



2025-2029 Child and Family Services Plan

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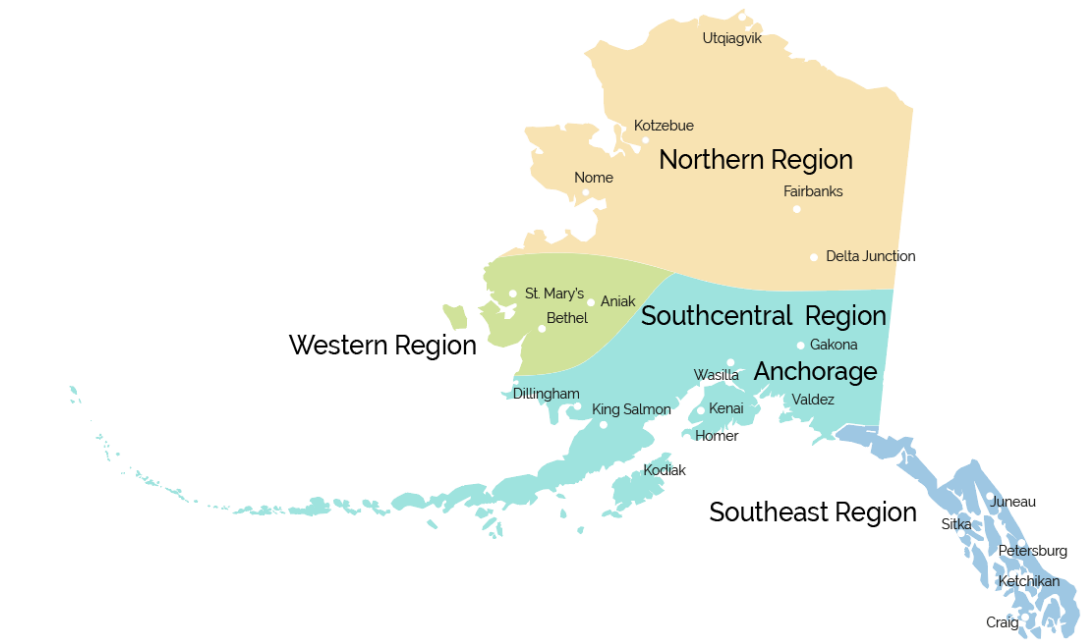
2025-2029 Child and Family Services Plan

SECTION 1 – VISION AND COLLABORATION

STATE AGENCY ADMINISTERING THE PROGRAMS

The Governor of Alaska has designated the Alaska Department of Family and Community Services, Office of Children’s Services as the single state agency responsible for administering Child Welfare Services (IV-B, subpart 1), Promoting Safe and Stable Families (IV-B, subpart 2), Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act, Chafee Foster Care Independence and Education, and Training Vouchers. The Office of Children’s Services (OCS) has administrative responsibility for the development and implementation of the Child and Family Services Plan, including all policies and procedures relating to child protection services in Alaska.

OCS, located in the Department of Family and Community Services is responsible for child protection services in the State of Alaska. OCS has 21 child protection field offices and approximately 610 employees with five regional headquarters in Anchorage, Bethel, Fairbanks, Juneau, and Wasilla. Only nine of the OCS offices are accessible by the road system. The staffing at OCS field offices varies across the state from one person generalist offices to multi-unit offices offering a full range of services. All fiscal and program support and oversight are based in Juneau, the state’s capital, Anchorage, and Wasilla.



Child Protection Offices in Alaska

Overview of OCS Child Protection Services Practice Model

The Alaska Office of Children’s Services, Child Protection Services (CPS) program utilizes a family intervention system with a focus on child safety. The OCS Child Protection Practice Model focuses on those families where a formal intervention by the state is necessary. This model emphasizes a strengths-based, family-centered approach through the standardization of information gathering, enhanced assessment and critical thinking skills by the CPS staff. Decisions regarding needed interventions with families are based on

thorough processes for initial and ongoing assessment of safety, risk, and protective factors. The CPS program serves families who are identified as having children who are “unsafe” or at “risk” for future maltreatment.

Mission / Vision/ Guiding Principles

Fundamental to the provision of OCS services is that every family served is treated with dignity and respect, and with consideration to their family and cultural values. Intervention and services to families are in the least restrictive, least intrusive, and most sustainable manner possible. In the case of Alaska Native or American Indian children, the diligent compliance with the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) is critical and can only be done through full partnerships with Tribes and Tribal organizations associated with the child’s family. OCS works in partnership with families and communities to support the well-being of Alaska's children and youth. Services are designed to enhance families’ capacities to give their children a healthy start, to provide them with safe and permanent homes, to maintain cultural connections, and to realize their potential.

MISSION STATEMENT

Ensuring the safety, permanency, and well-being of children by strengthening families, engaging communities, and partnering with Tribes.

VISION STATEMENT

Safe Children, Strong Families

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- **Safety** - Every child has the right to be safe.
- **Family** - Children remain in their home whenever possible.
- **Strength** - Families have specific strengths and cultures that are valued.
- **Success** - Empower children and youth to succeed.
- **Permanency** - Foster care is temporary. Every child deserves a safe and permanent home.
- **Community** - Community Partnerships are essential to engage and support families.
- **Connection** - Children need lifelong connections to their family, community, and culture.
- **Tribes** - Tribes and OCS have a respectful government-to-government relationship.

CORE VALUES OF AN EFFECTIVE WORKFORCE

- Hope – Motivates us

We anticipate success. We are a strengths-based organization. We support and empower people on their journey to success.

- Integrity – Directs us

We are trustworthy. We are reliable, authentic, and loyal. We do what we say we will do. We have the courage to do the right thing.

- Respect – Guides us

We honor all people. We value the intrinsic dignity and worth of all people. We treat others the way we want to be treated.

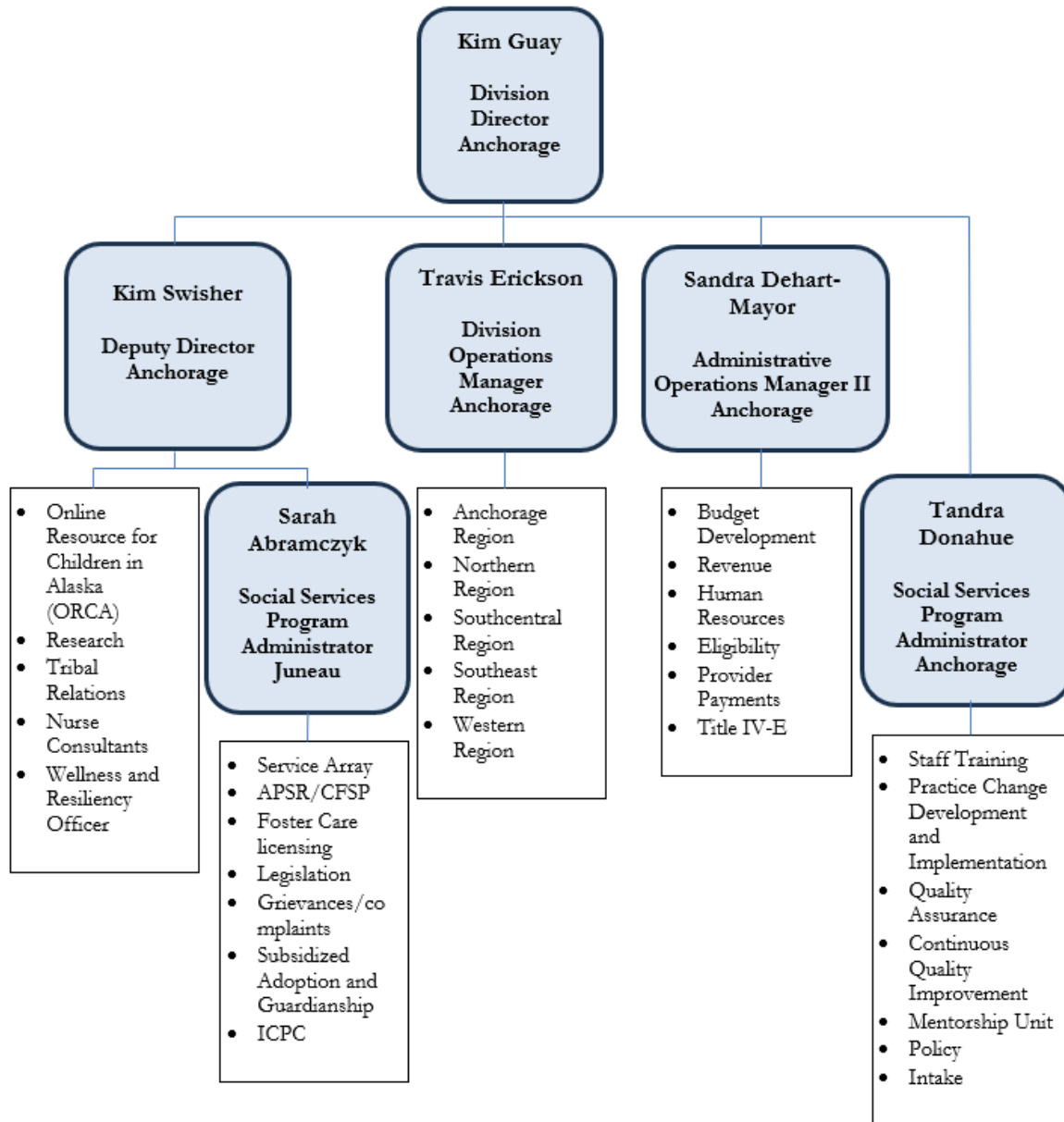
- Empathy – Leads us

We seek to understand. We work to listen and understand the unique perspectives and feelings of others.

Additionally, the Office of Children's Services' Child Protection Practice Model works in concert with the seven federal outcomes:

- Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect.
- Children are safely maintained in their homes whenever possible and appropriate.
- Children have permanency and stability in their living situations.
- The continuity of family relationships and cultural connections is preserved for children.
- Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs.
- Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs.
- Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs.

OCS Leadership Organizational Chart



Child Welfare Vision Statement

Alaska's Vision for Child Welfare to Empower Communities to Strengthen Families and Prevent Child Abuse, continues to be utilized and updated to provide provides goals and direction to align resources and support better outcomes for families.

Alaska's Vision for Child Welfare

Empower Communities to Strengthen Families and Prevent Child Abuse By Partnering with Tribes and Communities

Develop a stable child protection workforce.

- Enhance recruitment and retention efforts through improved agency culture.
- Improve new staff orientation, training and transfer of learning.
- Improve agency supervision.

Improve Permanency outcomes for children in care.

- Focus on statewide permanency plan.
- Centralize Statewide Permanency Leadership.



Prioritize essential child protection services.

- Establish Prioritization Principles.
- Timely initiations and completion of investigations.
- Monthly case worker visits, and family centered practice.

Enhance kinship care and involvement

- Increase kin involvement.
- Expand Team Decision Making statewide.
- Plan for a family meeting continuum.
- Support kin placements through licensure.

Collaboration

OCS recognizes the benefits of engaging and interacting with both our internal and external stakeholders. Collaboration with stakeholders leads to services that better fit the needs of the individuals we are tasked with serving, provides opportunities for all levels of staff to participate in the development of policy and procedures, increases the agency's accountability, and promotes a more inclusive child welfare system. The inclusion of individuals in which the system affects in decision making can lead to greater confidence in agency initiatives and better outcomes for the children and families served.

To capture the voice of lived experience, OCS supports and engages with Facing Foster Care in Alaska (FFCA). FFCA is a nonprofit dedicated to improving the foster care system, developing leadership skills among current and former foster youth, and creating a network of peer support that is a lifeline for many foster youths and alumni. OCS partners with the Alaska Center for Resource Families to host virtual statewide Foster Parent Forums to better inform the agency on how to improve recruitment and retention efforts for licensed foster parents. Those forums have now moved regionally and focus on specific needs and topics for foster parents serving children and families in those areas. In 2024 OCS is implementing a Parent Advisory Committee, this committee will be made up of ten Parent Leaders and has a goal to fully launch later this year. OCS leadership will partner with the Parent Advisory Committee to improve outcomes for children and families.

OCS continues to have robust engagement and collaboration with Tribes and Tribal Organizations through work on the Alaska Tribal Child Welfare Compact, Tribal State Collaboration Group, and Regional Tribal State Committees.

In continued efforts for retention of OCS staff, leadership hosted an in-person Leadership Summit that included Regional Managers, Staff Managers, Supervisors, Mentors, representatives from the Staff Advisory Board, Admin Officers, Admin Assistants, and statewide program staff in April of 2023 and April of 2024. This was a time set to refocus on workforce wellness, presenting the Surgeon General's Framework for Workplace Mental Health and Well-Being with the alignment of OCS' retention and recruitment plan, training on adaptive change and CQI model, targeted focus on safety, permanency, and wellbeing round tables. A significant highlight to the Leadership Summit was the cross programmatic information sharing and collaboration and efforts to prepare for Round 4 of the CFSR. Alaska partnered with The Butler Institute to provide more education and learning opportunities. Staff have responded positively, both years, on the ability to engage with each other in person for relationship building.

The Office of Children's Services interacts and engages with our stakeholders on an ongoing basis through the normal course of business on both a statewide and local level. Current venues in which stakeholders are engaged include but are not limited to:

- Court Improvement Project
- Regional Managers
- PSM I Collective
- Supervisory Leadership Council
- Child Welfare Academy
- Facing Foster Care in Alaska
- Tribal State Collaboration Group
- Tribal Compacting
- Change Management Leadership Team
- Rock Matsu and Rock Juneau
- Beacon Hill

- Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority
- Alaska’s Citizen Review Panel
- Alaska Youth and Family Network
- Resource Family Advisory Board
- Alaska Center for Resource Families
- University of Alaska
- Alaska Impact Alliance
- Citizen’s Review Panel
- Family Services Training Center
- Foster Parent Forums
- Parent Advisory Committee

OCS has also benefited from partnering with national partners including:

- Casey Family Programs
- Region X
- Capacity Center Building for States
- State Planning Sessions, SLO Peer Groups, and CJA meetings
- Center for Children and Family Futures
- National Quality Improvement Center for Collaborative Community Court Teams (QIC-CCCT)
- The Butler Institute

SECTION 2 – ASSESSMENT OF PERFORMANCE

CHILD AND FAMILY OUTCOMES

The 2017 CFSR findings and the 2017 Statewide Assessment, outlined that Alaska was not in substantial conformity with the seven outcome areas of Safety, Permanency and Well-Being; and six of the seven systemic factors. The Alaska Program Improvement Plan built on the information, data analysis and findings from both the CFSR findings and the Statewide Assessment. Through the multiple PIP strategies, OCS data shows improvement in multiple outcome areas and systemic factors. As Alaska is not scheduled for CFSR Round 4 until 2025, this reported data will serve as a baseline for the CFSP and future Annual Progress and Services Reports. As the next CFSR will likely require a Program Improvement Plan, OCS will be limiting the number of strategies during the first years of this CFSP. Additional strategies from the PIP will be reported on in subsequent APSRs.

Safety Outcome 1: Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect

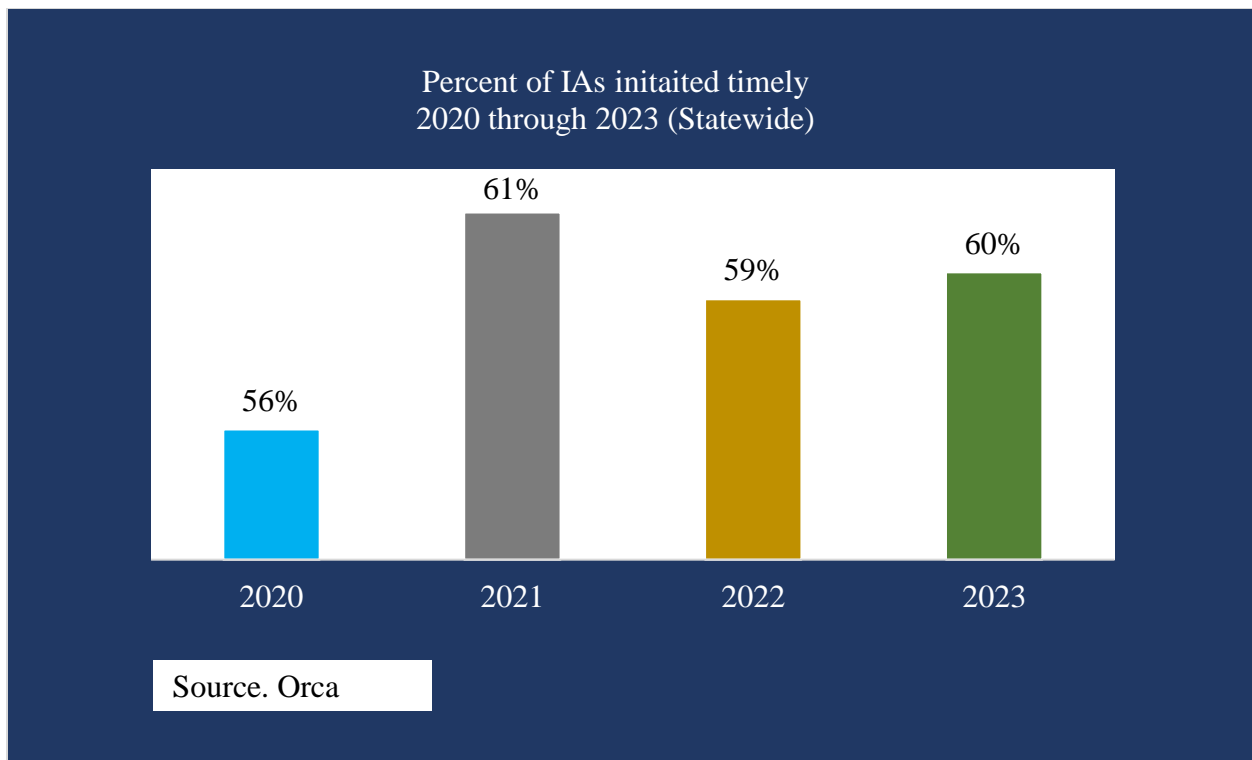
Alaska did not achieve substantial conformity with Safety Outcome 1 during the four-year PIP for Round 3. Alaska was very close to achieving the PIP goal for this item, and in Measurement Period 7 Item 1 strengths were at 76%, only one point away from achieving the goal of 77%.

ITEM 1: TIMELINESS OF INITIATING INVESTIGATIONS OF REPORTS OF CHILD MALTREATMENT

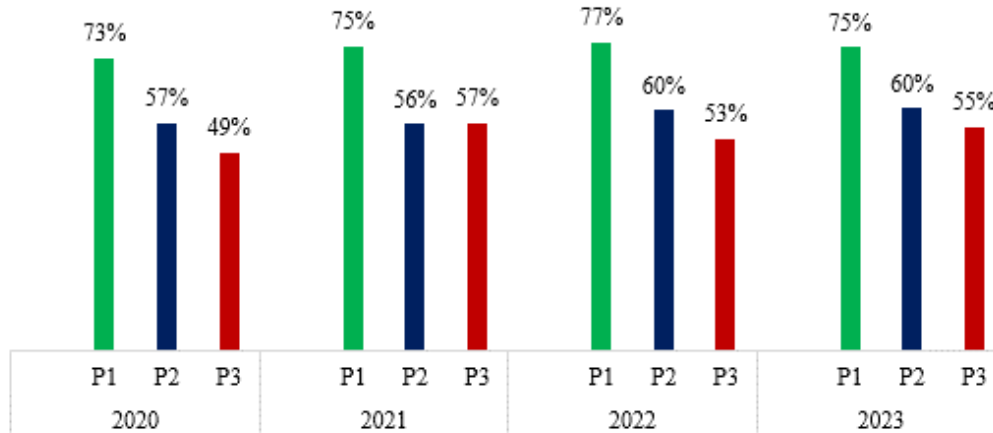
This item determines whether responses to all accepted child maltreatment reports received during the period under reviewer were initiated, and face-to-face contact with child(ren) made, within the time frames established by agency policy and state statutes.

Timeliness of initiating investigations of reports of child maltreatment did not meet the PIP goal of 77%. Reviewers found that at the end of the PIP, 72% of Item 1 cases were rated as a Strength. OCS does well in initiating investigations on Priority 1 reports of child maltreatment, the state struggles with timely initiations of priority 3 reports and the recent four-year data indicates that priority 2 reports also are an issue. Staffing shortages have been a major barrier in improving this item. Addressing retention and recruitment will continue to be a focus in Alaska’s 2025- 2029 CFSP. The use of data boards in the Strengthening I & A program should improve this area. Data boards allow investigation staff to plan the actions needed for investigations assigned with their supervisors. Efforts to expand the program statewide will continue from 2025-2029.

Item 1: Timeliness of Initiating Investigations of Reports of Child Maltreatment				
Site	Sample size	2021	2022	2023
Anchorage	39	79%	60%	70%
Juneau	18	36%	40%	77%
Fairbanks	18	90%	75%	70%
All Sites	75	72%	59%	72%
PIP Goal		77%	77%	77%



Percent of IAs initiated timely by priority level



Source: ORCA

Safety Outcome 2: Children are safely maintained in their homes whenever possible and appropriate

Alaska was unable to reach the PIP goal for Safety Outcome 2 due to Item 3 never reaching the goal. Currently OCS is working on changing the training for new Protective Services staff to include a transfer of learning period that is predicted to improve a new staff members skills to address safety. Focus groups will occur to assess how the new training is preparing staff for their work. Training will continue to be evaluated and modified during this CFSP.

During this CFSP Alaska will also be focused on the statewide implementation and fidelity monitoring of Strengthening I&A. This goal is described below in objective 2.B.

ITEM 2: SERVICES TO FAMILY TO PROTECT CHILD(REN) IN HOME AND PREVENT REMOVAL OR RE-ENTRY INTO FOSTER CARE.

This item determines whether, during the period under review, the agency made concerted efforts to provide services to the family to prevent entry into foster care or re-entry after a reunification. Item 2 was able to reach the PIP goal of 86% strength during measurement period 6.

Item 2: Services to Family to Protect Child (ren) in the Home and Prevent Removal or Re-Entry Into Foster Care

Site	Sample size	2021	2022	2023

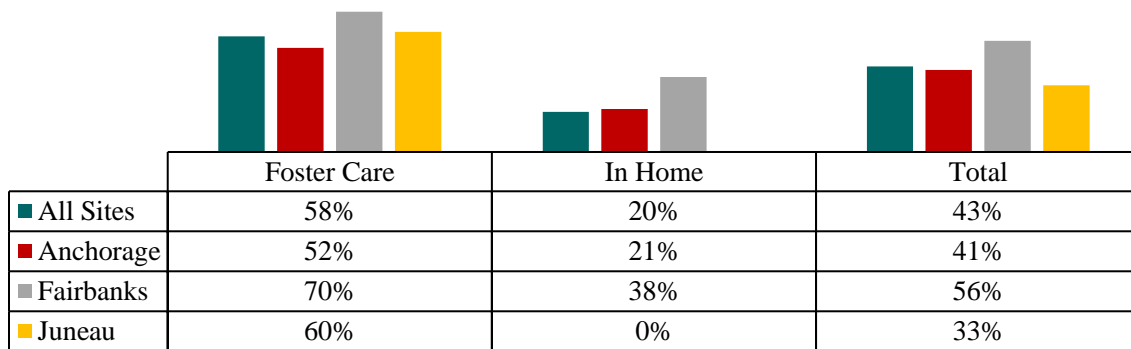
Anchorage	39	83%	80%	92%
Juneau	18	64%	83%	57%
Fairbanks	18	88%	100%	80%
All Sites	75	79%	86%	79%
PIP Goal		86%	86%	86%

ITEM 3: RISK AND SAFETY ASSESSMENT AND MANAGEMENT.

This item determines whether, during the period under review, the agency made concerted efforts to assess and address the risk and safety concerns relating to the child(ren) in their own homes or while in foster care. The PIP goal for Item 3 was not achieved and percent of repeat maltreatment for Alaska Native children has gone up to 18% while that of non-Native children has remained below the national performance level. Risk and safety management continue to be a struggle for in home cases, and are a focus for the agency.

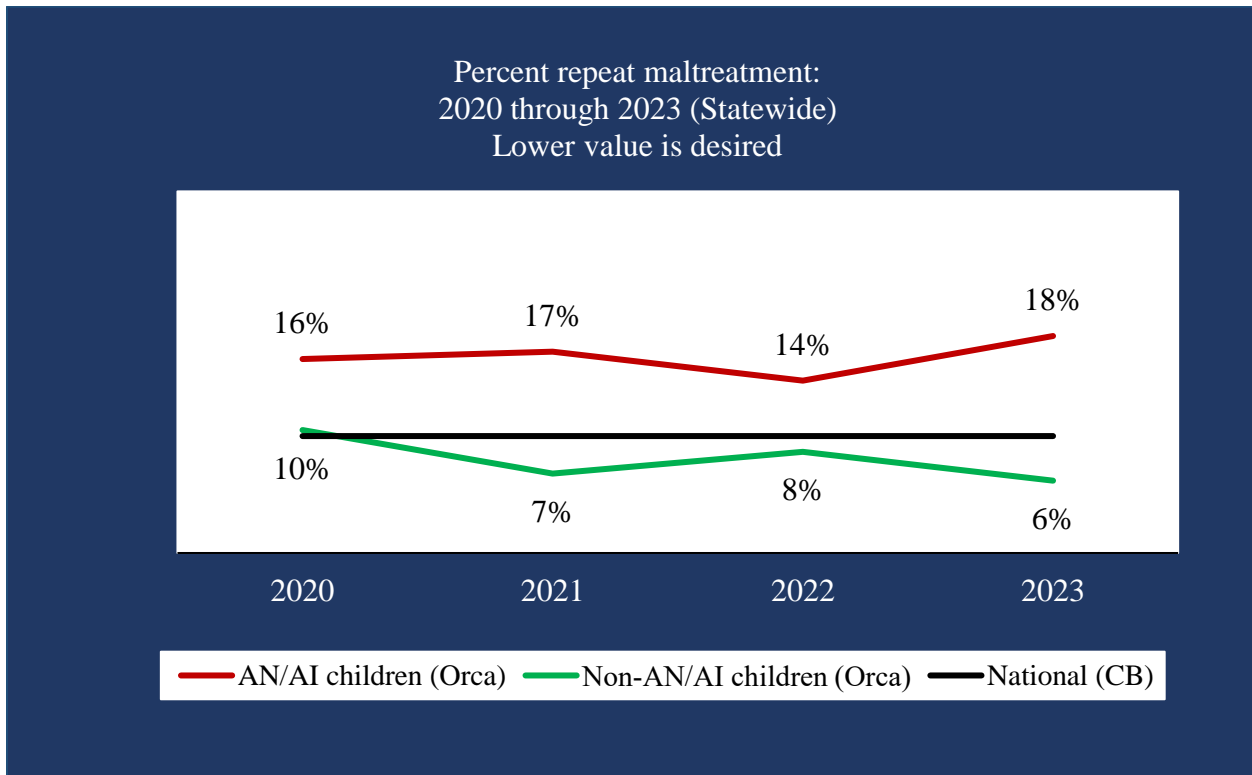
Through Alaska’s 1115 Behavioral Health Medicaid Demonstration Project, OCS continues to partner with the Department of Health to increase the availability of 1115 covered services including mental health, substance misuse, and family support.

**Item 3. Risk/safety assessment and risk/safety management
(FC vs IH by site) Percent of applicable cases rated strength
Measurement period 16
PIP Goal: 55%**



Item 3: Risk and Safety Assessment and Management				
Site	Sample size	2021	2022	2023
Anchorage	39	44%	49%	41%

Juneau	18	44%	28%	33%
Fairbanks	18	56%	78%	56%
All Sites	75	47%	51%	43%
PIP Goal		55%	55%	55%



Permanency Outcome 1: Children have permanency and stability in their living situations

Permanency Outcome 1 was achieved during the PIP. Strengths for the agency include updated policies and procedures for early relative identification and placement, Tribal Compacting, and joint permanency efforts with the CIP. Alaska’s struggles with record staff turnover and chronic high caseloads impact the agency’s ability to meet the AFSA timelines for permanency. The provision of timely services to Alaska’s families will also be a focus area for the state. In 2024 OCS created and hired a new Permanency Officer position to oversee the Regional Permanency Specialists which should improve this area further.

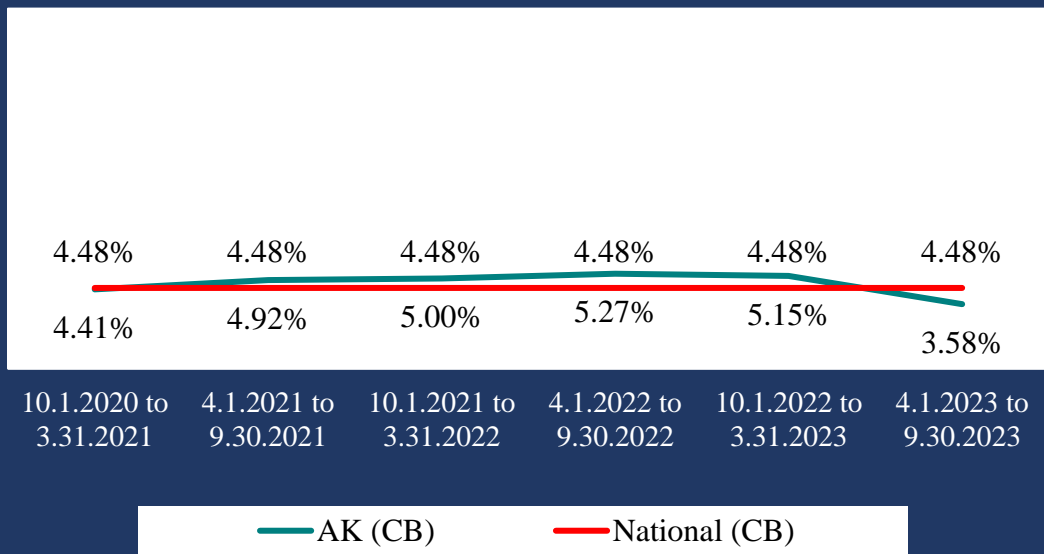
ITEM 4: STABILITY OF FOSTER CARE PLACEMENT

This item determines whether the child in foster care is in a stable placement at the time of the onsite review and that any change in placement that occurred during the period under review were in the best interest of the child and consistent with achieving the child’s permanency goal(s). Alaska surpassed this PIP goal during measurement period 7 when 78% of cases reviewed received a strength. Stability of foster care has been improving according to the Alaska data profile.

Item 4: Stability of Foster Care Placement

Site	Sample size	2021	2022	2023
Anchorage	39	72%	60%	64%
Juneau	18	90%	70%	80%
Fairbanks	18	90%	60%	70%
All Sites	75	80%	62%	69%
PIP Goal		74%	74%	74%

Placement stability (Risk-Standardized Performance)
 Oct 1, 2020 through September 30, 2023 (Statewide)
Lower value is desired



ITEM 5: PERMANENCY GOAL FOR CHILD.

This item determines whether appropriate permanency goals were established for the child in a timely manner. Alaska achieved this PIP goal for 8 consecutive measurement periods.

Item 5: Permanency Goal for Child

Site	Sample size	2021	2022	2023
Anchorage	39	75%	44%	40%

Juneau	18	100%	50%	70%
Fairbanks	18	70%	60%	56%
All Sites	75	80%	49%	50%
PIP Goal		57%	57%	57%

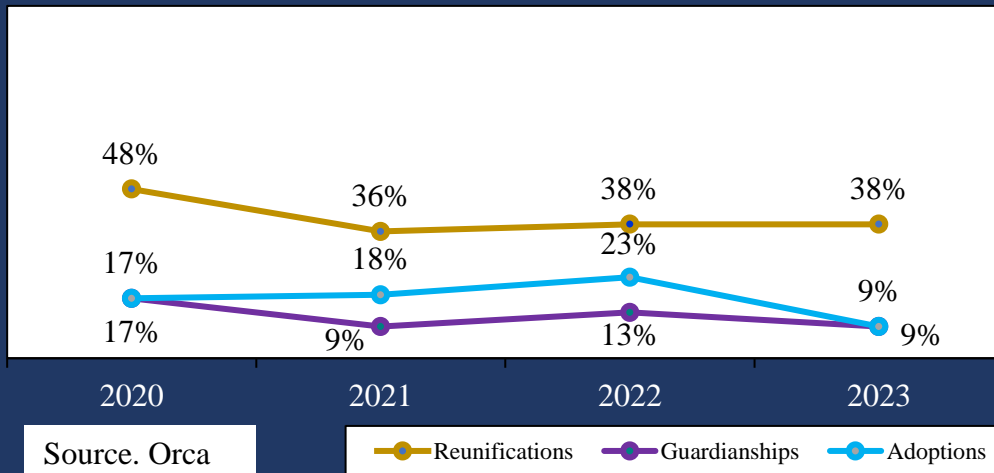
ITEM 6: ACHIEVING REUNIFICATION, GUARDIANSHIP, ADOPTION OR OTHER PLANNED PERMANENT LIVING ARRANGEMENT.

This item determines whether concerted efforts were made, or are being made, during the period under review to achieve reunification, guardianship, adoption, or other planned permanent living arrangement. Alaska has experienced improvement from 2022 to 2023 and was able to achieve the PIP goal for 5 consecutive measurement periods during the PIP.

Item 6: Achieving Reunification, Guardianship, Adoption, or Other Planned Permanent Living Arrangement

Site	Sample size	2021	2022	2023
Anchorage	39	64%	40%	40%
Juneau	18	70%	40%	50%
Fairbanks	18	30%	50%	50%
All Sites	75	58%	42%	44%
PIP Goal		55%	55%	55%

Percent of reunifications, guardianships, and adoptions timely
2019 through 2023 (Statewide)



Permanency Outcome 2: The continuity of family relationships and connection is preserved for children

Alaska has remained stable for Permanency Outcome 2 and case reviews indicate mostly high percentages in this outcome area. Strengths include efforts to improve relative search and placement, maintaining children in their home schools, and stronger use of ICWA placement preferences for Alaska Native children in care. Concerns continue to be directly related to record high staff turnover and high caseloads. Central to improved child welfare performance on all outcomes for families and children in Alaska is a strong and stable workforce focused on safety, permanency, and well-being. Alaska looks to the key elements of staff recruitment strategies, retention efforts primarily through training, supervision, and staff mentorship as key to reducing the workforce challenges with OCS. The creation and hiring of a Wellbeing Officer has also been a strategy to strengthen the workforce. In 2024 OCS created and hired a new Permanency Officer position to oversee the Regional Permanency Specialists.

ITEM 7: PLACEMENT WITH SIBLINGS.

This item determines whether, during the period under review, concerted efforts were made to ensure that siblings in foster care are placed together unless a separation was necessary to meet the needs of one of the siblings. Alaska has continued to maintain a high percentage in recent years.

Item 7: Placement With Siblings				
Site	Sample size	2021	2022	2023
Anchorage	39	75%	100%	87%
Juneau	18	100%	100%	100%

Fairbanks	18	100%	83%	100%
All Sites	75	87%	97%	92%
PIP Goal		N/A	N/A	N/A

ITEM 8: VISITING WITH PARENTS AND SIBLINGS IN FOSTER CARE.

This item determines whether, during the period under review, concerted efforts were made to ensure that visitation between a child in foster care and his or her mother, father, and siblings is of sufficient frequency and quality to promote continuity in the child’s relationship with these close family members. Alaska continued to remain stable with high percentages in this item experiencing only a 1% variation in the recent three years. Resource parents supportive of reunification have been identified as a positive influence in this outcome area.

Item 8: Visiting With Parents and Siblings in Foster Care				
Site	Sample size	2021	2022	2023
Anchorage	39	72%	71%	62%
Juneau	18	75%	60%	67%
Fairbanks	18	75%	88%	100%
All Sites	75	73%	72%	73%
PIP Goal		N/A	N/A	N/A

ITEM 9: PRESERVING CONNECTIONS.

This item determines whether, during the period under review, concerted efforts were made to maintain the child’s connections to his or her neighborhood, community, faith, extended family, Tribe, school, and friends. Alaska has maintained a high percentage in this item in the recent years.

Item 9: Preserving Connections				
Site	Sample size	2021	2022	2023
Anchorage	39	76%	96%	92%
Juneau	18	100%	90%	80%
Fairbanks	18	88%	100%	100%
All Sites	75	84%	96%	91%
PIP Goal		N/A	N/A	N/A

ITEM 10: RELATIVE PLACEMENT.

This item determines whether, during the period under review, concerted efforts were made to place the child with relatives when appropriate. Alaska continued to receive a high percentage in this item. The Tribal compact and use of Tribes to assist in locating relatives has played a pivotal role in this item.

Item 10: Relative Placement				
Site	Sample size	2021	2022	2023
Anchorage	39	88%	83%	96%
Juneau	18	100%	100%	100%
Fairbanks	18	100%	100%	100%
All Sites	75	93%	91%	98%
PIP Goal		N/A	N/A	N/A

ITEM 11: RELATIONSHIP OF CHILD IN CARE WITH PARENTS.

This item determines whether, during the period under review, concerted efforts were made to promote, support, and/or maintain positive relationships between the child in foster care and his or her mother and father or other primary caregiver(s) from whom the child had been removed through activities other than just arranging for visitation. Alaska has dropped by 10% for aggregate scores in 2023, although the Fairbanks PIP sight remained stable throughout the last three years.

Item 11: Relationship of Child in Care With Parents				
Site	Sample size	2021	2022	2023
Anchorage	39	59%	71%	39%
Juneau	18	63%	75%	89%
Fairbanks	18	83%	100%	100%
All Sites	75	64%	78%	68%
PIP Goal		N/A	N/A	N/A

Well-being Outcome 1: Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs

Alaska was unable to achieve Well-Being Outcome 1 during the PIP. OCS aims to address permanency and well-being through activities designed to improve the engagement and relationships between clients and case workers by providing staff with more support and accountability through enhanced supervision, quality and consistent visits with children and parents, and through the exploration and inclusion of cultural activities in the case planning process. The training of case carrying staff has undergone complete revision to support staff in learning how to do the work in the field as opposed to primarily providing training in a classroom

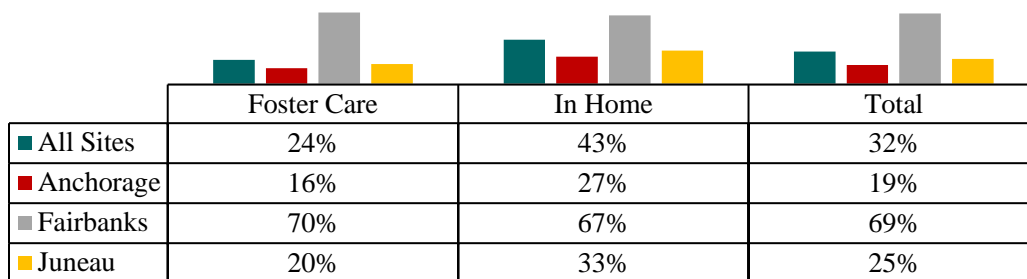
setting. This should better prepare new staff in understanding their role in assessing and addressing the wellbeing needs of the families being served.

ITEM 12: NEEDS AND SERVICES OF CHILD, PARENTS, AND FOSTER PARENTS.

This item determines whether, during the period under review, the agency (1) made concerted efforts to assess the needs of children, parents, and foster parents (both initially, if the child entered foster care or the case was opened during the period under review, and on an ongoing basis) to identify the services necessary to achieve case goals and adequately address the issues relevant to the agency’s involvement with the family, and (2) provided the appropriate services. Alaska was unable to reach the PIP goal of 40% strength for aggregate data. Although the individual office of Fairbanks has been consistently operating above the PIP goal, this was not enough to improve the aggregate data and achieve the goal.

Item 12: Needs and Services of Child, Parents, and Foster Parents				
Site	Sample size	2021	2022	2023
Anchorage	39	36%	31%	19%
Juneau	18	38%	19%	25%
Fairbanks	18	44%	63%	69%
All Sites	75	38%	35%	32%
PIP Goal		40%	40%	40%

Item 12. Needs and services of child, parents, and foster parents
(FC vs IH by site) (Percent of applicable cases rated *strength*)
Measurement period 16
PIP Goal: 40%



ITEM 13: CHILD AND FAMILY INVOLVEMENT IN CASE PLANNING.

Item 13 determines whether, during the period under review, concerted efforts were made to involve parents and children (if developmentally appropriate) in the case planning process on an ongoing basis. Alaska achieved the PIP goal and was able to stay above the goal for 9 consecutive measurement periods. Item 13 has dropped slightly in 2023 and there is a relationship with the decrease in caseworker visits for parents.

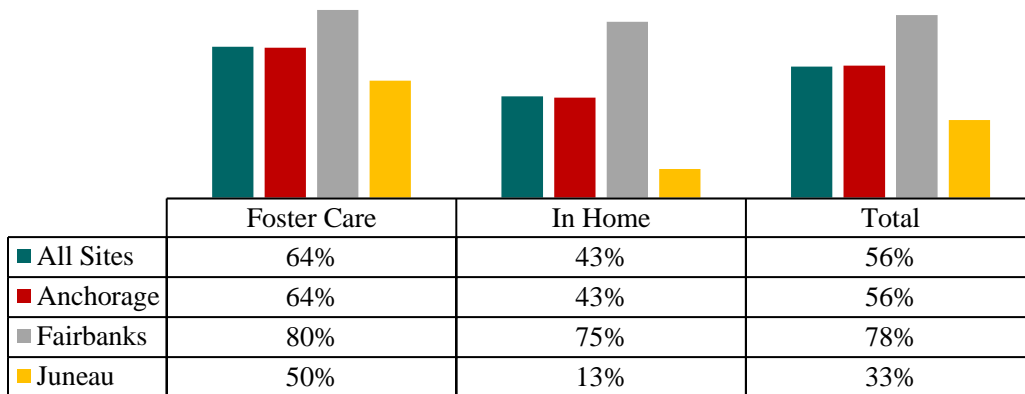
Item 13: Child and Family Involvement in Case Planning

Site	Sample size	2021	2022	2023
Anchorage	39	56%	61%	43%
Juneau	18	50%	56%	37%
Fairbanks	18	71%	100%	69%
All Sites	75	58%	69%	48%
PIP Goal		54%	54%	54%

ITEM 14: CASEWORKER VISITS WITH CHILD.

Item 14 determines whether the frequency and quality of visits between caseworkers and the child(ren) in the case are sufficient to ensure safety, permanency and well-being of the child(ren) and promote achievement of case goals. Alaska was unable to reach the PIP goal of 55% although came close in the last two measurement periods. OCS staff struggle with prioritizing essential services which can cause a decrease in caseworker visits from children placed in their home.

Item 14. Caseworker visits with child (ren) FC vs IH by site
 Percent of applicable cases rated strength
 Measurement period 16
PIP Goal: 58%



ITEM 15: CASEWORKER VISITS WITH PARENTS.

Item 15 determines whether, during the period under review, the frequency and quality of visits between caseworkers and the mothers and fathers of the child(ren) are sufficient to ensure the safety, permanency, and well-being of the child(ren) and promote achievement of case goals. Alaska able to achieve the PIP goal and

maintain above the goal for 5 measurement periods. Statewide data does indicate stability but there is still a need for further efforts with parents, especially fathers.

Item 15: Caseworker Visits With Parents				
Site	Sample size	2021	2022	2023
Anchorage	39	32%	15%	9%
Juneau	18	38%	0%	6%
Fairbanks	18	33%	53%	50%
All Sites	75	34%	20%	19%
PIP Goal		28%	28%	28%

Caseworker Visits with Children				
Region	2020	2021	2022	2023
Anchorage	69%	61%	62%	64%
Northern	63%	72%	71%	60%
Southcentral	76%	73%	70%	70%
Southeast	77%	68%	64%	79%
Western	39%	43%	56%	50%
Statewide	68%	65%	65%	64%

Source. Orca

Caseworker Visits with Mothers				
Region	2020	2021	2022	2023
Anchorage	23%	20%	19%	19%
Northern	29%	41%	32%	27%
Southcentral	24%	24%	24%	25%
Southeast	19%	28%	22%	22%
Western	11%	17%	15%	13%
Statewide	24%	25%	23%	22%

Source. Orca

Caseworker Visits with Fathers				
Region	2020	2021	2022	2023
Anchorage	13%	11%	10%	11%
Northern	17%	30%	20%	15%
Southcentral	17%	15%	18%	16%
Southeast	11%	17%	13%	11%
Western	8%	12%	10%	9%
Statewide	14%	16%	14%	13%

Source. Orca

When you had placement of children, how often did you receive contact with the assigned case worker?		
Frequency	Number	Percent
At least monthly	207	49.2
At least every other	80	19.0
Every 2-3 months	65	15.4
Every 4-6 months	26	6.2
No visits	43	10.2
Total	421	100.0

Source. 2024 Foster Parent Survey Preliminary Report

When needed, were you able to reach caseworker for the children in your home?		
Response	Number	Percent
Yes	235	58
No	170	42
Total	405	100

Well-being Outcome 2: Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs

Alaska has remained stable in this outcome area and has continued to score high in the recent three years. Alaska will continue to assess children’s educational needs at initial and on-going contacts with the child. OCS maintains a data sharing agreement with the Department of Early Education and Early development. Any educational needs are documented on the child’s case plan and addressed through case management.

ITEM 16: EDUCATIONAL NEEDS OF THE CHILD.

This item determines whether, during the period under review, the agency made concerted efforts to assess children’s education needs at the initial contact with the child (if the case was opened during the period under review) or on an ongoing basis (if the case was opened before the period under review), and whether identified needs were appropriately addressed in case planning and case management activities. Alaska has achieved 90% strength for the two most recent years.

Item 16: Educational Needs of the Child				
Site	Sample size	2021	2022	2023
Anchorage	39	87%	83%	90%
Juneau	18	90%	100%	83%
Fairbanks	18	89%	100%	100%
All Sites	75	88%	90%	90%
PIP Goal		N/A	N/A	N/A

Well-being Outcome 3: Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs

Alaska has experienced improvement in this outcome area in 2023. The agency must continue to diligently assess and address the physical and mental health needs of children. Systemic collaborations continue to be an area of need to assure that children can access needed trauma-informed behavioral health services. Improvements in this outcome may be seen through continued engagement and partnership with DBH on the 1115 Behavior Health Medicaid Demonstration Project and strategies identified in the CSFP to link families to services.

ITEM 17: PHYSICAL HEALTH OF THE CHILD.

This item determines whether, during the period under review, the agency addressed the physical health needs of the children, including dental health needs. Alaska has achieved 88% strength in cases reviewed for 2023.

Item 17: Physical Health of the Child				
Site	Sample size	2021	2022	2023
Anchorage	39	81%	76%	90%

Juneau	18	79%	71%	82%
Fairbanks	18	86%	83%	91%
All Sites	75	82%	76%	88%
PIP Goal		N/A	N/A	N/A

ITEM 18: MENTAL HEALTH OF THE CHILD.

This item determines whether, during the period under review, the agency addressed the mental/behavioral health needs of the children. Alaska has experienced a 6% increase from 2022 to 2023 achieving an aggregate score of 74% strength.

Item 18: Mental/Behavioral Health of the Child				
Site	Sample size	2021	2022	2023
Anchorage	39	50%	68%	59%
Juneau	18	57%	57%	73%
Fairbanks	18	55%	73%	100%
All Sites	75	53%	68%	74%
PIP Goal		N/A	N/A	N/A

SYSTEMIC FACTORS

Systemic Factor A: Statewide Information System

ITEM 19: STATEWIDE INFORMATION SYSTEM

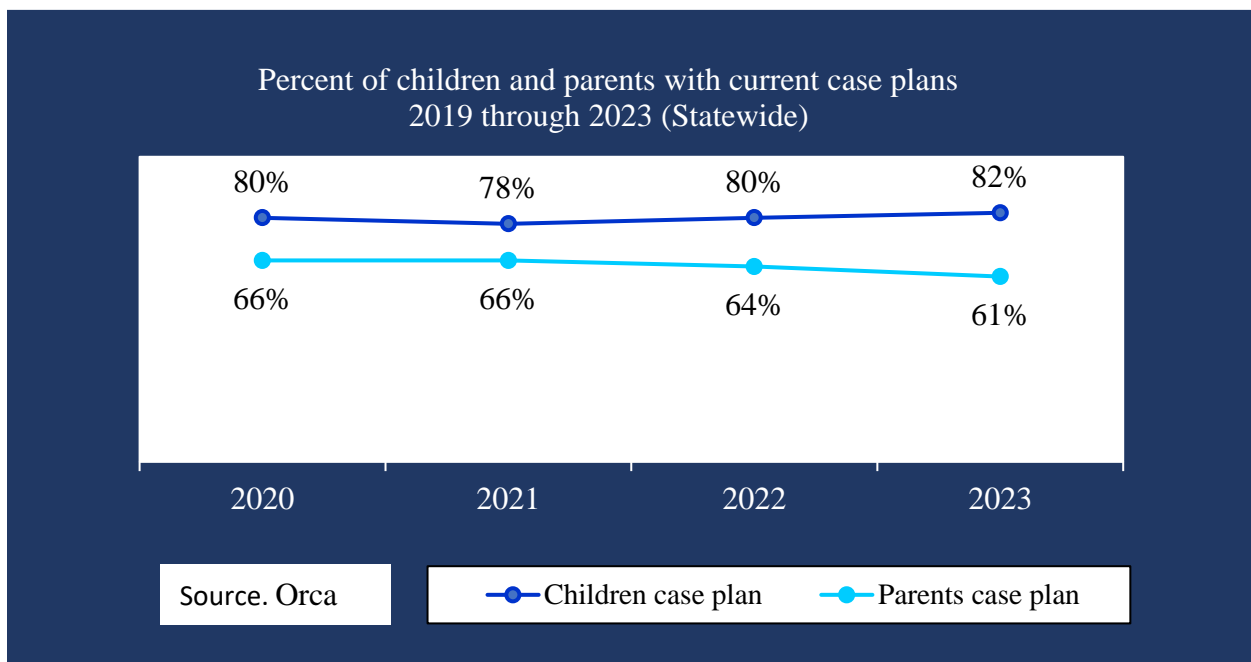
This systemic factor examines whether the State is operating a statewide information system that, at a minimum, can readily identify the status, demographic characteristics, location, and goals for the placement of every child who is (or within the immediately preceding 12 months, has been) in foster care. Alaska has not completed its next Statewide Assessment and is scheduled to do so in the next year. It is anticipated that the results will remain the same and the State will be rated as an Area Needing Improvement as the same challenges continue since the 2019 Statewide Assessment. The Statewide Information System currently in use has reached its end of life and the State took action to procure a new system. This included hiring Berry Dunn to conduct a full feasibility analysis. The State down selected three possible options for moving forward with a new system and selected an accelerator solution based on cost and “time to market.” The efforts to procure a new system were stalled due to a lack of funding in the Governor’s FY25 budget. The State cannot move forward with a new system without additional funding as the State does not have the personnel and resources to do so. Until funding becomes available, the State is targeting its efforts on improving data quality and integrity through removing redundancies in its existing system, standardizing new

code, establishing a Data Governance Plan, and reinforcing data quality checks including identifying opportunities for automation.

Systemic factor B: Case review System

ITEM 20: WRITTEN CASE PLAN.

This item pertains to whether the State adheres to a process that ensures that each child has a written case plan, to be developed jointly with the child, when appropriate, and the child’s parent(s), that includes the required provisions. Alaska’s statewide data indicates that most children have a current case plan, and this has remained to be true for the last four years. Parent case plans have experienced a slight drop in 2023 and the region that is struggling the most in the Western region where geographical struggles are a barrier in reaching families.



Percent of children with current case plan				
Region	2020	2021	2022	2023
Anchorage	84%	77%	84%	89%
Northern	77%	79%	84%	79%
Southcentral	82%	86%	82%	85%
Southeast	79%	75%	83%	96%
Western	67%	52%	54%	46%

Statewide	80%	78%	80%	82%
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Percent of parents with current case plan				
Region	2020	2021	2022	2023
Anchorage	74%	66%	67%	68%
Northern	56%	63%	62%	54%
Southcentral	69%	75%	70%	69%
Southeast	59%	62%	53%	52%
Western	49%	50%	44%	30%
Statewide	66%	66%	64%	61%

Source. Orca

ITEM 21: PERIODIC REVIEWS.

This item pertains to whether the State provides a process for the periodic review of the status of each child, no less frequently than once every six months, either by a court or by administrative review. Statewide data showed that Alaska has a fully functioning administrative case review system that ensures a periodic review for each child occurs no less frequently than every 6 months. Data for 2023 indicated that 90.1% of the periodic reviews for each child were occurring timely.

ITEM 22: PERMANENCY HEARING.

This item pertains to whether the State provides a process that ensures that each child in foster care under the supervision of the State has a permanency hearing in a qualified court or administrative body no later than 12 months from the date that the child entered foster care and no less frequently than every 12 months thereafter.

Children’s court provides a report to OCS that shows all upcoming permanency hearings, but it does not include the current case worker information, nor does it contain the ORCA family ID, therefore is difficult for OCS to utilize in tracking when permanency hearings are scheduled. The OCS Data Programing Manager manually adds missing information to the court report and distributes the information to regional managers and supervisors on a monthly basis.

ITEM 23: TERMINATION OF PARENTAL RIGHTS.

This item pertains to whether the State provides a process for termination of parental rights (TPR) proceedings in accordance with the provisions of the Adoption and Safe Families Act. ORCA report manager provides a report detailing children who have been in out of home care for 15 out of 22 months, current TPR status, and if compelling reasons not to terminate have been documented.

Current data shows for FY 23 and partial FY 24:

Report Data	Children OOH 15 of 22 months	Both Parents TPR now	Had Compelling reasons	No Compelling Reasons Documented
4/30/2023	2,093	21.1%	25.7%	53.2%
4/30/2024	1,924	19.0%	25.5%	54.5%

During this CFSP OCS has a goal of a centralized permanency unit to assist in a renewed focus on permanency for children in care. This includes reunification, adoption, guardianship, and other permanency options. OCS believes this unit, with a focus on permanency, will improve timely termination of parental rights and documentation of compelling reasons.

ITEM 24: NOTICE OF HEARINGS AND REVIEWS TO CAREGIVERS.

This item examines whether the State provides a process for foster parents, pre-adoptive parents, and relative caregivers of children in foster care to be notified of, and have an opportunity to be heard in, any review or hearing held with respect to the child.

Currently Alaska does not have a consistent way of notifying foster parents, pre-adoptive parents, or relative caregivers of court hearings, this task remains assigned to the assigned Protective Services staff. In partnership with CIP, OCS has implemented some strategies in a pilot project conducted in Fairbanks. Court parties are notified through the court system of reviews and hearings; however caregivers are notified through the QA unit for any hearing conducted in alignment with the Administrative Review schedule. In FY 24 CINA rule 3 amended hearing notice requirements in subsection (a) which provides this notice to a foster parent or out-of-home care provider satisfies the hearing notice requirement. The CINA rule amendment has not yet been evaluated for implementation or compliance since its effective date. This evaluation is planned during the current CFSP.

Systemic Factor C: Quality Assurance System

ITEM 25: QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM

This systemic factor pertains to whether the state is operating an identifiable quality assurance system that is in place in the jurisdictions where the services included in the Child and Family Services Plan (CFSP) are provided, evaluates the quality of services, identifies the strengths, and needs of the service delivery system, and provides relevant reports and evaluates program improvement measures implemented.

During the PIP, the Fairbanks office created strategies using the Plan Do Study Act (PDSA) format following feedback from their CFSR reviews in efforts to improve areas and assess their progress. While Juneau also created strategies and experienced many improvements, they struggled with stabilizing their workforce for much of the PIP. The Anchorage PIP site chose to focus on Essential Services data.

Alaska has continued with case reviews following the completion of the PIP in 2023. A 2024 schedule was developed to review a sample of cases for each region using the CFSR instrument online. Improvements on how to use the information collected from case reviews to inform strategies to improve the outcome areas have been a focus. Training by the Capacity Building Center for States is currently scheduled to occur in

September of 2024. The training plan that has been developed will focus on Change and Implementation Framework and bringing capacity building skills to the OCS quality assurance team. OCS is seeking to gain more understanding and clarity on Implementation Science and processes for future practice improvement initiatives. All members of the Quality Assurance team will be attending this in person training. The training has also been offered to other leadership members within the organization. Assessing how the Quality Assurance team is supporting the change efforts has been ongoing following the completion of the PIP and a plan to improve the role of the unit is in the process of being developed.

Systemic Factor D: Staff and Provider Training

ITEM 26: INITIAL STAFF TRAINING.

IN FY 25, a new initial staff training program is being launched promoting more on the job training and coaching. The delivery of the training will differ in how it was previously taught, offering more support in the field and coaching. Starting July 2024, new Protective Services staff will go to the first series of trainings for 4 weeks. The first week of training will focus on an orientation to the agency and the practice model of the safety assessment. The second week of training will occur in the regional field offices. Staff that will be assigned to an investigation unit will be assigned one case that will be worked alongside an assigned mentor. Other staff will shadow current investigation staff. The third week of training will encompass family services and legal training. The curriculum will cover family engagement, case worker visits, permanency planning, case planning and assessing for behavioral change. The fourth week of initial training will again occur in the regional field office hubs where staff that will be family services workers will be assigned their first case. Other staff will shadow current family services workers for purposes of exposure to family services work.

The initial four weeks of training will be led by the OCS mentor team to enhance practical application of the practice model to cases. After a period of time staff will return for further subject matter training in 162 and 163 editions facilitated by the Child Welfare Academy. These sessions will include the historical topics this trainings have covered previously including subject matter presentations on mental health, substance use, additional legal training, Youth Mental Health First Aid, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, and an Alaskan Native Blanket Exercise.

New staff will continue to be assigned a mentor to evaluate and train to competencies for the first six months of the new employee's tenure. Three months after working with a mentor, an Individualized Training Plan (IDP) will be developed in concert with the mentor, supervisor, and employee. The Training Plan will focus on enhancing identified competencies for the next three months of the mentorship. At the conclusion of the mentor assignment, an evaluation is conducted to determine if the new employee is ready for closure out of the mentor program or a continuation is needed.

Supervisor training provides a series of trainings for new supervisory staff over the course of a year. Supervisors initially attend a training provided by OCS that focuses on basic supervisory skills, use of data, tools, and coaching techniques. Following, supervisors will participate in Facilitated Attunement Training (FAN) focusing on reflective supervision and providing the supervisor with a mentor and support. Concluding the series, supervisors will have a capstone training of Coaching Supervisors to Best Practice.

As the delivery and curriculum of initial staff training will be a new system of delivery in FY 25, evaluation of the training and changes will occur over the course of the CFSP. Training will be evaluated through new staff tests, surveys, and focus group feedback.

ITEM 27: ONGOING STAFF TRAINING.

Ongoing staff training for Protective Services staff is delivered through the Mentor Program. Each region is provided at minimum a week of training and technical assistance within the regional field office. The topics and design of training is determined by collaboration between regional management, state office and the Mentor Program. Data through CFSR case reviews, practice observations and feedback from the field on training needs. The week of training provides enhanced skill and knowledge development with an additional practical application component. As an example, writing case plan goals will be trained and discussed with a component added for staff to bring samples of case plans they have written for feedback to enhance quality.

Each year on the annual staff survey questions are devised to elicit responses of training needs. This information is used to provide training throughout the year on a variety of topics. The focus on FY 25 is a series of legal trainings to meet the requests for additional training on testifying, handling conflict at court and court report writing. In addition, all regions receive safety training from the Safety Program, Monthly training on wellness and resiliency and quarterly training on ICWA.

Ongoing training for supervisors include monthly supervisor training and coaching zoom sessions. The topics of the monthly trainings are determined by feedback from supervisory staff and evaluation of case practice decisions through the CFSR and application of policy. Topics can range from a specific supervisory skill such as coaching or to a particular policy at OCS. Supervisor attendance has been regularly at a high rate and feedback has been positive to not only enhance learning but strengthen connections and relationships between supervisors.

ITEM 28: FOSTER AND ADOPTIVE PARENT TRAINING.

This item examines whether the State provides training for current or prospective foster parents, adoptive parents, and staff of State-licensed or State-approved facilities that care for children receiving foster care or adoption assistance under title IV-E. Additionally, it examines whether the training addresses the skills and knowledge base that they need to carry out their duties with regard to foster and adopted children.

The State of Alaska Office of Children's Services works with long time grantee Northwest Resource Associates/Alaska Center for Resource Families (ACRF) to provide a full array of required and optional training for licensed foster homes and unlicensed relative homes. Upon implementation of new foster care regulations in July 2022, licensed foster parents began transitioning from an hours-based requirement to an Individual Training Plan (ITP) developed each year based on the special needs of the children in that home. By July of 2024, all licensed foster homes will be under the new regulations.

In the first year of licensure, all licensed foster families are required to take Core Training for Resource Families which addresses trauma informed parenting and skills related to working with OCS, birth families, family contact and licensing requirements. Foster families then take the Second Year Training Pack which includes information on the Indian Child Welfare Act, the Reasonable and Prudent Parent Standard, Mandated Reporter Training, Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder, and other topics related to the children in the home. More experienced foster parents then develop ITPs based on the needs of the children in their home or to develop skills further based on the ages and specializations defined in their license.

ACRF has developed a spectrum of options for training offered statewide on their website, teleconference, Zoom, and in person. Specialized training continues to be developed through a series of "webi-conferences" which provide intensive training on topics such as caring for medically fragile children, fostering adolescents, substance misuse disorders, and working with birth families. ACRF meets regularly with OCS licensing, and program staff, to evaluate potential training needs. ACRF tracks completion of training hours and completion of ITPs for families.

Adoptive parent training opportunities have expanded in the last five years to include a required Adoption Learning Path for all families inquiring or adopting from the Heart Gallery of Alaska. The Heart Gallery is the adoption exchange used by Alaska to assist in finding adoptive placements for legally free children. The Adoption Learning Path is offered through ACRF and consists of Core Training for Resource Families, Building Families through Adoption, and Adopting through OCS. Training hours are tracked by ACRF, and families must complete the path before being introduced or matched with a child listed on the Heart Gallery. The Adoption Learning Path is offered to families who are interested in adopting from the foster care system or are currently licensed with an identified adoption or guardianship placement. There are additional trainings offered to families who are moving towards adoption including Trauma Informed Parenting, Lifebooks, Grief and Loss, and Child Preparation for Adoption.

Systemic Factor E: Service Array

ITEM 29: ARRAY OF SERVICES.

This item examines whether the State agency has in place an array of services that assess the strengths and needs of children and families, determines other service needs, that addresses the needs of families in addition to individual children to create a safe home environment, that enables children to remain safely with their parents when reasonable, and that help children in foster and adoptive placements achieve permanency. Alaska continues to strive to fill gaps in services, especially in more rural areas of the state. Efforts include partnership with DBH on the expansion of services within the 1115 Medicaid Waiver, promotion, and financial support of Help Me Grow, and partnership with DPH to increase grant opportunities for providers offering Parents as Teachers (PAT).

Collaboratively, the Department of Family and Community Services (DFCS) and Department of Health (DOH) created the DOH-DFCS Complex Care Steering Committee and the State of Alaska Complex Care Committee. These committees are designed to identify solutions to address systemic gaps in access to care for patients with complex needs, provides forward-looking guidance, and implements solutions as identified.

ITEM 30: INDIVIDUALIZING SERVICES.

This item examines whether the State agency's service array and resource development system is functioning statewide to ensure that the services in Item 29 can be individualized to meet the unique needs of children and families served by the agency.

Alaska continues to update and utilize the Cultural Resource Guide to meet the individualized service needs of families involved with the agency. The Cultural Resource Guide icon is located on all computer desktops of OCS employees. The guide assists OCS staff in linking families to traditional healing/cultural services provided through traditional healers, tribal members/peer mentors, and tribal elders. All parents with an active in-home or out-of-home OCS case plan are eligible to engage in services with a Cultural Services Support Provider identified in collaboration between the Tribe, parent, and OCS.

OCS collaborates with other state agencies such as DBH, DPH, DHCS, SDS, and community services agencies to continue to assess funding sources available for families to access services across the state. Alaska continues efforts towards the provision of 1115 Waiver services that allow families to access behavioral health services through Medicaid funding.

Systemic Factor F: Agency Responsiveness to the Community

ITEM 31: STATE ENGAGEMENT AND CONSULTATION WITH STAKEHOLDERS PURSUANT TO THE CFSP AND APSR.

This item examines if the agency's responsiveness to the community is functioning statewide to ensure that, in implementing the provisions of the CFSP and developing related APSRs, the state engages in ongoing consultation with Tribal representatives, consumers, service providers, foster care providers, the juvenile court, and other public and private child and family serving agencies and includes the major concerns of these representatives in the goals, objectives and annual updates of the CFSP.

OCS continues to have strong collaborations with regional, state, and national stakeholders and partners. OCS plans for improvement are developed with input and ongoing consultation with Tribal representatives, children and families, service providers, the juvenile court, and other public and private child- and family-serving agencies. OCS utilizes meetings with stakeholders to gather information and feedback to assist in development of policies, programs, and evaluations. These meetings include Tribal State Collaboration Group, Leadership Gatherings, Court Improvement Project, and more. Several key stakeholders provide valuable input for the APSR including the Child Welfare Academy, the Alaska Center for Resource Families, Facing Foster Care in Alaska, Court Improvement Project, and more.

During this CFSP OCS will be finalizing the implementation of Alaska's Parent Advisory Committee (PAC). One of the parent members of the PAC presented to OCS at the Leadership Gathering which was a highlighted as one of the more influential parts of the summit. OCS is looking forward to full implementation and engagement with the PAC for consultation on goals and initiatives. Alaska's PAC will be made up of ten Parent Leaders with lived experience of the child welfare system. They will partner with OCS leadership to provide feedback, participate in training, and other initiatives.

ITEM 32: COORDINATION OF CFSP SERVICES WITH OTHER FEDERAL PROGRAMS.

This item examines if the agency responsiveness to the community system is functioning statewide to ensure that the state's services under the CFSP are coordinated with services or benefits of other federal or federally assisted programs serving the same population.

Through memoranda of agreement, program coordination, and improvements to technology for collaborative efforts, the state's services under the CFSP continue being coordinated with services and benefits of other federal programs that assist the same service population. Alaska identified collaborations with divisions across other department. These include the Division of Behavioral Health, Division of Public Assistance, Department of Revenue, Department of Education, Bureau of Vital Information, Division of Health Care Services, Department of Public Safety, and Tribes/Tribal entities.

Systemic Factor G: Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention

ITEM 33: STANDARDS APPLIED EQUALLY.

This item measures whether the State's foster and adoptive parent licensing, recruitment, and retention system is functioning statewide to ensure that state standards are applied to all licensed or approved foster family homes or childcare institutions receiving title IV-B or IV-E funds.

Licensed foster homes and Residential Childcare Facilities are required to meet state statutory and regulatory licensing standards. In July 2022, Alaska implemented new regulatory licensing standards for licensed foster homes. State standards are applied equally to the licensed foster homes and Residential Childcare Facilities. The State of Alaska has a process for completing standardized home studies for adoptive homes.

ITEM 34: REQUIREMENTS FOR CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECKS.

The State of Alaska Office of Children’s Services (OCS) conducts thorough background checks to ensure the safety of children in foster care, adoptive homes, unlicensed relative placements, and households with members aged 16 and older. These checks include fingerprint-based background checks, Alaska Public Safety Information Network (APSIN) criminal history checks, child abuse registry checks, and National/State of Alaska Sex Offender Registry checks.

OCS partners with the Department of Health’s Alaska Background Check Program (BCP) to process these criminal and civil history background checks, identifying any barrier crimes or conditions. The BCP monitors background check recipients through the New Alaska Background Check System (NABCS) database. If an individual with an approved background check is subsequently charged with a crime, the BCP revokes the background check and alerts OCS.

The OCS APSIN unit conducts APSIN checks on unlicensed relative placements and household members aged sixteen and older. For children aged twelve and older, OCS conduct child abuse and neglect registry checks as well as JOMIS checks.

The APSIN Unit flags all unlicensed relatives, licensed foster parents, and household members aged sixteen and older. If a flagged individual is charged with a crime, a terminal message (T-message) is sent to the Protective Services Specialist, licensing worker, and supervisors. Appropriate actions are taken to ensure the safety and well-being of children.

Fiscal Year	APSIN Ran	Individuals Flagged	Flags Removed	T Messages
2021	18,036	1,878	2,455	183
2022	17,082	2,283	2,331	183
2023	16,910	2,113	2,341	243
2024	14,847	2,304	1,983	280

To ensure background checks were completed in NABCS, several action items were identified, including the need for fingerprints, rejected fingerprints, expiring background checks, eligibility status, hiring individuals, and applicable variances. Notifications and reports from NABCS were used to update and alert licensing managers and supervisors about these required action items, enabling them to flag and monitor individuals in APSIN.

This process, coupled with the notification system for unlicensed relatives needing fingerprints, has significantly increased the number of individuals flagged in the system. As a result, the reporting of new criminal activity through the terminal messaging system has improved, with a response rate of 92% as of June 2024. This marks an increase from previous years, with response rates of 50% in 2021, 73% in 2022, and 66.7% in 2023.

In cases where a barrier crime or condition is identified, OCS Community Care Licensing staff (CCLS) assist the individual in completing a Barrier Crime Variance Application. OCS has collaborated with the Department of Health to update the background check variance process for individuals applying for foster

care licensure, unlicensed relative placements, adoption, and guardianship who face background check barriers. This collaboration involved updating the application and oversight agency recommendation form, as well as eliminating application requirements that were specific to employment in organizations.

Year	OCS Background Check Variances	Approved
2021	15	10
2022	25	23
2023	30	28
2024	10	7

In 2024, OCS addressed a delay in identifying new civil barriers post-background check determinations by implementing a new reporting process. This process ensures that the Department of Health’s Background Check Program is notified of any new substantiated civil barriers in real time, significantly reducing the time it takes to revoke an eligible background check. Since its implementation in March 2024, this process has led to the identification of an additional thirty-seven individuals with substantiated findings of abuse or neglect.

Looking ahead, OCS plans to develop a similar real-time identification process for Child In Need of Aid (CINA) civil barriers. This will involve coordinating with regional courts to access court documents promptly, increasing documentation of CINA cases in our ORCA database, and creating a reporting system that identifies both parents involved in any CINA cases. These improvements aim to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of our background check processes, ensuring the continued safety and well-being of children under OCS care.

ITEM 35: DILIGENT RECRUITMENT OF FOSTER AND ADOPTIVE HOMES.

This item measures whether the State’s foster and adoptive parents licensing, recruitment, and retention system is functioning to ensure that the process for ensuring the diligent recruitment of potential foster and adoptive families who reflect the ethnical and racial diversity of children in the state for whom foster and adoptive homes are needed is occurring statewide.

As part of the diligent recruitment of foster and adoptive homes in Alaska, each of the five OCS Regional Offices submit resource family recruitment and retention plans. The recruitment and retention plans are developed by regional teams comprised of OCS Licensing and Child Protective Services Specialists, community agencies, resource families and Tribal partners. OCS also maintains a Statewide Resource Family Recruitment and Retention Plan. The Statewide Plan is reviewed on a quarterly basis by the licensing management team.

Data from ORCA is utilized to assess if the number of children, in Alaska, who cannot be returned home exceeds the number of available licensed foster families. As of June 2024, there are 1,227 licensed foster homes in Alaska, with 224 open placements available.

Region	Foster Care Vacancies Available
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Anchorage	72
Northern	28
Southcentral	82
Southeast	25
Western	17
Total	224

OCS also utilizes ORCA data to determine if the state is recruiting families that meet the racial and ethnic needs of children needing foster or adoptive homes. The below chart shows statewide data reflecting the number of licensed bed capacity by race. While this chart details licensed providers it is important to consider the over 600 unlicensed relative homes, who are family members of children in custody, and have multiple bed spaces.

June 2024

	AN/AI	White	Black or African American	Pacific Island	Asian	Multi Race	Undetermined
Total Statewide Children	1,761	540	68	58	23	110	14
Total Statewide Provider placement capacity	606	1230	241	60	37	215	20

As part of the regional targeted recruitment efforts the Regional Recruitment and Retention teams have implemented targeted recruitment strategies to include, but not limited to, community outreach to cultural centers, Tribal entities, local businesses, community leaders, churches and various cultural activities occurring in the communities. These events include Juneteenth celebrations, Hispanic Heritage Month, and the Asian Native Hawaiian Pacific Islander Heritage Festival. In addition, OCS has targeted recruitment efforts on identifying resource families willing to care for children with complex medical needs, behavioral issues, sibling groups, teens, LGBTQIA+, respite care, and emergency shelter care. Activities included events held in the community, partnering with local agencies, social media outreach, radio spotlights, advertising at local businesses, flyers, foster care tangibles, and more.

ITEM 36: STATE USE OF CROSS-JURISDICTIONAL RESOURCES FOR PERMANENT PLACEMENTS.

This item measures whether the State’s foster and adoptive parent licensing, recruitment, and retention system is functioning to ensure that the process for ensuring the effective use of cross-jurisdictional resources to facilitate timely adoptive or permanent placements for waiting children is occurring statewide. Alaska has a fully functioning process for requesting placement and adoptive placement resources within the state and across state lines.

When a child is in the custody of the State of Alaska and placement is being requested in another state, the local Alaska worker submits an Interstate Compact for the Placement of Children (ICPC) to the state office. The state ICPC office reviews the information to ensure all requirements that are specific to the receiving state, have been addressed and to ensure that the packet is complete. It is then forwarded to the receiving state to request completion of a Safe and Timely home study in accordance with the ICPC regulations. Once the receiving state has completed the home study and returned it, the ICPC state office forwards the home study and its supporting documents to the Alaska primary worker within 24 hours.

When Alaska is the receiving state of an ICPC request, the ICPC packets are received and forwarded to the local office in Alaska. Completed home studies are returned to the ICPC state office where State office staff collect the foster care license and confirms that the background checks have cleared prior to recommendation of approval or denial.

Alaska ICPC continues to process incoming and outgoing packets through NEICE for states that have onboarded with that system. Packets with non-NEICE states are sent through encrypted email.

2023 Home Study Requests by Type

	Parent	Relative	Foster Care	Adoption
Incoming	11	34	33	7
Outgoing	7	25	44	16

2023 Home Study Completion Compliance

ALL	Number of ICPC requests	Percentage in 60 Days	Percentage in 90 Days	Percentage in Over 90 Days
Adoption	7	0%	0%	100%
Licensed	26	23%	31%	46%
Parent	6	0%	50%	50%
Relative	29	21%	28%	51%

Source: OCS ORCA ICPC Home study Completion Time Report (run date of 5/1/2024)

Placement across regions:

Each regional office within OCS can request services and assistance from any other OCS office, this process is called Out of Town Requests (OTR). OTRs may be requested for emergency and non-emergency placements in other regions, assignment for ongoing caseworker visits, Investigations and Assessments, or one time or short-term assistance.

Documentation of the Protective Services Specialist (PSS) assignment will be made by the receiving office in ORCA within one week of request.

Region to Receiving Region

Region	OTRs Received	OTRs Sent
Anchorage	315	308
Northern	258	221
Southcentral	259	313
Southeast	37	71
Western	147	102

ORCA OTR data (July 1, 2023 to June 12, 2024)

SECTION 3 – PLAN FOR IMPROVEMENT

GOALS & OBJECTIVES

Alaska has chosen to focus on the following four priorities over the next five years. OCS believes that by focusing on these four priorities the agency will be able to achieve significant improvement in outcomes for children and families. As Alaska is not scheduled for CFSR Round 4 until 2025, this reported data will serve as a baseline for the CFSP and future Annual Progress and Services Reports. As the next CFSR will likely require a Program Improvement Plan, OCS will be limiting the number of strategies during the first years of this CFSP. Additional strategies from the PIP will be reported on in subsequent APSRs.

Goal 1: Develop a Stable Child Welfare Workforce

Central to improved child welfare performance on all outcomes for families and children in Alaska is a strong and stable workforce focused on safety, permanency, and well-being. Alaska looks to the key elements of staff retention strategies and recruitment efforts primarily through improved training, mentoring, enhanced supervision, and continuous assessment of organizational culture.

OCS is targeting three key areas of focus related to strategies to improve outcomes for workforce. These targets align with current workforce improvements the agency has embraced to improve worker retention, using the CQI process:

- Retention and recruitment of child welfare staff.
- Enhance a supportive organizational culture.
- Improvements to agency orientation and training.

There are strategies for which training is central to improve practice. However, it is also recognized that training alone cannot improve practice. The Office of Children’s Services has experienced a shift in the workforce to include applicants with less case management experience and little, to no, post-secondary education. Due to the shifts in the applicants coming to child welfare work in Alaska, strategies must include meeting the new workforce at their level of competence with a holistic process to orient, train, implement transfer of learning, provide reflective supervision, and commit to ongoing organizational culture assessments to ensure the workplace is a learning environment that supports our employees in service to families.

OBJECTIVE 1.A: ENHANCED RETENTION AND RECRUITMENT EFFORTS THROUGH IMPROVED AGENCY CULTURE

Concern/Focus

- By end of year 2023, the turnover rate at OCS was at 46%.
- High turnover rates impacts all areas of case practice.
- Vacancies are staying vacant longer as difficulties to recruit increase.

Strategies

- Maintain a five-year staff retention plan utilizing the U.S. Surgeon General's Framework for Workplace Mental Health and Well-Being.
- Conduct agencywide wellness assessments and planning related to organizational culture to inform retention efforts.
- Develop and implement standardized and centralized recruitment.
- Statewide Executive Team (SET) will work with Department of Family and Community Services Human Resources (HR) to create recruitment and retention deliverables.

Measure of Progress and Timeline

- Updated 5 year recruitment and retention plan will be complete by March 2025.
- Initial Wellness Assessments and Regional Plans will be completed by December 2024.
- CQI on DFCS central hiring to be evaluated annually.

Staff Training, Technical Assistance, Implementation Supports

- Embed wellness efforts in Regional Improvement Plans.
- Provide menu of recruitment and retention options to hiring managers by June 2025.
- Coordination with DFCS HR on retention and recruitment strategies.

Projected Outcomes

- Decrease turnover rate over the next 5 years.

OBJECTIVE 1.B: IMPROVE NEW STAFF ORIENTATION, TRAINING, AND TRANSFER OF LEARNING

Concern/Focus

- Less experienced and educated workforce in frontline positions.
- Lack statewide consistency in how new staff are oriented to the agency.

Strategies

- Enhanced training and transfer of learning via mentors and regional leadership involvement.
- Implement a statewide orientation program for new employees focused on Mission, Vision, and Core Values of the organization.
- Improvement of practical, hands on, training for staff.

Measure of Progress and Timeline

- Initial frontline worker training through the Child Welfare Academy (CWA) will be delivered in partnership with the OCS Mentor Program to begin July 1, 2024.
- Training will occur in phases to enhance transfer of learning (TOL) through mentorship and field practice in regional offices.
- By July 2024 OCS leadership will implement a required new employee orientation process to compliment central hiring.

Staff Training, Technical Assistance, Implementation Supports

- In Partnership with the CWA develop measurement and feedback strategies to track the effectiveness of training and TOL.
- Create a menu of training options for all staff.
- Training will be provided to supervisors and managers for utilization and purpose of the orientation process.

Projected Outcomes

- CWA evaluation and Annual staff survey will demonstrate that staff feel their orientation and training successfully prepared them for their position.
- Staff will report feeling more competent in their practice after implementation of changes to new employee and on-going training.

OBJECTIVE 1.C: IMPROVE AGENCY SUPERVISION

Concern/Focus

- Increase provision of supportive supervision practices statewide to decrease emotional drain staff can experience in the work.
- Lack of standardized training for supervisors.

Strategies

- Standardized training plan for new and current supervisors.
- Enhance reflective practices of supervisors and managers at OCS.

Measure of Progress and Timeline

- Develop process for new and current supervisors to attend trainings including Academy for Supervisors through Department of Personnel and Labor Relations (DOPLR), Supervisor Core Training Supervisor Facilitated Attuned Interactions (Supervisor FAN), Coaching Supervisors to Best Practices (CSBP), and continued supervisor/leader training opportunities by December 2024.

Staff Training, Technical Assistance, Implementation Efforts

- Workgroup to develop and implement changes to the curriculum and training plan for new and existing supervisors.

- OCS will build internal experts in Supervisor Training, Supervisor FAN, and CSBP by creating a Training of Trainer (TOT) model.
- On the annual Staff survey, staff will report they receive meaningful and consistent supervision.
- On the annual Staff survey, supervisors will report they receive consistent training supervisory practices, requirements, the use of reflective supervision, coaching, and attending to worker well-being.

Projected Outcomes

- Staff will receive meaningful and consistent supervision.
- Supervisors will receive consistent training on supervisory practices, requirements of supervision, the use of reflective supervision, coaching, and attending to worker well-being.

Goal 2: Prioritize Essential Child Protection Services

Alaska needs to focus on essential child protection services in order to effectively achieve our mission to keep children safe and families strong. Identifying clear priorities in services and expectations will provide direction to staff with limited work capacity. The four essential services include:

- Timely initiations and completion of Investigations & Assessments;
- Current case plans for children and parents;
- Monthly case worker visits with children, mothers, and fathers; and
- Children placed with relatives.

OBJECTIVE 2.A: ESTABLISH PRIORITIZATION PRINCIPLES

Concern/ Focus

- Essential Services are achieved at low, variable rates across regions and offices.
- OCS often lacks capacity to achieve essential services at target rates.
- OCS lacks prioritization principles to guide triage decision making within and across regions and program areas.

Strategies

- Update services deemed “essential.”
- Establish achievable target rates tailored to each Essential Service
- Implement established prioritization principles applicable to all workload and workforce conditions.
- Establish target ranges and cutoffs that require plans of response and higher level approval.
- Update ORCA reporting to reflect modified Essential Service measures.

Measure of Progress and Timeline

- Five- year plan will be created by January 2025.

Staff Training, Technical Assistance, Implementation Supports

- To be determined in 5-year plan.

Projected Outcomes

- Increase rates of Essential Services delivery based on established achievable target rates.

OBJECTIVE 2.B: IMPLEMENTATION OF STRENGTHENING INVESTIGATIONS AND ASSESSMENTS MODEL

Concern/ Focus

- Scaling out is continuing for statewide implementation.
- Monitoring of fidelity to the model in field office sites.

Strategies

- Develop adaptations for rural locations.
- Enhance management oversight of quality decision making.
- Regional case reviews of Investigations and Assessments.

Measure of Progress and Timeline

- In year one, progress measured by sample OSRI case reviews for each office.
- In year two, progress measured by Statewide assessment and CFSR.
- Next years, progress measured through PIP reporting.

Staff Training, Technical Assistance, Implementation Supports

- Centralized leadership team to assist with fidelity checks and implementation needs.
- Training on the Strengthening Investigations & Assessments model.

Projected Outcomes

- Continued decrease in backlog of uninitiated protective services reports.
- Timely initiations and completion of quality assessments.

OUTCOME 2.C: IMPROVED DELIVERY OF FAMILY SERVICES

Concern/ Focus

- Increase family centered case plans that are developed timely.
- Enhance early family engagement in case planning.
- Capitalize on culturally appropriate services.

Strategies

- Improved training and enhancement of the Cultural Resource Guide.
- Identify community services to engage families.
- Focus on creation of case plans and measurement of behavioral change in new training for family services.

Measure of Progress and Timeline:

- In year one, progress measured by sample OSRI case reviews for each office.
- In year two, progress measured by Statewide assessment and CFSR.
- Next years, progress measured through PIP reporting.

Staff Training, Technical Assistance, Implementation Supports

- ICWA Specialists partner with Tribes to identify cultural resources.
- Parent Advisory Committee (PAC) will provide guidance on what is needed to engage families.

Projected Outcomes

- Families will have timely, individualized case plans, that enhance behavior change.

OBJECTIVE 2.D: INCREASE MONTHLY CASEWORKER VISITS WITH CHILDREN

Concern/ Focus

- Increase frequency and quality of caseworker visits with children.
- Continual needs and safety assessment for children in out of home care.

Strategies

- In times that barriers exist and face to face contact cannot occur with a child, OCS will identify other resources to establish safety for that child. This could include facetime visits or ICWA representative visits.
- CMLT workgroup continues to work on improving quality of case worker visits.

Measure of Progress and Timeline:

- In year one, progress measured by sample OSRI case reviews for each office.
- In year two, progress measured by Statewide assessment and CFSR.
- Next years, progress measured through PIP reporting.

Staff Training, Technical Assistance, Implementation Supports

- Training on quality caseworker visits and documentation.

Projected Outcomes

- Increased caseworker visits with children.

Goal 3: Enhancing Kinship Care

Engaging families in child protection cases promotes permanency, and well-being for the children and families in the child welfare system. Strong family engagement supports children's healthy development and wellness by reducing the impacts of traumatic experiences. Involving extended family members is valuable, as

families know their children the best. Family input is instrumental in making sure that the most least restrictive and supportive decisions are made on behalf of children in care.

OCS believes that child and family outcomes can be improved by early and on-going engagement with kin.

OBJECTIVE 3.A: INCREASE KIN INVOLVEMENT

Concern/ Focus

- Alaska is experiencing a placement shortage in licensed foster care.
- Outcomes for children improve when with family.
- Families need to be identified and engaged early.

Strategies

- Ensure diligent relative searches are conducted.
- Support Tribes in conducting initial and on-going relative searches through the Tribal Child Welfare Compact.
- Engaging and support relatives early in the case to prevent placement in general foster care.
- Focus on engaging families throughout the case.

Measure of Progress and Timeline

- Update letters for Right to Request Placement and Right to Request Permanent Placement.
- Increase of referrals through the Tribal Child Welfare Compact for initial and on-going relative search.

Staff Training, Technical Assistance, Implementation Supports

- Training on family engagement.
- Engaging relatives in discussion on how they can support the family.

Projected Outcomes

- Increased kinship placements.

OBJECTIVE 3.B: DEVELOP A FAMILY MEETING CONTINUUM

Concern/ Focus

- Team Decision Making meetings have not yet been implemented statewide.
- Formalize the model and training for TDM.
- Families need to be engaged throughout a case.

Strategies

- Finalize Alaska's model for TDM.
- Develop training for current and new TDM facilitators.
- Develop training for new and current staff.

- Monitor TDM data to determine areas of the model needing more focused training.
- Roll out to Southeast and Western regions.

Measure of Progress and Timeline

- Model and training will be developed by fall of 2025.
- Full implementation of statewide TDM by fall of 2028.
- Research other types of family group meetings being held by other states.
- Determine other types of meetings that will improve outcomes for families.
- Refine TDM data to be used for CQI.

Staff Training, Technical Assistance, Implementation Supports

- Training will be developed for staff.
- Tribal and stakeholder collaboration.
- Continued CQI with available data.
- Family engagement training for staff.

Projected Outcomes

- Increased family participation in meetings.
- Expand TDM statewide.

OBJECTIVE 3.C: INCREASE SUPPORT TO RELATIVES THROUGH LICENSURE

Concern/ Focus

- Increase unlicensed relative placements to become licensed.
- There are barriers to some relatives to becoming licensed.

Strategies

- Remove barriers to relatives becoming licensed.
- Provide support through the licensing process for relatives.
- Support Tribes in licensing Tribal homes through the Tribal Child Welfare Compact.

Measure of Progress and Timeline

- Updated licensing application for relatives.
- Timely license of relatives within the 45-day timeframe of placement, including variance process.
- See progressive increase in the amount of licensed relative foster homes.

Staff Training, Technical Assistance, Implementation Supports

- Identify internal supports for hands on assistance to relatives.
- Tribal partnerships to decrease barriers for Alaska Native families.
- Improved language accessibility for individuals applying for licensure.

Projected Outcomes

- Increased number of fully licensed relative placements.

Goal 4: Pathways to Permanency

Children need safe and permanent families for healthy development. Federal laws guide states on what is considered timely permanency for reunification, adoption, and guardianship. Alaska has lacked a consistent statewide focus on permanency with the use of consistent data and strategies to address permanency for children. During this CFSP Alaska intends to create a statewide centralized permanency unit to bring this focus to the agency and improve permanency outcomes for children in care.

OBJECTIVE 4.A: CENTRALIZE PERMANENCY LEADERSHIP

Concern/Focus

- Children will not languish in out of home placement.
- Reduce number of placement changes for children in care.
- Focus permanency efforts across the state.

Strategies

- Centralize permanency planning leadership under direction of a new Permanency Officer.
- Centralize permanency-focused human resources into single regionally aligned team.
- Create a five-year plan to increase permanency performance indicators.
- Root cause analysis will determine court involvement in strategic plan, current CIP workgroup for permanency will be utilized for stakeholder feedback.

Measure of Progress and Timeline

- Permanency Officer will start in new position in June 2024.
- Centralization of permanency-focused human resources will occur by September 2024.
- Five-year plan will be established by January 2025.

Staff Training, Technical Assistance, Implementation Supports

- To be determined in five-year plan.

Projected Outcomes

- Decrease length of time children spend in out of home placement.
- Decrease number of placement changes children experience.
- Increase use of Team Decision Making prior to placement change.

SECTION 4 – SERVICES

CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES CONTINUUM

Prevention

OCS has engaged in collaboration with several community and state agencies to address prevention before families enter the child welfare system. OCS has several programs that are focused on the promotion of well-being and the prevention of child maltreatment for young children as identified under the Goals and Service Array of this plan. OCS is the lead agency for the Alaska Strengthening Families which is a cost-effective initiative aimed at preventing child abuse and neglect. OCS has partnered with the Department of Public Health to increase a grant offered for the provision of Parents as Teachers. The goal of this grant is to increase providers across the state, as well as increase the number of programs that are Parents as Teachers affiliates. Alaska is also partnering with hospitals and community providers to lift Plans of Safe Care. There is currently a successful program, in Juneau, that is partially funded by OCS called Hello BABY. OCS continues to meet with other communities and stakeholders to scale out other programs across the state. OCS funds prevention efforts to the Tribes through Alaska's Tribal Child Welfare Compact. The intake department sends screened out protective services reports to Tribes.

Intake

As the front door to OCS, Intake is the crucial first step in the assessment of child safety. The receipt, processing, and preliminary assessment of child maltreatment allegations marks the beginning of a process that will determine if children are safe in their homes. All reports received are documented in a Protective Services Report (PSR) within the agency's automated case management system, ORCA.

The intake process, which often includes contacting collateral sources for additional information, determines whether reports will be referred for further investigation. This determination is the critical function of the OCS Intake department. Reports of alleged caregiver maltreatment or family conditions found to impact child safety and threaten harm, are assigned to the appropriate region for investigation. Other reports may be determined to require no further Child Protective Services intervention and intake staff make appropriate referrals to other resources within OCS and the community.

Intake requires exemplary customer services and the ability to effectively communicate with OCS staff, clients, and community partners. Intake provides twenty-four hour a day coverage and is reachable via phone, email, and fax 365 days per year.

Investigation and Assessment

OCS provides investigations and assessments to determine child safety on all reports screened in during the intake process. The investigation and assessment process begins immediately after a protective services report is assigned to a Protective Services Specialist (PSS) The PSS has multiple goals to accomplish during this process while following standardized policy and procedures throughout the investigation and assessment. The focus of this assessment is to gather sufficient information about the family which allows workers to make educated safety determinations about present and impending danger as well as the level of risk of future harm. This assessment informs the level of intervention, if any, the circumstances may require.

By the conclusion of the investigation and assessment process, the worker must also determine whether the child suffered harm as a result of maltreatment with a finding of "substantiated" or "not substantiated" based on the initial allegations or other child abuse or neglect. This finding is required, however, it does not dictate if or how a family will be served by OCS. For example, the allegations of maltreatment may be "not substantiated" because a child was not harmed, but the family circumstances may be placing a child at high risk of harm. A family in such a situation may still be provided services to ameliorate the dangerous conditions and prevent future episodes of child maltreatment. The most important function of the

investigation and assessment process is determining child safety and controlling any threats to the child's safety occurring in the present or likely to occur in the near future.

Family Services

The Family Services Program provides comprehensive services in situations where the initial assessment has determined the child is unsafe or at risk of being maltreated. Services are intended to ensure the safety, permanency, and well-being of children, enhance the protective capacities of parents, and strengthen the family. Family Services can be provided when a child is placed in out of home care or is being monitored in the home of a parent or caregiver.

Throughout the Family Services process, the court provides oversight of the case and conducts regular reviews to ensure the needs of the child and family are met. Out-of-home care is provided by relatives of the family or tribal members. When these resources for placement are not available, the child is placed with a licensed foster family. Efforts are made throughout this process to ensure that the child maintains family connections, and continuity of their cultural and community connections. Services to assist the birth family in making needed changes are provided through a process of assessment of need of each family member including the children and identification of services responsive to those needs. Parents are actively engaged by the worker in the development of their case plan. Tribal members are also asked to participate in case planning efforts if a tribe has intervened on a child's behalf.

Resource Families

The Resource Family Program is responsible for assessing all families who wish to become a licensed foster, adoptive or guardianship family, ensuring licensing standards for safety are met in each resource family home. The Resource Family Section includes foster care licensing, the recruitment and retention of resource families, Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC), and the OCS Background Check Program. Resource families are necessary to OCS, as children in out-of-home placement need to live in safe homes while they are not living with their parents. If a child cannot permanently return home to their parents, OCS strives to place children for adoption or guardianship in safe, nurturing, permanent homes. Resource families consist of relatives and non-relative foster care families, guardianship families or adoptive families.

When a relative is identified for the placement of a child, the licensing worker will support the relative through the licensing process. Training for resource families is valued and mandated by OCS. Each resource family completes a basic training program called CORE or Relative CORE, which is vital to prepare the resource family in understanding the OCS process, helping resource families understand the trauma foster children have experienced, the reasonable prudent parent standard, and how resource families can support reunification. Should the child be unable to safely return to the parent's home, OCS actively prepares the child for adoption or guardianship with a permanent, "forever" family.

Services Array

OCS Service Array Section manages funding for services provided under Title IV-B Subparts 1 & 2, Chafee, ETV, CAPTA, Title IV-E, CBCAP, Adoptions and Legal Guardianship Incentive Funds, and state general funds.

Child abuse and neglect prevention. OCS provides grants and contracts for community-based primary prevention services designed to increase the strength and stability of families, to increase the parents' competence in their parenting skills, to afford children a safe, stable, and supportive family environment, and to enhance child development. The Community Family Education grant as well as the Family Support Services contracts are in place to provide primary prevention services. The core services of these grant and

contract programs include in-home support; parent education and support; and facilitated access to resources such as early childhood services, medical services, educational or employment services, and transportation services.

Referral sources for both prevention programs include service agencies, such as schools or early education programs, medical services, community agencies, or parents may self-refer. Services are aimed at families who do not have an open child protection case and they can support families who need support for basic needs, skill acquisition and crisis stabilization. The primary focus of this grant is children ages 0-12 years of age, with special consideration given to children ages birth to three years. Other targeted populations are families experiencing disability of a family member and/or homeless youth. The services are intended to promote parent engagement and parent leadership skills. Service providers also facilitate family participation in free activities such as literacy fairs, parenting nights, health fairs and other positive family activities. These activities sometimes involve childcare, parenting resources and links to other community resources.

Child abuse and neglect intervention, treatment services and foster care:

Child Advocacy Centers (CACs). Provide services to child victims of alleged sexual and other severe physical abuse. The centers use a multidisciplinary team approach where forensic investigations are conducted in a protective, safe, child friendly environment during a single visit. Family advocacy and case management services are also offered to alleged victims and their families. These services will continue to be provide for as long as the family still require the support. Mental health services and referrals are also offered.

Family preservation services. Family Preservation services provide in-home support and service coordination for families who have been determined by OCS to have risk factors for future abuse or neglect. The OCS case can remain open, or be closed, with the child remaining in the home. Alaska's Family Preservation Program is called "Circles of Support Family Preservation Services." The grant continues the integration of the Strengthening Families protective factors and Trauma-informed practices to serve the existing target population. The services funded through the grant are Family Service Coordination; Service plan implementation and monitoring; Assessment of family progress; Parent education and support; and Transportation services.

Services to support reunification. Family Contact Services grants and a contract are in place to provide supervision of family visitation and family coaching. These services are designed to educate parents on child development as it relates to their child's needs and an understanding of their ability to proactively respond to their children's needs. These efforts help assist family and child functioning, decrease repeat maltreatment, and increase rates of family reunification. OCS workers make referrals to the Family Contact Services grantees/contractor when it is determined through the Safety Assessment process that current family circumstances are not safe for the child at home, and out-of-home placement is necessary. Services to families may include supervised family contact, service coordination, skill development, and transportation.

Adoption. OCS awarded the "Adopting and Guardianship Support" grant to the Alaska Center for Resource Families (ACRF). The grant was established to provide seamless continuation of support for adoptive and guardianship families of Alaska through pre- and post- adoption/guardianship services. This ongoing collaboration with ACRF provides for improved outcomes to children and families through the provision of services including family preparation services, information and referral services, crisis intervention services, and case management services. The population served through this grant includes all families in Alaska who have adopted children through public and private adoptions. Services are available throughout the State of Alaska by face to face contacts, self-study courses and telephonic services.

Adoption Education and Preparation. ACRF provides a series of classes called "The Adoption Learning Path" geared toward preparing families to adopt special needs children from care through OCS's Resource

Family Training grant. When the family completes the series of classes, they help the family generate a “family profile” which is shared with adoption case workers throughout the state. This process has assisted in matching children needing adoptive homes with families who understand the needs of children in care and are ready to care for them. Services are available throughout the State of Alaska by face to face contacts, self-study courses, and telephonic services. ACRF continues to develop, update, and provide trainings for Resource Families in order to promote adoption.

Preparing Families for Special Needs Adoption project continues to promote adoption through the provision of intensive preparation, training and post-adoption support to families matched with legally free children in care through the Alaska Heart Gallery. Each family attends Trust-Based Relational Intervention training to give them the tools and knowledge they will need to become a forever home to a child in foster care. ACRF provides the participants with intensive education and preparation as well as matching support and post adoption support.

Independent living. The OCS Independent living program supports and delivers services to youth aged 16 or older who are or were in OCS custody and placed in out-of-home care by OCS. Independent living services consist of opportunities for youth up to age 21 to gain the skills needed to become self-sufficient and support their transition into adulthood.

Mentorship for Independent Living. OCS continues to partner with Big Brothers Big Sisters of Alaska (BBBS) through the *Mentorship for Independent Living* grant. Mentorship for Independent Living services fall under the broader Independent Living program which provides services to foster youth to prepare them for self-sufficiency in adulthood. Research suggests that, in the transition to adulthood, youth leaving foster care face enormous challenges in building successful lives without the extended support most families provide young people. The Mentorship for Independent Living program provides the extended supports that youth need to achieve their goals and be self-sufficient. Mentors work with mentees both in and out of OCS custody, to support them in meeting their individual needs and to promote transitional skills such as socialization and life skills, employment, and educational services. The goal of the program is to provide personal and emotional support and promote of interactions with and develop connections to dedicated adults. This program identifies and connects youth with safe and supportive adults to encourage a positive and healthy experience during transition to adulthood.

Emergency Shelter Services for Youth. OCS partnered with Covenant House to support youth via the *Emergency Shelter Services for Youth* grant; this grant partnership has continued since that time. Emergency Shelter services provide temporary residential care for youth that are in immediate danger in their present environment, need short term temporary placement, or may need stabilization and assessment of their needs. These youth may be in crisis due to recent disclosure of abuse, neglect, or commission of a delinquent act and may have recently been removed from their family home, foster home, or other placement. The target population are homeless youth, runaways and at-risk youth, ages 13-20, in the Anchorage area who are referred for services by OCS. The clients will usually be in the custody of the State; however non-custody youth are also eligible. The Emergency Shelter is responsible for assisting and resolving the crisis, stabilizing the youth, and assisting in the planning for the youth’s return home or placement in alternative care.

Youth Interim Services (YIS). In 2025, OCS issued grant monies for Youth Interim Services. These are supportive services to provide stabilization and coordination of services for OCS youth. The Youth Interim Services grantees are responsible for assisting and supporting in the resolution of the youth/family crisis, stabilization of the youth, and assisting in the transitional planning of the youth’s return home or placement in alternative care. Youth may be in crisis due to recent disclosure of maltreatment (child abuse or neglect), or involvement with the Division of Juvenile Justice or the Department of Corrections due to criminal charges. These youth may have recently been removed from their family home, foster home, or other placement. A

grantee may only refuse a placement if the program cannot appropriately serve the youth with reasonable accommodations due to the youth's special needs or lack of capacity.

SERVICE COORDINATION

The services supported through the Service Array Section continually adapt to changes in field practice, which is coordinated through ongoing dialogue and engagement with the management in the five OCS regions. Additionally, other OCS collaborative efforts on statewide and regional levels ensure that available services through other federally funded programs, community-based public and private providers for programs such as substance abuse, domestic violence, and behavioral health ensure that families served in the state child welfare services receive priority services that meet their specific needs to achieve case plan goals.

Some specific examples of these collaborative efforts include:

Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems/Strengthening Families. The most effective collaboration and coordination work has been through the activities with the Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems (ECCS) Program, the Strengthening Families initiative and the Alaska Children's Trust, who also fund Family Support Programs throughout the State of Alaska. Currently, this group is working on a Statewide Prevention Plan, which will prioritize prevention activities needed in all communities throughout Alaska. The IV-B Program Coordinator will provide input to the plan and work to incorporate the needs identified in the statewide plan into the models for service delivery.

Infant Learning Program. Because the Infant Learning Program (ILP) has a strong focus on the 0-3 age group in Alaska, the Family Support Program has integrated that population as a group needing special considerations for services under the Family Support Programs, as well as the IV-B funded Family Preservation and Time Limited Family Reunification Programs. As those programs have been redesigned, the Request for Proposals now include the age range of 0-3 as a priority population and the reporting requirements for children served indicates whether a referral has been made to the ILP for screening and services through the ILP program. This provides for a direct link between these services and ensures that even the youngest family members are considered during service provision.

Community Based Child Abuse Prevention (CBCAP). OCS is designated as the State Lead for the Community-based Child Abuse Prevention (CBCAP) program. In FY 23 Alaska's CBCAP award was decreased due to an inability to leverage previously leveraged funding. Alaska utilizes CBCAP funds to for grants aimed at preventing child abuse and neglect by providing family support services as well as other prevention activities. These grants increase protective factors through parent education, and in home support, as well as promote child abuse awareness. During FY 23 funds were used to support Community Family Educations grants in five communities, a contract for April Child Abuse Prevention Month Campaign, and Family Support Services Contract in three communities.

Children's Justice Act (CJA). The Alaska CJA Task Force holds three in-person meetings a year to plan and carry out the goals and objectives of the group including awarding scholarships to support child welfare and law enforcement professionals to further their professional development. The meeting held during legislative session occurs in the State Capital of Juneau, where the task force presents before Committees and meets face-to-face with individual legislators and their staff. These meetings and presentations focus on educating legislators about the extent of child abuse in Alaska, and environmental and social factors related to child abuse based on a recent longitudinal study of Alaskan children from birth through adulthood. The task force also participates in public presentations and other media events to talk about the activities of the CJA. One of the major accomplishments of the CJA has been the development and maintenance of the state's online child abuse and neglect and [mandated reporter training](#). It is expected that work on the training will continue

over the next five years as there is new legislation regarding reporting child abuse and neglect which will require renewed efforts to implement and educate new mandated reporters. Efforts will continue to advertise the website through various means. The CJA plans to engage in formal strategic planning for 2020, which will focus their future objectives and activities.

Court Improvement Project (CIP). The CINA Court Improvement Program monitors and improves the way the court system handles child in need of aid cases and enhances coordination between the court system and other agencies and Tribes involved in CINA cases. Members of the statewide CIP committee are appointed by the Chief Justice of the Alaska Supreme Court. Current members include judges, the Director of the Office of Children's Services, Tribal representation, and representation by other state agencies including the Department of Law, the Public Defender Agency, the Office of Public Advocacy, and the Director of the Division of Behavioral Health. CIP has several projects they jointly work with OCS on including Family Contact, Joint Permanency Project, ICWA, and CINA Court process education.

SERVICE DESCRIPTION

The service array and resource development system is functioning to ensure the provision of services that assess the strengths and needs of children and families and determine other service needs. There is a need for services that address the needs of families in addition to individual children in order to create a safe home environment, services that enable children to remain safely with their parents when reasonable, and services that help children in foster and adoptive placements achieve permanency in all political jurisdictions covered by the CFSP.

Due to the state's vast geographical area, Alaska is challenged in ensuring that the array of needed services is accessible in all political jurisdictions covered by the CFSP. DFCS continues to partner with DOH to enhance the continuum of care for children and adults. OCS also continues to utilize the Cultural Resource Guide to provide culturally relevant services for families involved in the children protection system.

STEPHANIE TUBBS JONES CHILD WELFARE SERVICES PROGRAM (TITLE IV-B, SUBPART 1)

All title IV-B funding received is awarded through grants and/or contracts managed through OCS. No title IV-B subpart 1 or 2 funding is allocated to support planning and service coordination. Allocations of title IV-B, subpart 2 funding to the respective categories are based on analysis of utilization and service outputs in each service category; the blending of additional funding supporting each service priority; the availability of services in each category statewide; and the capacity of providers to deliver services within each category. Based on utilization data from the previous five fiscal years, funding was realigned to increase the services utilized most by children, youth, and families.

OCS continues to prioritize funding family reunification services with IV-B, subpart II funding due to the high numbers of children in out of home care and caseload sizes. Alaska is currently funding Adoption Support and Promotion services with Title IV-E adoption program savings. Family Support grants are funded with Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention funds which have been adequate to fund Family Support grants in recent years. For these reasons, Alaska's limited Title IV-B, subparts 1 and 2 funding are needed primarily for Family Preservation and Family Reunification services. The chart below provides a percentage breakdown of Title IV-B, subpart 2 funds in allowable categories, as OCS intends to continue to utilize funds in FY 24.

Table 10: Title IV-B, Subpart 2 Allocation for FY 24

Service Type	Percent Allocated
Family Support	25%
Community Service Option 1 (FP)	30%
Community Service Option 2 (TLFR)	40%
Adoption Promotion	5%

Services for Children Adopted from Other Countries

Services for adoption support are provided statewide through a grantee. Post-adoption services are crucial to ensuring the continued success of families who have adopted through OCS and through private domestic or international adoptions. The grant provides information and referral services; crisis intervention services; and general support to include support groups or peer mentoring services for all adoptive and guardianship families, regardless of the how the legal relationship was finalized. The goal of the services are to help ensure that children remain in their homes safely and permanently and that the child’s evolving special needs will be met.

Services for Children Under the Age of Five

OCS has piloted some region specific and statewide initiatives aimed at actively expediting permanency for children under the age of five without a permanent family.

Families, Infants and Toddlers (FIT) courts have continued operations in Ketchikan and the Mat-Su area serving families with children aged three and younger. The intention of these courts is to provide more targeted and timely services leading to reduced repeat maltreatment and less time placed in out-of-home care.

OCS continues to focus on the timeliness and quality of Relative Searches as a strategy to increase timely permanency for all children. Relative searches are particularly critical for Alaska with the high number of children who fall under the jurisdiction of ICWA. Early placement with relatives and agreement with the Indian child’s Tribe regarding placement is a much-preferred scenario versus contested placement hearings with Tribes, later in the life of a case. Relative Searches is one of the first services to be provided under the Tribal Child Welfare Compact and continues to be provided by Tribal cosigners.

Through Alaska’s Early Childhood Coordinating Council (AECCC), the Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS) partners with other state organizations and non-government entities to ensure the integration and alignment of services to address the developmental needs of all vulnerable children under the age of five in Alaska. The AECCC was created in 2010 to promote positive development, improve health and mental health outcomes and school readiness for Alaska’s children prenatal through age eight. Members the of AECCC include the Commissioners of the Department of Health and Social Services, the Department of Education and Early Development (DEED), the Department of Labor, and the Department of Public Safety; a representative from the Governor’s Office; the DEED Partnership Liaison; the Child Care Program Manager; the Part C/Early Intervention Manager; the Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems Manager; Alaska Infant Learning Program Association, Alaska Head Start Association, Alaska child care resource & referral network (thread), Alaska Native Health, the Children’s Trust, Chamber of Commerce, and mental health providers.

DFCS partners with the Department of Health to provide services and programs that address the developmental needs of all vulnerable children under five years of age. These activities and programs include:

- **Denali KidCare.** Administered through the Division of Health Care Services, Alaska’s Federal Children’s Health Insurance Program is known as Denali KidCare. The program offers comprehensive health insurance coverage for children and teens. Additionally the CHIP program is required to partner with the Public Health, Maternal Child Health, OCS and DJJ to ensure child and adolescent access to Medicaid services and delivery of quality health care including children with special health care needs to all Alaskan children.
- **Early Periodic Screening Diagnostic and Treatment (EPSDT).** The EPSDT program provides coverage of all medically necessary Medicaid services to correct or ameliorate a child’s physical or mental condition, regardless of whether such services are covered under a State’s Medicaid State Plan. All children in state custody receive an EPSDT screening within 30 days from removal.
- **The Infant Learning Program (ILP).** Housed in the Division of Senior and Disability Services, insures that all infants and toddlers with disabilities in the State who are eligible for early intervention services are identified, located, evaluated, and provided appropriate services. As required by federal law, this program utilizes a Child Find System that is coordinated with:
 - Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program (MIECHV)
 - Early Periodic Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment (EPSDT)
 - Programs under the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act of 2000
 - Head Start and Early Head Start
 - SSI program under Title XVI of the SS Act
 - Child protection and child welfare programs under the state agency responsible for administering the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA)
 - Early Hearing Detection and Intervention (EHDI)
 - Childcare programs in the state

In accordance with CAPTA, ILP complies with federally required referrals from the State agency (OCS) responsible to substantiated allegations of child abuse. These electronic referral records are automatically retrieved from the ORCA data system every night. These referrals are sent to a database that interfaces with all the ILP providers throughout the State.

- **Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems.** The Women’s Children’s and Family Health (WCFH) section, housed in the Division of Public Health, administers the federally-funded Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems grant for Alaska. This grant aims to integrate and coordinate services for the early childhood population and to improve outcomes in children’s developmental health and family well-being indicators. This work is community-based in nature. The focus of this grant is to increase the use of evidence-based developmental screening. Often, developmental concerns are not identified until a child enters school. This project aims to identify those concerns early and connect families with needed supports.
- **Parents as Teachers.** Also under, WCFH is the management and implementation of the Parents as Teachers home visiting grants. PAT is an evidence-based model of home visiting that serves clients during pregnancy and up until the child is age 5. The focus is on family education and parent support. This model aims to increase parent knowledge of early childhood development and improve parenting, provide early detection of development concerns, prevent child abuse, and neglect, and increase school readiness. The model involves personal visits, group connections, child screening, and a resource network. National research has shown that parents enrolled in PAT read more frequently to their children and are more likely to enroll their children in pre-school, both of which are linked to school readiness and achievement.
- **The Early Childhood Mental Health- Systems of Care.** This program is delivered by the Child Welfare Academy and is a system for technical support for Head Start mental health consultants and their grantees. It provides facilitation of a learning network, supporting the development of an Alaska model for head start consultation, providing a face to face statewide meeting, providing participant

support for training in evidence based treatment and participation in reflective practice groups and collecting data.

Efforts to Track and Prevent Child Maltreatment Deaths

The OCS Quality Assurance (QA) unit receives all child and youth deaths that occurred over the previous calendar year by the Department of Public Health. With this information the QA unit crosswalks information contained in the ORCA data base system. A comprehensive report that depicts an analysis of any child protection history, classification of death, and other characteristics is issued annually to the OCS leadership team. These reports have elicited strategies such as incorporating Youth Mental Health Aid training for suicide and assurance of distribution of safe sleeping brochures. OCS will continue participating in the Maternal Infant Child Death Review and Child Fatality Review Teams which are facilitated under the auspices of the State Medical Examiner's Office (SMEO). Participation in the reviews provides valuable opportunity for input and feedback with other agency partners. In addition, it identifies cases through the Child Fatality Review Team where a report was not made to OCS and can be followed up through Intake. OCS will continue to analyze trends through the Child Fatality Annual Report to identify strategies to prevent child maltreatment death.

MARYLEE ALLEN PROMOTING SAFE AND STABLE FAMILIES (PSSF) (TITLE IV-B, SUBPART 2)

States are required to spend a significant portion of the title IV-B, subpart 2 PSSF grant for each of the four service categories of PSSF: family preservation, community-based family support, time-limited family reunification, and adoption promotion and support services. PSSF funds, in part, provide grants for family support in Anchorage, Juneau, and Fairbanks. PSSF, in part, also supports family preservation grants called Circles of Support for seven providers across the state. Partially supported by PSSF funds are family reunification grants that provide family contact programs in Anchorage, Wasilla, and Fairbanks in all regions of the state.

Service Decision-Making Process for Family Support Services

Family Support Services (FSS) are community-based primary prevention services designed to increase the strength and stability of families, to increase the parents' competence in their parenting skills, to afford children a safe, stable, and supportive family environment, and otherwise to enhance child development. Families participating in FSS do not have an open child protection case.

Grants are awarded to community-based providers with services that strengthen families by enhancing parental resilience, link families to concrete supports, enhance knowledge of parenting and child development and support the social and emotional development of young children. Core services of FSS grant providers include in-home support, parent education, facilitated linkages to community resources, transportation services, and service coordination. The programs promote participation in early childhood services, medical services, and educational and employment services. FSS works with families who need support with basic needs, skill acquisition, and crisis stabilization.

Populations at Greatest Risk of Maltreatment

Alaska Native children, age birth to five years, continue to be the population at greatest risk of maltreatment. This group of children makes up 6.1% of the general population of children in Alaska but makes up 29.2% of the substantiated protective services reports. Further, 4.2% of Alaska Native children in this age group

experienced substantiated maltreatment. The percentage of substantiated maltreatment for this population has decreased from the previous year which was at 6.8%.

OCS dedicates a significant amount of time and resources targeted at nurturing relationships with Tribal partners, developing practice and policy strategies aimed at Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) compliance, targeted Alaska Native foster home recruitment, and the purchase of culturally appropriate family support services.

Despite agency efforts, a higher percentage of Alaska Native children in this age group have experienced substantiated maltreatment than in previous years. Alaska continues a true partnership and government-to-government relationship with Tribes and Tribal Organizations to truly transform child welfare. Both OCS and Tribal Cosigners are invested in the success of the Alaska Tribal Child Welfare Compact. Prevention work has been added to the Compact as a service to be funded, but not as a scope of work. The state is encouraging Tribes to work with families prior to OCS involvement.

CY 2023 Substantiation Rate

Age Range	Child Race	% Of AK Ages 0-17	% Of Total Children Ages 0 to 17 With a Substantiation	% Of Age Group Maltreated
Ages 0-5	Native	6.1%	29.2%	4.2%
Ages 0-5	Non-Native	25.4%	12.7%	0.7%
Ages 6-10	Native	5.9%	19.1%	2.9%
Ages 6-10	Non-Native	22.8%	9.9%	0.6%
Ages 11-15	Native	5.7%	15.3%	2.3%
Ages 11-15	Non-Native	23.3%	7.8%	0.5%
Ages 16-17	Native	2.1%	3.6%	1.5%
Ages 16-17	Non-Native	8.7%	2.4%	0.4%

Sources: ORCA RR0002>working>substantiated maltreatment.sql, Run dates: 1/1/23-12/31/23 and from <https://live.laborstats.alaska.gov/pop/>

MONTHLY CASEWORKER VISIT FORMULA GRANTS AND STANDARDS FOR CASEWORKER VISITS

OCS continues efforts to improve CWV compliance and is a goal within the CFSP under prioritizing essential services. With continued high caseloads and record high staff turnover rates, Alaska’s performance on monthly CWV continue to fail to meet the national standard. OCS continues efforts for staff recruitment and retention as noted in CFSP goal 1.A, 1.B, and 1.C.

Alaska received \$37,077.00 in title IV-B, subpart 2 funding for FFY 2024. This money was used to offset the cost of travel required to make monthly case worker visits. States are required to report data on monthly case worker visits with children in foster care by December 15 of each year. OCS submitted the following data on December 7, 2023:

- **STANDARD #1:** The total number of visits made by caseworkers on a monthly basis to children in foster care during a fiscal year must not be less than **95%** of the total number of such visits that would occur if each child were visited once every month while in care.

FFY 2023 OCS DATA: the total number of visits made by OCS caseworkers on a monthly basis to children in foster care was **66%**; this is an increase from FFY 2021 (65%).

- **STANDARD #2:** At least **50%** of the total number of monthly visits made by caseworkers to children in foster care during a fiscal year must occur in the child's residence.

FFY 2023 OCS DATA: **70%** of the monthly visits by OCS caseworkers to children in foster care occurred in the child's residence, which is a slight decrease from FFY 2021 (71%).

ADDITIONAL SERVICES INFORMATION

Adoption and Legal Guardianship Incentive Payments (section 473A of the Act): Alaska is using the Adoption and Legal Guardianship Incentive to fund, in part, a statewide grant that promotes the achievement of timely permanency through the provision of adoption and guardianship home studies. The Adoption and Legal Guardianship Incentive funds will continue to be used for the statewide grant to Alaska Adoption Services for the provision of adoption and guardianship homestudies. There are no concerns about the expenditure of these funds within the timeframes.

Adoption Savings (section 473(a)(8) of the Act): With the adoption savings the state provides post adoption and guardianship services through a grant with the Alaska Center for Resource Families (ACRF). The grant was established to provide seamless continuation of support for adoptive and guardianship families in Alaska. The grant services include information and referral services, crisis intervention, and case management. Savings is also provided for IV-B allowable services specifically to maintain a child in their home or return a child home such as parenting skills, family and child counseling, and non IV-E case planning services. The state also provides services to help secure permanent homes for children in foster care that cannot return home.

JOHN H. CHAFEE FOSTER CARE PROGRAM FOR SUCCESSFUL TRANSITION INTO ADULTHOOD

Agency Administering Chafee

The State of Alaska's Office of Children's Services provides administration, supervision, and oversight of the Chafee Foster Care Program for Successful Transition to Adulthood and the Education and Training Voucher program.

Description of Program Design and Delivery

OCS administers the Chafee Program through its Independent Living (IL) program. The IL Team is managed by a Social Services Program Officer who is a member of the Anchorage state office team and is directly staffed with an Independent Living Supervisor, seven Regional Independent Living Specialists (RILS) who administer the Chafee Program statewide and an Office Assistant. The Mental Health Trust Authority also funded a long-term, non-permanent, Independent Living Coordinator position to address systemic barriers that are resulting in delays in youth achieving adult guardianships and conservatorships; this position does not deliver Chafee services.

The IL Program supports eligible youth in transitioning into adulthood. “Eligible youth” are defined as youth aged 16-21 in out-of-home care or youth who were in out-of-home care on or after their 16th birthday and are no longer in foster care. This includes youth who are or have been in Tribal foster care. Eligibility terminates at age 21 unless the youth participates in the ETV program. Alaska has elected to maintain its current eligibility standards and will not be expanding to include youth ages 14 and 15. Foster youth ages 14-15, will be advised of their right to request a free annual credit report and the importance of monitoring for identify theft. If a youth 14-15 requests their free annual credit report, the IL team will obtain their credit report for them or assist them in doing so. Transition planning will also occur with youth 14-15 years old per OCS policy.

The IL team will utilize the National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD) survey to collect information on youth in foster care, including sex, race, ethnicity, date of birth and foster care status. It also collects information about the outcomes of those youth who have aged out of foster care by surveying them on six outcomes: financial self-sufficiency, experience with homelessness, educational attainment, positive connections with adults, high-risk behavior, and access to health insurance. Over the next five years Alaska will continue to use information gathered from NYTD surveys to steer programmatic activities by highlighting needed changes to service delivery and clearly identifying areas needing enhanced programmatic focus. Alaska is considering a potential contract for an outside entity to complete NYTD surveys in an effort to reach more youth and complete more surveys.

In addition to direct support and service provision provided by the OCS Independent Living Team, the Independent Living Supervisor will administer grants, contracts and Reciprocal Services Agreements that are awarded to community that extend delivery of Chafee services and provide other supportive services to youth. Partners focus on such things as delivering essential NYTD services, providing mentorship, arranging, and hosting youth retreats and conferences and providing housing support.

Facing Foster Care in Alaska (FFCA) is once such contractor. FFCA is a nonprofit organization dedicated to improving the foster care system, developing leadership skills among current and former foster youth ages 16-24, and creating a network of peer support for foster youth throughout the state. OCS has maintained a strong partnership with FFCA since 2018 through the *Foster Youth Independence Retreats and Cash Grant Management* contract. FFCA plans and hosts Independent Living Program retreats and career conferences for current and former foster youth, ages 16-21 and for “elders” who are out of custody youth between the ages 21-24; “elders” serve in mentoring/leadership roles. Retreats and conferences focus on enhancing a range of skills that are designed to promote self-sufficiency. Retreats and conferences also provide the opportunity for youth to form connections with others with shared life experiences. FFCA’s Youth Leadership Board has proven to be an invaluable asset in managing public awareness campaigns for youth/former youth. FFCA’s Youth Leadership Board meets quarterly with OCS leadership to discuss agency agendas, training needs, legislation, and policy development.

With their lived experience, youth are considered stakeholders whose input is sought when setting goals for the for OCS to include the CFSR, conference agendas, training of staff, providers, and resource families. Assurances will be made that Alaska Native youth are represented on any workgroups and in the development of trainings, policies, and procedures. OCS will continue to actively partner with youth to

address programs and policies that may perpetuate systemic barriers for children and families of color and addressing disparities in the child welfare system experienced by LGBTQIA2S+ children, parents, and caregivers.

Serving Youth Across the State

The OCS Anchorage, Southcentral, and Fairbanks regions each have two RILS assigned to serve foster youth and the Southeast region is staffed with one RILS dedicated to serving youth in the Southeast and Western regions. The regional distribution of the RILS allows the IL team to serve and engage with all IL eligible youth including youth in rural and remote areas of Alaska who may be underserved by other systems. Although the larger regions have more community resources available for foster youth and alumni, the IL Program makes every effort to provide equitable distribution of services and funding. The IL Program has regularly scheduled life skills activities, classes, and training opportunities for youth and alumni that reside in each of the regional office areas and facilitate transportation of youth in order to participate. Life skills trainings are available in-person and virtually to allow for youth in rural areas of Alaska to participate. Over the next five years the IL program will continue to partner with youth and Tribes to address the challenges of engaging with Alaska Native youth in IL service delivery in rural areas when in-person contact may be infrequent.

Serving Youth of Various Ages and Stages of Achieving Independence

The IL program provides a multitude of opportunities for IL eligible youth to engage with caring adults, develop positive relationships with peers, learn healthy behaviors, identify concrete supports, and develop skills that will support their transition into adulthood. The RILS work directly with individual youth in their regions to assess needs and to assist the youth with their individualized goals to include transitioning out of care. Through the support of the Mental Health Trust Authority and its funding of the Independent Living Coordinator Position, this also includes early identification of youth who may need an adult guardianship or conservatorship an ensuring measure are in place for that transition to occur as well.

Alaska's foster youth are further supported in achieving independence via a one million dollar Federal Grant issued directly to Covenant House Alaska. The federal grant will be dispersed over a three-year pilot period. The majority of funds will go directly to youth, as well as toward hiring two staff members to help young people navigate the program.

Alaska does not intend to extend, or plan to extend, title IV-E foster care assistance to young people ages 18-21. Youth may remain in care and placed in a licensed foster home. As well, Alaska also has not elected to extend Chafee services to age 23. However, young adults 21+ and older often suffer from the abrupt end of financial support prior to establishing independence. To support this population, the Mental Health Trust Authority has issued the Independent Living program \$250,000 to support this population with housing, transportation, and basic living needs. This \$250,000 will continue through FY27 and OCS will continue to use it for its intended purpose until it expires. Additionally, Governor Dunleavy allocated one million dollars to the Independent Living Program to support youth 18-21 in successfully transitioning into adulthood and maintaining their independence by reducing financial barriers for youth that were in legal custody or had exited foster care at age 18. OCS reduced the lower age limit and expanded the upper age limit to 23 and funding is capped at \$3000 per youth, per state fiscal year. As long as this funding remains in the budget, it will be used to support this population.

Once a youth reaches the age of 16, and is in foster care in Alaska, or was in out-of-home care on or after their 16th birthday, and are no longer in foster care, they are eligible for the IL Program. Youth are provided information about the IL Program and supported in identifying and accessing needed services and resources and in planning for their future. Youth in custody aged 16 and older also participate in a yearly Casey Life

Skills Assessment that assess the independent skills the youth needs to achieve their long-term goals. It aims to guide youth toward developing healthy, productive lives. The results of these assessments are then recorded in the case file and become a part of the youth's caseplan.

Youth who have moved to Alaska after exiting care from another state are able to access IL services from OCS, as well as the Office of Youth Empowerment. OCS partners with FFCA to engage these youth and provide needed services. The OCS webpage also informs youth of available services and who to contact.

Collaboration with Other Private and Public Agencies

The IL program makes diligent efforts to develop strong community partnerships to wrap services around IL youth. Partnerships continue with Facing Foster Care in Alaska, Alaska Housing Finance Corporation, University of Alaska Anchorage, Alaska Pacific University, the Mental Health Trust Authority, the Child Welfare Academy, Covenant House, Big Brothers Big Sisters, the Division of Public Assistance and Tribal entities across the state. IL participates in the state's Court improvement Project and Regional Tribal/State Collaboration meetings. These partnerships allow for information sharing to continue to identify ways to support youth and alumni as well as resource sharing.

The OCS IL program partners with the Department of Health to maintain that youth have necessary Medicaid coverage. The IL program is able to assist youth who have moved to another state in applying for Medicaid by providing any necessary documentation required by the state they reside in.

Determining Eligibility for Benefits and Services

Independent living services and support will be made available to all youth aged 16 or older who are or were in OCS custody and placed in out-of-home care by OCS. Independent living services are seen as a service to youth that will help them achieve their goals as they transition to adulthood, regardless of the permanency goal. The services will be tailored to meet the unique, individualized needs of the youth and will be based on assessments and conversations with youth. Independent living services consist of a series of developmental activities that provide opportunities for youth in custody and former foster care youth up to age 21 to gain the skills required to live healthy, productive, and responsible lives as self-sufficient adults. The objective of the services is that each youth achieve self-sufficiency through completion and attainment of employment and academic achievement.

Two types of financial assistance are available to facilitate the transition from foster care to self-sufficiency: Independent Living Funds and Education and Training Voucher Funds:

- Independent Living Funds: For purchase of goods and services to successfully facilitate the transition from out-of-home care to independent living. Youth must have completed a Casey Life Skills Assessment prior to the request. Eligible youth who are no longer in custody can access funds up to age 21. These funds are not considered an entitlement and are approved only on an as needed basis.
- Education and Training Voucher (ETV) Funds: For post-secondary or vocational training. Youth must be accepted into an institution of higher education. The maximum amount a youth can access is \$5,000 per academic year. The total funds approved cannot exceed the total cost of attendance for the academic year. Youth may access funds up to age 23 if they started their post-secondary education by age 21 and have been continuously enrolled.

Cooperation in National Evaluations

Alaska's Office of Children's Services Independent Living Program will cooperate with any national programmatic evaluation for the purposes of Chafee to the fullest extent possible.

Chafee Training

The IL team will be reinvigorating quarterly trainings for staff members on topics specific to Independent Living and working with IL youth; these trainings will be recorded for all staff to reference. OCS will be seeking youth input on what training topics they would like to see for OCS staff members and will be asked to participate in developing and presenting these trainings. The need for training on the topics of adult guardianships/conservatorships, the permanency goal of APPLA, supporting LGBTQIA2S+ youth, and services for youth in Tribal custody have been identified by OCS. A member or members of the IL team will also participate in a portion of SKILS to provide an overview of the Independent Living Program to new employees and new employee are to meet with their regional RILS as part of their onboarding.

Education and Training Vouchers (ETV) Program

Alaska's ETV program eligibility requirements and will not be expanding to include youth aged 14 and 15. OCS plans to maintain its business agreement with the University of Alaska's, CWA, to administer ETV programming to former foster youth up to age 23. Youth engaged in the ETV program receive direct, on-campus support and have a caring adult to assist with navigating the challenges of attending college and securing resources for their education. Alaska's ETV Program is fully staffed by those with lived experience in the child welfare system who themselves are graduates of the ETV program.

To ensure the total amount of educational assistance does not exceed the total cost of attendance, ETV Program staff monitor student enrollment, the number of credits involved and estimates the cost of attendance. The CWA ETV Coordinator can view financial aid awards, including any grants, loans, and scholarships beyond ETV. The CWA ETV Coordinator then assesses an award amount up to the \$5000 limit and provides that information to the school's Financial Aid Department. Financial aid has further layers of review and will not utilize ETV assistance until all other aid has been applied to a student's account. If a student has been over awarded or does not show a financial need, funds are returned. For students at non-UA Campuses, the CWA ETV Coordinator reviews the student's overall costs as determined by that school, completes a college funding worksheet, and determines the student's level of financial need. The CWA ETV Coordinator provides the information to OCS Independent Living Program supervisor who issues a check directly to the school along with an award letter from the CWA ETV Coordinator outlining eligibility. If a student withdraws or fails, has too much aid, or drops some credits, financial aid notifies the CWA ETV Coordinator, and funds are returned.

Consultation with Tribes

In effort to ensure Chafee benefits and services are available to children in Tribal custody, virtual meetings will be facilitated by the IL Program Coordinator. The IL program will host these meetings to provide IL and Chafee technical assistance for Tribes and youth in Tribal Foster care. In this next five years the IL program will enhance the previous teleconferences and maintain that all Tribes are invited to participate.

All Chafee benefits and services are currently available to eligible Indian youth. There have been no requests by tribes to develop an agreement with OCS or to build a tribal Chafee or ETV program.

SECTION 5 – CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION BETWEEN STATES AND TRIBES

- The State of Alaska, local Tribes, and Tribal Organizations utilize several forums to discuss OCS compliance with the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA). The outcomes of these joint discussions

include government-to-government collaboration on legal agreements, initiatives, workgroups, committees, and meetings designed to develop policy and systemic changes to improve outcomes for Alaska Native children involved in the child welfare system. Tribes are provided the opportunity within these forums to discuss the CFSP as well as the APSR. The State will continue to make the CFSP and future APSRs accessible to Tribes through the OCS website. Below is a detailed narrative of specific outcomes that were a result of consultations and coordinated discussions between the State, Tribes, and Tribal Organizations.

The State of Alaska values Tribal collaboration and consultation on service delivery and seeks to gather input from Tribes through various ways. Representatives and leaders from the Tribes and State have been “working together for a common goal” since 1994 through the Tribal State Collaboration Group (TSCG). A component of the TSCG is an advisory team consisting of OCS Leadership and the Regional Co-Chairs elected by Tribal Caucus. Tribal State Advisory Team (TSAT) meets every other month with the goal of addressing Tribal concerns and relationships to continue to improve outcomes for Tribal families. Efforts related to outcomes for Tribal youth at risk of coming into care, services while in care, eligibility for Chafee/ETV funding, and other best practices related to serving Alaska Native youth are some, but not an exhaustive list, of topics addressed through Tribal State Collaboration Group. The statewide and regional collaboration groups will continue to meet during the 2025-2029 CFSP. Tribes represented in TSAT include Central Council of Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska, Kawarak, Inc., Nome Eskimo Community, Associated Council of Village Presidents, and Bristol Bay Native Association. Co-chairs from these Tribal entities represent the interests and voices of the Tribal State Tribal Caucus consisting of the 229 federally represented Tribes in Alaska. Feedback on initiatives or processes are communicated to all Tribal Caucus for input.

The Tribal-State Data Group meets to review and identify possible additional data indicators to ensure the data collected conveys an accurate representation of the strengths and challenges within the system. This group will continue to meet during the 2025-2029 CFSP.

The ICWA Due Diligence and Collaboration process was developed as an alternative to the ICWA Contested Memo previously utilized by the AAGs office for disagreement with Tribes. When OCS and the Tribe disagree regarding placement or permanency, or encounter issues with ICWA Compliance, the ICWA Due Diligence and Collaboration process will be consulted to work through the disagreement at the lowest level possible to continue to nurture and maintain relationships. As issues are unable to be resolved, the concern will be brought to the leadership level for review in hopes of reaching resolution.

OCS utilizes a survey to solicit information regarding Tribal satisfaction with OCS. The survey asks Tribal Partners to use a Likert scale to rate their agreement or disagreement level to several statements surrounding the involvement of Tribes in cases involving their Tribal children. The survey also asked several questions where Tribal responders have the opportunity to provide feedback and ideas about OCS staff recruitment and retention, disproportionality, and alternatives to taking custody of Alaska Native children.

An ORCA Activity Note titled “Collaboration with Tribe” was launched in the ORCA system during the previous CFSP to track Tribal collaboration. This allows OCS to have the ability to ensure the communication with the Tribe is frequent and ongoing. ORCA reports will continue to be monitored to review the collaboration notes to determine if more implementation strategies will need to be considered during the 2025-2029 CSFP.

The Alaska Tribal Child Welfare Compact was signed on October 10, 2017, and currently involves 20 Tribal Co-Signers representing 172 individual Tribes. The Alaska Tribal Child Welfare Compact is a government-to-government agreement between the State of Alaska and certain Alaska Native Tribes and Tribal Organizations. The Compact respects and acknowledges the inherent sovereignty of Tribes over the welfare

of Alaska Native children. The Compact helps increase the capacity of Tribal governments to provide child welfare services to their Tribal children. One of the primary goals of the Compact is to collaboratively address the racial disproportionality of Alaska Native children in State custody. Tribes, Tribal Organizations, and the State participated in several joint meetings, to negotiate the child welfare services Tribal partners would provide to their Tribal citizens through the Compact. Work related to Tribal Compacting will continue into the 2025-2029 CFSP.

OCS continues to work on the expansion of Tribal Title IV-E Maintenance Pass-Through Agreements and Administration & Short-Term Training Agreements. OCS, Federal Region X, and Tribal partners who currently have IV-E Agreements presents IV-E information to Tribal Caucus. The information presented outlines the benefits of IV-E, the ability to draw down funds to build Tribal child welfare infrastructures, and the criteria needed to enter into a Title IV-E Agreement with the State.

The State is committed to continued collaboration with Tribes and Tribal Organizations on joint training opportunities. Tribal partners have either been involved in or co-facilitated several trainings including Title IV-E and IV-B, as well as ICWA I and II. Training provided by the Child Welfare Academy continues to be open to Tribes and Tribal Organizations to attend. The Child Welfare Academy in partnership with OCS began facilitating the Blanket Exercise May 31, 2019, and continues to use this exercise in new worker training. This is a very powerful event that demonstrates the gravity of historical trauma and resiliency in a new way. This curriculum was originally developed by KAIROS Canada and was adapted by Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium who worked with Alaska Center for Resource Families to create an Alaska Native version of the Blanket Exercise.

Below is a list of Tribes and Tribal Organizations participated in one or more of the above mentioned joint Tribal-State legal agreements, initiatives, workgroups, committees, or meetings.

Alaska Federation of Natives	Central Council Tlingit & Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska
Alaska Legal Services	Chickaloon Indian Tribe
Alaska Native Health Board Inc	Chugachmuit
Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium	Cook Inlet Tribal Council
Aleut Community of St. Paul Island	Copper River Native Association
Aleutian Pribilof Islands Association	Eastern Aleutian Tribes
Arctic Slope Native Association	Elim IRA
Asa'carsarmiut Tribal Council	
Association of Village Council Presidents	First Alaskans Institute
Bristol Bay Native Association	Kawerak
Buckland, Native Village of	Kenaitze Indian Tribe
Bureau of Indian Affairs	Louden Tribal Council
Casey Family Programs	

Maniilaq Association	Norton Sound Health Corp
Native American Rights Fund	Organized Village of Kake
Native Village of Afognak	Orutsararmiut Native Council
	Sitka Tribes of Alaska
Native Village of Eyak	Southcentral Foundation
Ninilchik Traditional Council Community Clinic	Sun'aq Tribe of Kodiak
Nome Eskimo Community	Tanana Chiefs Conference

The State plans to continue coordinated and collaborative efforts with Tribes on the implementation and assessment of the 2025-2029 CFSP. The State will continue to distribute and share, the CFSP/APSR with Tribes utilizing, but not limited to, the following forums:

- Tribal State Advisory Team, Regional TSCG, Statewide TSCG
- Alaska Tribal Child Welfare Compact meetings including negotiating services to be provided by Tribes and Tribal Organization to their Tribal citizens and communities.

It is through the above identified collaborations and forums that the State and Tribes work to establish shared responsibility for providing child welfare services and the protection of Tribal children. Tribes have an inherent vested interest and will continue to advocate and provide services for their Tribal children involved in the State child welfare system.

SECTION 6 – TARGETED PLANS WITHIN THE CFSP

FOSTER AND ADOPTIVE PARENT DILIGENT RECRUITMENT PLAN

General recruitment involves reaching all parts of the state through media and public recruitment events. These media and recruitment events include radio public service announcements, Department of Family and Community Services Facebook and YouTube channel, local magazines, postcards, movie theater ads, Alaska Club digital media, recruitment booths at Alaska Federation of Natives (AFN), Cam-I Dance Festival, Artic Winter Games, and other events throughout the state.

Targeted recruitment focuses on specific children and youth in need of temporary and permanent homes, for example children with medical needs, large sibling groups, LGBTQI youth, teens, and ICWA homes. The State of Alaska has a disproportionate number of Alaska Native children in out-of-home care. Targeted recruitment includes radio ads in Yupik and English, recruitment activities at community events targeting ICWA homes and LGBTQ+ homes, attending Tribal activities in villages, conduct orientation in rural communities targeting ICWA homes, working with school districts targeting sibling group homes, leaving recruitment materials at hospitals targeting medical foster homes, and coordinating with Tribes to seek ICWA applicants.

Training and diligent recruitment and retention are expected to both retain current resource families and increase the diversity of resource families, including to increase the number of ICWA families to address the disproportionate number of children in care. OCS will measure the changes in the foster parent population during the 2025 – 2029 period.

In the event that a child becomes legally free for adoption and no permanent placement is identified, the child is listed on the Beacon Hill Online Heart Gallery. Northwest Adoption Exchange and AdoptUSKids funnel inquiries to Beacon Hill who responds to the family and offers adoption orientation provided jointly by Beacon Hill and Alaska Center for Resource Families (ACRF).

The PARKA recruitment and training project through ACRF continues to develop and expand throughout the state with intentions to provide more access to families and increased preparation of families at the beginning of the adoption journey. Families moving toward adoption are strongly encouraged to complete the Adoption Learning Path through ACRF which includes Core Training for Resource Families, adopting through OCS, and Building Families through Adoption. As Heart Gallery of Alaska expanded and took over more of the recruiting responsibilities once held by the Northwest Adoption Exchange, ACRF worked with HG to require the Adoption Learning Path. This Adoption Learning Path is required by the Heart Gallery of Alaska for families who inquire about children listed on the Heart Gallery and required for families who develop a family profile which is posted on the Heart Gallery of Alaska web page.

In efforts to work with families where English is not their first language, OCS is working on translating the foster care application to the top five languages spoken by families. Alaska partners with Tribes through the licensing assist scope of work to assist Alaska Native families in filling out the foster care application. OCS also, when necessary, utilizes the Language Interpreter Center through the Alaska Institute for Justice.

The state of Alaska has Non-Discriminatory Fee Structure. There are no fees to families to obtain a foster care license. There are no fees to families adopting special needs children with the exception of attorney fees for finalization, of which \$2,000 per child is reimbursed after finalization.

Region	Licensed Foster Home	Unlicensed Relative Foster Home
ARO - CPA	155	-
ARO	344	208
WRO	61	65
NRO	134	108
SERO	89	22
SCRO	334	91
Total	1,117	494

HEALTH CARE OVERSIGHT AND COORDINATION PLAN

Section 422(b)(15)(A) of the act requires states to develop a plan for the ongoing oversight and coordination of health care services for children in foster care. States must develop the plan in coordination with the state Medicaid agency, and in consultation with pediatricians and other experts in health care, and experts in and recipients of child welfare services.

The Health Care Oversight and Coordination Plan was updated in 2024 with the assistance of the State of Alaska Department of Health. OCS has signed a memorandum of agreement for the Medical Director for Health Care

Services to serve as the Health Authority for OCS. When the Medical Director is not available, the Chief Medical Officer is designated to serve in this role. This agreement provides for the Health Authority to participate in biennial meetings with the Medical Mental Health Unit (MMHU) and OCS Nurse Consultants to discuss and strategize around any health care needs or practice trends identified for the foster care population. The Health Authority will also provide guidance regarding quality assurance methods on tracking children in state custody on psychotropic medications and system improvements. Agency records will be available for the Health Authority to review as necessary to provide and facilitate consultation of services for children and youth in OCS custody.

OCS created a central Medical Mental Health Unit to ensure youth with complex medical and mental health needs were receiving consistent services statewide. Additionally, OCS has implemented biennial meetings to occur for HOCP Committee Co-Chairs to continue efforts for information and data sharing as well as improvements to communication.

DISASTER PLAN

Section 422(b)(16) of the Act requires that states have in place procedures explaining how the state programs assisted under title IV-B, subparts 1 and 2, and title IV-E, would respond to a disaster, in accordance with criteria established by the Secretary. These procedures, enumerated in section 422(b)(16)(A)-(E) of the Act, should describe how a state would:

- Identify, locate, and continue availability of services for children under state care or supervision who are displaced or adversely affected by a disaster;
- Respond, as appropriate, to new child welfare cases in areas adversely affected by a disaster, and provide services in those cases;
- Remain in communication with caseworkers and other essential child welfare personnel who are displaced because of a disaster;
- Preserve essential program records; and
- Coordinate services and share information with other states.

Alaska experiences numerous disasters and weather-related issues that affect the health and safety of residents. The OCS goal is that these issues do not affect delivery of services to children and families in Alaska. Not only has the OCS made significant improvements to the OCS Continuity of Operations plan (COOP) but to its overall response to disasters. Since the last report, the OCS has created a Safety and Security unit within the division to help liaise with state emergency management officials, monitor disaster trends, and send alerts to OCS leadership of developing situations. Additionally, Safety and Security unit has been sending eyewitness reports to the Emergency Management office to assist with their efforts of information gathering and response/recovery operations. Contact information for key staff is regularly updated, and core group notifications brought current annually. With these improved processes, OCS was able to quickly prepare and response to disasters, like Typhoon Merbok, or the record floods that have struck northern communities of Nome and Kotzebue, with minimal agency impact.

- Statewide COOP has certified all OCS Essential Functions.
- Created stronger links to and cooperation from the State Emergency Operations Center.
- Safety and Security Unit Staff have received advanced emergency management and FEMA certifications.
- Improved communication and family/worker support, families/workers are provided with quick, relevant information pertaining to a disaster and any individual grant information if applicable.

TRAINING PLAN

In FY 25, a new protective services staff initial training curriculum will be piloted and delivered by the OCS Mentor Program. The training will differ than how it has historically been delivered by offering more support through field training and coaching. Starting July 2024, new staff will go to the first series of trainings for 4 weeks. The first week of training will focus on an orientation to the agency and the practice model for safety assessment, primarily focused on

investigation and assessments. The first week of training will be held virtually. The second week of training will occur in the regional field offices, as field work, with an investigation assigned to the new PSS worker along with a mentor. The third week of training will return to virtual training and will encompass family services and legal training. The curriculum will cover family engagement, case worker visits, permanency planning, case planning and assessing for behavioral change. The fourth week of initial training will again occur in the regional field office hubs where staff that will be family services workers will be assigned their first case. Other staff will shadow current family services workers for purposes of exposure to family services work.

New protective services staff will be assigned a Mentor to evaluate and train to competencies for the first six months of the new employee's tenure. The initial four weeks of training will be led by the OCS mentor team to enhance practical application of the practice model to cases. At approximately 3 months and six months, staff will return for further subject matter training in 162 and 163 editions facilitated by the Child Welfare Academy. These sessions will include topics such as subject matter presentations on mental health, substance use, additional legal training, Youth Mental Health First Aid, Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and an Alaskan Native Blanket Exercise.

The delivery and curriculum of the new staff training will be a new system of delivery in FY 25, evaluation of the training and changes will occur over the course of the CFSP. Training will be evaluated through new protective services specialists pre and posttests, surveys, and focus group feedback. The attached Training Plan provides all training covered throughout the year for the differing job classes at OCS.

SECTION 7 - FINANCIAL INFORMATION

PAYMENT LIMITATIONS

Title IV-B, Subpart 1

States may not spend more title IV-B, subpart 1 funds for childcare, foster care maintenance and adoption assistance payments than the state expended for those purposes in FY2005 (section 424 © of the Act). Alaska spent \$0 of title IV-B, subpart 1 funds for administrative costs. Alaska does not utilize title IV-B I/II funds for administrative costs.

Title IV-B, Subpart 2

States are required to spend a significant portion of the title IV-B, subpart 2 PSSF grant for each of the four service categories of PSSF: family preservation, community-based family support, time-limited family reunification, and adoption promotion and support services.

Alaska's expenditures for family preservation, community-based family support, time-limited family reunification, and adoption promotion and support services for FFY 1992 were reported as \$1,206,910. Per the CFS-101, Part III, Alaska received \$600,011 in FFY 2022. From FFY2022 to FFY2023 (10/1/22 – 9/30/24) funds from title IV-B, subpart 2 and spent those funds as follows:

- \$138,306 or 23% of its FFY 2022 award on family preservation services.
- \$138,306 or 23% of its FFY 2022 award on community-based family support services.
- \$299,662 or 50% of its FFY 2022 award on time-limited family reunification services.
- Alaska did not spend any of its FFY 2022 award on adoption promotion and support services.

Per the attached CFS-101, Part III, Alaska did not spend any of its FFY2022 award on administrative costs.

Alaska spent \$112.15 on Monthly Caseworker Visits.

In FFY 2023, OCS did not expend approximately 20% of the grant on each of the four PSSF service categories. Funds were spent disproportionately during FFY 2022, because of continuing changes in utilization rate of grant

services. Family Reunification services were again prioritized for funding because the capacity of service providers needed to be increased to meet the demand for the services in the urban areas. Adoption promotion and support services in Alaska are funded through a grant to ACRF with state general funds.

Chafee

States are required to certify that no more than 30% of their allotment of federal Chafee funds will be expended for room and board for youth who left foster care after the age of 18 years of age and have not yet attained age 21. For states that operate an extended foster care program and that choose to exercise the Chafee option to serve youth up to age 23, the limitation applies to providing room and board to youth who left foster care after attaining ages 18 and have not yet attained age 23.

In FFY2023, OCS expended approximately 14% of its allotment of federal Chafee funds on room and board for youth who left foster care after the age of 18 years of age who had not yet turned 21. The funds were utilized for Tenant-Based Rental Assistance. In SFY 2023 Alaska's Governor allocated the Office of Children's Services additional state funding to support current and former foster youth to obtain housing. Those additional state funds were also utilized for necessary room and board. That funding continues as a part of the current budget.

CURRENT YEAR FUNDING

Reallotments

OCS did not receive any allotments in the current year.

Revisions – Submitting a Revised Part I

Submitting a Revised Part I: There were no revisions in the current year.

FY 2025 Budget Request—CFS-101, Parts i and ii

Alaska submitted Part I of the CFS-101 form to request Title IV-B, subpart I (CWS) and Title IV-B, subpart II (PSSF and Monthly Caseworker Visit funds), CAPTA, CFCIP, and ETV funds. In addition, Alaska completed Part II to include the estimated amount of funds to be spent in each program area by source, the estimated number of individuals and families to be served, and the geographic service area within which the services are to be provided.

FY 2022 Title IV-B Expenditure Report—CFS-101, Part iii

Alaska has completed the CFS-101, Part III to report the actual amount of funds expended in each program area of title IV-B funding by source, the number of individuals and families served, and the geographic service area within which the services were provided. Required financial reporting forms are attached.

Expenditure Periods and Submission of Standard Form 425 (SF-425) Federal Financial Report

Alaska reports expenditures under Title IV-B, subparts 1 and 2, CAPTA, CFCIP, and ETV programs on the Financial Status Report, SF-425 typically by December 31 of each year, which is 90 days after federal fiscal year-end.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A. Foster and Adoptive Parent Diligent Recruitment and Retention Plan FY 24 and FY 25

Attachment B. Alaska Health Care Oversight Plan

Attachment C. Alaska Disaster Plan

Attachment D. Alaska Training Plan FY2024

Attachment E. State of Alaska Data Quality Plan

Attachment F. OCS Workforce Workplan USSG Framework

Attachment G. CRP Report

Attachment H. Alaska's Response to the CRP Report

Attachment I. Assurances and Certifications

Alaska CFS 101 FY 2025 signed

Alaska CFS 101 FY2025 Excel

Alaska ETV Chart FY 2024