

Bethel Youth Facility Renovation Phase 2 of 2

FY2014 Request: \$10,000,000

Reference No: 42830

AP/AL: Appropriation

Project Type: Construction

Category: Health/Human Services

Location: Bethel

House District: Bethel/Aleutians (HD 37)

Impact House District: Bethel/Aleutians (HD 37)

Contact: Jennifer Klein

Estimated Project Dates: 07/01/2013 - 06/30/2018

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Brief Summary and Statement of Need:

The Bethel Youth Facility requires extensive renovation and construction. This capital request will provide funding for the completion of the project. The construction work will consist of building four new detention beds for a total of twelve detention beds, upgrading the existing treatment beds, providing additional probation space and expanded medical space, constructing a vehicle sally port, a small gymnasium and a secure outdoor recreation area.

Funding:	FY2014	FY2015	FY2016	FY2017	FY2018	FY2019	Total
Gen Fund	\$10,000,000						\$10,000,000
Total:	\$10,000,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$10,000,000

<input type="checkbox"/> State Match Required	<input type="checkbox"/> One-Time Project	<input type="checkbox"/> Phased - new	<input checked="" 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
Totals:	0	0

Prior Funding History / Additional Information:

Project Description/Justification:

The Bethel Youth Facility was part of a 2007 assessment study performed on the Division of Juvenile Justice's (DJJ) four oldest facilities to identify safety and security concerns in these facilities. The Bethel Youth Facility was deemed a poorly designed facility with serious safety and security deficiencies. Recently, the study was re-evaluated for the Bethel Youth Facility and the scope was trimmed down to address the current deficiencies in a two-phased project. The first phase of this project addressed pre-construction (design) and site development work. The second phase is the balance of funds needed to complete the construction phase. Total cost for the project in FY2012 originally was projected to be \$19,025,400. By phasing the project, additional costs were incurred.

During initial planning utilizing the FY2013 funding, it was determined that the State may save dollars if the population of the existing facility could be temporarily housed elsewhere. If the building was unoccupied, the amount of construction time could be conceivably reduced by one year. A service relocation cost and benefit analysis will be performed to determine if relocating the detention and probation services off site is possible, the cost of such a move, and whether this cost is justified

through time and money saved by allowing the contractor complete and unfettered access to the facility.

This capital project will completely fund all the remaining design and construction costs that will incorporate 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.

The Bethel Youth Facility 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 but not occupied until 1988. The 27 year old facility serves the City of Bethel and 56 surrounding villages.

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 among 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 youth 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 current 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.

The Bethel Youth Facility is in serious need of additional detention housing, 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 young adults. It is imperative that these facilities be safe if we expect positive results to be realized from the staff's dedicated work.