

Office of Children’s Services Lease Expansion or Relocation

FY2023 Request: \$0
Reference No: 63911

AP/AL: Appropriation

Project Type: Life / Health / Safety

Category: Health/Human Services

Location: Matanuska Susitna Borough

House District: Matsu Areawide (HD 7-12)

Impact House District: Matsu Areawide (HD 7-12)

Contact: Amy Burke

Estimated Project Dates: 07/01/2021 - 06/30/2026

Contact Phone: (907)465-1624

Brief Summary and Statement of Need:

To ensure office infrastructure and location change to accommodate the delivery of child welfare services in the Mat-Su area and Anchorage Regional Office. This proposal provides sufficient space for staff, client visitation, team meetings, and file management. The office locations will be safe, accessible, and ensure privacy for families involved with the Office of Children’s Services.

Funding:	FY2022	FY2023	FY2024	FY2025	FY2026	FY2027	Total
1002 Fed Rcpts	\$360,000						\$360,000
1004 Gen Fund	\$640,000						\$640,000
Total:	\$1,000,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$1,000,000

<input type="checkbox"/> State Match Required	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> One-Time Project	<input type="checkbox"/> Phased - new	<input type="checkbox"/> Phased - underway	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
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 Mat-Su Borough is Alaska’s fastest growing area with an average annual growth rate of 1.86 percent between 2010 and 2020 (Department of Labor and Workforce Development population estimates). The region represents 14.7 percent of Alaska’s total population. Staffing levels within the current Office of Children’s Services have grown along with the overall population growth of the area. In addition, recruitment difficulties in outlying offices resulted in positions being moved to Wasilla to cover those areas remotely. Three conference rooms have been transformed to shared offices while two additional conference rooms are being utilized for parent visitation. File rooms are at capacity and cabinets are spilling out into the hallways. Staff are doubled and tripled up in offices. The current office lobby can safely accommodate up to three clients. Often, there are up to ten clients or visitors in the lobby at a single time, resulting in safety concerns that put staff and clients at risk. Due to the nature of in-office client interactions and file maintenance, telework is not a viable option. The office is located in a strip mall adjacent to a grocery store and has been subject to vandalism including broken windows and State vehicle theft. Drug transactions, public urination, and intoxicated individuals

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sleeping in the hallways are common and visible from office windows, contributing to staff safety concerns. Clients entering a child welfare office in a popular strip mall area lack privacy.

The Anchorage Regional Office is in an increasingly unsafe area of downtown where staff and clients endure drug transactions, vandalism, public urination, and intoxicated individuals sleeping in and near the entrances of the leased building. Intoxicated individuals follow staff and clients when entering and exiting the building which poses a safety concern. There is limited parking available to clients and staff. The walkway from a satellite lot to the building is not well lit and the walkway is not properly maintained during the winter months often causing injury to staff from falling on snow and ice. The building landlord fails to consistently maintain the parking areas and sidewalks causing several client and staff injuries during the winter months. In addition, there are several building maintenance issues that are not addressed by the landlord after multiple requests that frequently require escalation to the State leasing section. The landlord consistently misses contractually required improvements, such as flooring, carpet, and paint.

Both the Mat-Su and Anchorage leases will expire with no remaining options in 2023. The Department of Health and Social Services will solicit new office spaces, ensure client and worker safety, and provide privacy for clients through a formal procurement process. This request will provide for moving expenses, furnishings, and general office infrastructure. The leases will include walls, carpet, information technology, safety, surveillance cameras, an integrated key card system, furnishings, family visitation rooms, filing rooms, conference rooms, security guard station, and a properly sized waiting area.