

**Bethel Youth Facility Expansion - Phase 1****FY2013 Request: \$10,000,000****Reference No: 54191****AP/AL:** Appropriation**Project Type:** Construction**Category:** Health/Human Services**Location:** Bethel**House District:** Bethel (HD 38)**Impact House District:** Southwest Areawide (HD 36-38)**Contact:** Jennifer Klein**Estimated Project Dates:** 07/01/2012 - 06/30/2017 **Contact Phone:** (907)465-1870**Brief Summary and Statement of Need:**

Bethel Youth Facility (BYF) is in need of extensive renovation and construction. This capital request will provide for the pre-construction work of four new detention beds for a total of twelve, upgraded treatment beds, additional probation space, expanded medical space, a vehicle sally port, a small gymnasium and a secure outdoor recreation area. This first phase will complete the design, address site issues and will assist in the removal of the Yukon Kuskokwim Health Corporation's Keyes Building that is in too close proximity to Bethel Youth Facility.

<b>Funding:</b>	<u>FY2013</u>	<u>FY2014</u>	<u>FY2015</u>	<u>FY2016</u>	<u>FY2017</u>	<u>FY2018</u>	<u>Total</u>
Gen Fund	\$10,000,000						\$10,000,000
<b>Total:</b>	\$10,000,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$10,000,000

<input type="checkbox"/> State Match Required	<input type="checkbox"/> One-Time Project	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Phased - new	<input type="checkbox"/> Phased - underway	<input type="checkbox"/> On-Going
0% = 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:	0	0
One-Time Startup:	0	0
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

**Additional Information / Prior Funding History:**

First year request

**Project Description/Justification:**

Bethel Youth Facility (BYF) currently provides western Alaska with an 18-bed detention and treatment facility that also includes the region's probation offices. The existing building was constructed in 1984 -1985 and actually was not occupied until 1988. The 20+ year old facility serves the City of Bethel and 56 surrounding villages.

BYF was part of an assessment study performed on the Division of Juvenile Justice's (DJJ) four oldest facilities in 2007 to identify safety and security concerns in these facilities. The study identified BYF as a poorly designed facility with serious safety and security deficiencies. Recently, the study has been re-evaluated for BYF and the scope has been trimmed down to address the current deficiencies in a two-phased project. The first phase of \$10,000,000 will address pre-construction (design) and site development work. Any remaining balance of funds will be added to a FY2014 request to complete the construction phase. Total cost for the project in FY2013 dollars is \$19,025,400.

This capital request will completely fund the design work. The design will encompass the pre-concept planning document that incorporates a central spine that connects the new gym, outdoor recreation, sally port and medical space with the existing building. The existing housing areas are to be extensively renovated with significant restructuring, thus addressing significant infrastructure issues. These include septic system failure, water pipe problems, electrical issues and structural problems with four cells on the detention unit. The central spine will separate the 11-bed treatment area from the 12-bed detention space. The intake area will be immediately adjacent to the vehicle sally port.

Funding for this first phase will also address the security and adjacency issues with the Yukon Kuskokwim Health Corporation (YKHC) Keyes Building, a former children's receiving home once owned and operated by the Department and transferred to Yukon Kuskokwim Health Corporation (YKHC). This site is less than 30 feet away from the treatment unit and shares the north property line. There is no fence defining the property boundary and casual trespassing onto BYF grounds is common. Visual access onto the site is unimpeded and conformance to child protection and confidentiality requirements are difficult to provide since the only outdoor recreation area is in full view of this neighboring facility. The Department will partner with YKHC to remove the building to another site and the land will revert back to the Department for use by BYF.

Pre-construction funding will also address demolition of unused building(s) on the site in preparation for construction. Any remaining funds from this appropriation will be combined with the Phase 2 request to complete the project.

The majority of the youth in the facility have grown up with families experiencing substance abuse and domestic violence issues. Many of the youth suffer from some level of mental health issues. The rate of serious crime amongst juveniles in the Yukon-Kuskokwim area is not disproportionately higher than other regions of the State, but historically, the facility has housed offenders with a wide range of offenses including murder, assault and kidnapping charges. The level of the physical security systems and barriers must be adequate to keep these offenders contained within the building. The investigation conducted as a part of this study revealed several weaknesses in the level of containment that need to be addressed in order to improve both the holding capability of the security lines and internal safety within the facility.

The facility is very crowded, with multiple probation officers sharing offices and the detention program at times experiences severe overcrowding. As many as 22 residents have occupied the eight-bed detention facility. Detention and treatment are managed from one centralized and enclosed control room.

The detention unit has steel doors and security locks with lock down capabilities, but the treatment unit has free egress, hotel style locking wood doors with commercial locks. There is little acoustic separation between the spaces and therefore, little separation between the programs. Large cell windows are not security glazed and there are few interlocking doors to close off direct access from program areas to unprotected free space.

BYF is in need of additional detention beds, increased perimeter security and adequate space for probation to provide services beyond those offered to the residents.

The young people who are ordered by the court to live in the State's youth facilities are placed there to mitigate their ability to harm other members of the community. While held, intense proactive counseling and individual programming are administered in an attempt to alter behavior patterns before they are ingrained as a way of life. If the institutions are not safe and the residents feel threatened, we simply cannot expect the therapeutic work to have any effect on these youngsters. It is imperative that these facilities be safe if we expect positive results to be realized from the staff's dedicated work.

A few years ago, none of the youth facilities were fenced. Today it is necessary to protect the facilities' residents from outside violence as well as the citizens in the community from residents who may escape. Security and property fences and barriers need to be erected to assure the required protection is provided.

Today society places a greater number of young people at risk. Intervention at early stages before criminal activity becomes a way of life is found to be an effective means to keep some youths out of the Juvenile Justice System. These programs are often community-based, but supported by the state's youth facilities. Establishment and enhancement of these programs is an investment worth making. Assuring the programs are appropriately located and provide an appropriate environment for them to be administered is an important component of a long term State commitment to community safety.

The State's juvenile justice infrastructure is an important component of maintaining public safety and a last chance to habilitate our youth to be responsible members of their community. That investment not only protects our citizens today but also reduces the threat tomorrow.

This project directly supports the Department's mission by creating safe and secure facilities for juvenile justice staff and incarcerated youth, as well as Alaskan communities.

**Mission:**

To promote and protect the health and well-being of Alaskans.

**End Result:**

Alaskans live free from negative impacts of alcohol and drug use. The physical health of Alaskans is optimized. The mental health of Alaskans is optimized. Alaskans receive the long-term care they need. Vulnerable Alaskans have a safe living environment.