working on adoption/guardianship duties statewide.

The OCS would like to work toward dedicating a RAS position in each region allowing dedicated services delivery for adoption and guardianship subsidy matters and post-adoption support. This would also significantly reduce the overflow workload now being handled by state office staff in Juneau so that administrative and management work could be given appropriate attention.

Significant Changes in Results to be Delivered in FY2009

No changes in results delivered.

Major Component Accomplishments in 2007

The Subsidized Adoption & Guardianship program provided for 280 adoptions and guardianships for children that were in the permanent custody of the state.

Home Study Services: Two contractors provided home study services to families who want to adopt children in the state's custody.

Participated in the Alaska Adoption Exchange: The Alaska Adoption Exchange promotes earlier identification of children in the system waiting for adoption and potential families wanting to adopt. The Exchange lists children in custody who are available now or soon will be available for adoption, as well as potential adoptive families who could be 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 25.23	Adoption
AS 25.23.190-240	Subsidy for hard-to-place child
AS 47.10.080	Judgments and orders
7 AAC 53 Article 2	Subsidized Adoption and Subsidized Guardianship Payments
Title IV-E of the Social Security Act	

Contact Information

Contact: Laura Baker, Budget Chief
Phone: (907) 465-1629
Fax: (907) 465-1850
E-mail: Laura.Baker@alaska.gov

**Subsidized Adoptions & Guardianship
Component Financial Summary**

All dollars shown in thousands

	FY2007 Actuals	FY2008 Management Plan	FY2009 Governor
Formula Program:			
Component Expenditures:			
71000 Personal Services	0.0	0.0	0.0
72000 Travel	8.3	0.0	0.0
73000 Services	151.8	798.8	1,026.3
74000 Commodities	0.0	0.0	0.0
75000 Capital Outlay	0.0	0.0	0.0
77000 Grants, Benefits	19,631.6	20,512.8	20,512.8
78000 Miscellaneous	0.0	0.0	0.0
Expenditure Totals	19,791.7	21,311.6	21,539.1
Funding Sources:			
1002 Federal Receipts	11,101.8	11,346.8	11,346.8
1003 General Fund Match	3,284.2	3,134.4	3,134.4
1004 General Fund Receipts	5,405.7	6,830.4	7,057.9
Funding Totals	19,791.7	21,311.6	21,539.1

Estimated Revenue Collections

Description	Master Revenue Account	FY2007 Actuals	FY2008 Management Plan	FY2009 Governor
Unrestricted Revenues				
Unrestricted Fund	68515	0.1	0.0	0.0
Unrestricted Total		0.1	0.0	0.0
Restricted Revenues				
Federal Receipts	51010	11,101.8	11,346.8	11,346.8
Restricted Total		11,101.8	11,346.8	11,346.8
Total Estimated Revenues		11,101.9	11,346.8	11,346.8

**Summary of Component Budget Changes
From FY2008 Management Plan to FY2009 Governor**

All dollars shown in thousands

	<u>General Funds</u>	<u>Federal Funds</u>	<u>Other Funds</u>	<u>Total Funds</u>
FY2008 Management Plan	9,964.8	11,346.8	0.0	21,311.6
Adjustments which will continue current level of service:				
-Transfer in Permanency Funding from Child Protection Legal Services for Legal Services to Adoptions	227.5	0.0	0.0	227.5
FY2009 Governor	10,192.3	11,346.8	0.0	21,539.1