

State of Alaska FY2014 Governor's Operating Budget

Department of Public Safety Village Public Safety Officer Program Results Delivery Unit Budget Summary

Village Public Safety Officer Program Results Delivery Unit**Contribution to Department's Mission**

Preserve public peace and protect life and property in rural villages.

Core Services

- Contract with non-profit organizations and local governments/boroughs to provide Village Public Safety Officer (VPSO) services throughout rural Alaska.

Major RDU Accomplishments in 2012

During FY2012, significant effort was focused on recruitment in the VPSO program. New brochures were produced to educate both communities and those interested in a career in the VPSO program. A formalized strategic plan for the VPSO program was developed under contract with McDowell Group of Anchorage. This plan will be the program's compass to focus on the challenges and growth of the program. At the beginning of FY2012, there were 85 VPSOs employed and by the end of FY2012 there were 92 VPSOs.

With the introduction of the Northwest Arctic Borough into the VPSO program, positions increased from two to six within a region that previously had difficulty finding applicants.

The following lists the activity within the program during FY2012:

- AST conducted 4,812 village visits statewide to assist VPSOs.
- Troopers conducted 9,487 VPSO oversight hours.
- Twenty-eight of the thirty-six new VPSO hires graduated from the Sitka Academy in January 2012.
- A dedicated trooper VPSO support in Kotzebue assisted the local borough coordinator in supervision and retaining equipment for the VPSOs.
- Statewide, VPSOs investigated 7,360 calls of service. These cases included 100 driving under the influence (DUI), 266 domestic violence assaults and 192 other assaults.

The significant decrease in criminal case activities, increase in trooper oversight hours, and additional VPSO positions is a testimony that having VPSOs in villages is working and goes along with the Governor's commitment to the VPSO program and Safe Homes and Strong Families.

In FY2012, the D.A.R.E. program expanded the D.A.R.E. Officer Training, adding an additional DOT which was conducted in Bethel Alaska. This DOT required the training staff to attend a full day of training prior to beginning the DOT and incorporated two VPSO D.A.R.E. officers as mentor assistants. The training was held in January 2012 and successfully trained an additional nine D.A.R.E. officers. Most of these newly trained D.A.R.E. officers began teaching the D.A.R.E. curriculum in their communities.

Planning was begun with the Northwest Arctic Borough School District to bring in specialized consultants who will provide safety and security assessments for 10 village schools in the Northwest Arctic Borough. The consultants will begin the assessments in FY13.

During FY2012, 18 new D.A.R.E. officers were trained bring the statewide total to an all-time high of 69. Of the 18 new D.A.R.E. officers, 10 were VPSOs, bringing the total of trained VPSO D.A.R.E. officers to 20.

Key RDU Challenges

Village Public Safety Officers (VPSO) are the first responders to incidents, and may be the only individuals immediately available to provide a broad range of public safety services in their village. These functions range from basic law enforcement, to probationer and parolee supervision, provision of first aid to the injured, assisting with search and rescue missions, fire prevention activities, and public safety education.

With the increase in the number of VPSO positions, the ability to provide adequate housing and office facilities within communities is increasingly more challenging. With the depressed economies within rural Alaska, many communities are looking to the state or federal government for funding sources.

The VPSO program has grown in FY2012 with funding from state general funds to support other associated expenses within the program. Continued grant management and oversight will require significant staff time. A concentrated effort is needed to collectively communicate regional public safety needs within villages when applying for federal grants. The VPSO command staff is reaching out to these communities and offering assistance, justification, and collaboration regionally to demonstrate to those who review the applications that we are using all available public safety resources and that grant funds will be utilized wisely.

The Drug Abuse Resistance Education (D.A.R.E.) program continues to heavily support the specialized training of VPSOs who in turn work with students within their community schools to make safe and responsible decisions. Some of the challenges faced by the program have been providing adequate training opportunities for the VPSOs as this program is rapidly expanding. Additional challenges center around the training model which led to trained VPSOs that did not teach the program in their communities. Further, the high turnover rate within the VPSO program as well as officers being re-assigned to new units continue to present challenges to maintaining qualified D.A.R.E. officers throughout the state. Finally, challenges have arisen with the modified School Resource Officer program in being able to provide adequate training that provides the officers with the skills they need to enter the classroom and teach a class.

Significant Changes in Results to be Delivered in FY2014

The legislature appropriated funding in FY2013 for fifteen additional VPSO officers and the necessary support for these new positions. In addition, they provided funds to enable a replacement schedule for existing VPSO equipment. This appropriation is part of the Governor's commitment to provide law enforcement in all communities within rural Alaska. This appropriation brought the total funded positions to 116. An additional 15 VPSOs, along with associated support costs, are included in the Governor's FY2014 budget. If approved, the total number of funded Village Public Safety Officers will rise to 131 in FY2014.

Housing construction grants for the VPSO program, through the Alaska Housing Finance Corporation, are expected to continue to be available in FY2014 for communities who provide the justification and support for a VPSO. In FY2014, the VPSO program staff will offer assistance to the non-profits and borough in facilitating the submittal of these grant requests and along with requests for federal grants that support public safety.

A new Rural Law Enforcement Training Academy (RLET) has replaced the old 10-week VPSO academy in Sitka. A 24 month schedule with more opportunities to attend training will be provided through RLET. RLET will provide training for VPSO's, Village Police Officers (VPO) and Tribal Police Officers (TPO) within all of rural Alaska. These sessions will be shorter in duration, averaging two to four week sessions over a 24 month period. Session locations include Sitka Public Safety Training Academy, Yuut Elitnaurviat in Bethel, and other possible locations within rural Alaska to better accommodate future students. This increases the total number of training hours for all interested officers in rural Alaska.

Additionally, Alaska Youth Academy (AYA) programs have been established in Barrow and Bethel. Youths ages 15-18 are invited to experience a seven-day public safety academy. The goals of the academy are to introduce youth to careers in public safety within rural and urban Alaska. It is the goal of this project to develop these youth to be healthy productive citizens of the future and have the ability to seek careers in public safety.

The department is investing in the youth of Alaska through the Law Enforcement Cadet Corps (LECC). The program is comprised of youth ages 15-18 who attend Mount Edgecumbe High School. The school is a residential program for

students from all regions and ethnic groups of the state. This cadet program is a career exploration and educational experience for a group of 20 students to learn about public service related careers and gain valuable leadership skills. The Training Academy provides the staff and facilities for the LECC program. It is the VPSO program's desire to hire VPSOs who have completed the LECC program.

The D.A.R.E. Officer Training (DOT) has been updated to more adequately accommodate the rapid growth of the VPSO program. These changes include conducting an additional DOT in Bethel Alaska; this additional training also offers additional training and assists in building qualified D.A.R.E. officers throughout the state. Utilizing trained VPSO D.A.R.E. officers as mentor assistants will assist in improving implementation of the D.A.R.E. program throughout the state.

School Resource Officer (SRO) training will be created ensuring that officers attending will receive the tools and skills necessary to teach a variety of courses in a school classroom. These skills will include classroom management and curriculum development and deliver; this should improve the full implementation of the modified SRO program throughout rural Alaska.

The D.A.R.E. office is will continue working on a specialized grant that provides safety and security school assessments to all 10 village schools in the Kotzebue region and seek future grant opportunities for similar projects in other regions of the state.

In FY2014, two components will be merged into one VPSO Program component. The VPSO Support and VPSO Contracts components compliment each other and will be merged into the VPSO Program component. Services will not change as a result of this merger, but state administration of this program will become more efficient.

Contact Information
<p>Contact: Jeff Hoover, Director, Administrative Services Phone: (907) 465-5488 Fax: (907) 465-4362 E-mail: jeff.hoover@alaska.gov</p>

**Village Public Safety Officer Program
RDU Financial Summary by Component**

All dollars shown in thousands

	FY2012 Actuals				FY2013 Management Plan				FY2014 Governor			
	UGF+DGF Funds	Other Funds	Federal Funds	Total Funds	UGF+DGF Funds	Other Funds	Federal Funds	Total Funds	UGF+DGF Funds	Other Funds	Federal Funds	Total Funds
Formula Expenditures None.												
Non-Formula Expenditures												
Village Public Safety Officer Pg	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	18,345.0	0.0	0.0	18,345.0
VPSO Contracts	12,413.4	0.0	0.0	12,413.4	14,376.6	0.0	0.0	14,376.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
VPSO Support	753.4	375.5	0.0	1,128.9	1,874.6	2.0	0.0	1,876.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Totals	13,166.8	375.5	0.0	13,542.3	16,251.2	2.0	0.0	16,253.2	18,345.0	0.0	0.0	18,345.0

**Village Public Safety Officer Program
Summary of RDU Budget Changes by Component
From FY2013 Management Plan to FY2014 Governor**

All dollars shown in thousands

	<u>Unrestricted Gen (UGF)</u>	<u>Designated Gen (DGF)</u>	<u>Other Funds</u>	<u>Federal Funds</u>	<u>Total Funds</u>
FY2013 Management Plan	16,251.2	0.0	2.0	0.0	16,253.2
Adjustments which will continue current level of service:					
-Village Public Safety Officer Pg	16,083.5	0.0	2.0	0.0	16,085.5
-VPSO Contracts	-14,376.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	-14,376.6
-VPSO Support	-1,874.6	0.0	-2.0	0.0	-1,876.6
Proposed budget decreases:					
-Village Public Safety Officer Pg	-417.8	0.0	-2.0	0.0	-419.8
Proposed budget increases:					
-Village Public Safety Officer Pg	2,679.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	2,679.3
FY2014 Governor	18,345.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	18,345.0