

**Department of Family and Community Services  
FY23 Mid-Year Status Report**

| Item # | Approp / Allocation  | Description   | Amount / Fund Source   | LFD Comment   | LFD Questions  | Agency Comments  |
|--------|--|---|--|---|--|--|
| 1      | Various  | Executive Order 121                                     | Total: \$1,592.9<br>\$470.2 Fed Rcpts (Fed)<br>\$668.7 GF/Match (UGF)<br>\$454.0 I/A Rcpts (Other)<br>7 PFT Positions<br>3 TMP Positions | Through Executive Order 121, the Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS) has been divided into two distinct departments: the Department of Family and Community Services (DFCS) and the Department of Health (DOH).   | Have there been unforeseen costs associated with the DHSS split?<br><br>What is the status of the positions that were added to various components within DFCS to facilitate the new department? If a position has been filled, please provide a hire date.   | Acquisition of State Equipment Fleet (SEF) vehicles was an unforeseen expense. H&SS misunderstood the allowable use of SEF credits – staff intended to utilize existing credits to acquire new vehicles; however the new departments must purchase new vehicles as the credits are only valid toward replacement of existing fleet vehicles, not for expanding the fleet.<br><br>Commissioner – filled 7/1/2022<br>Executive Secretary – filled 7/11/2022<br>Project Coordinator – filled 9/6/2022<br>Division Director – Departmental Support Services – filled 7/1/2022<br>Department Technology Officer – filled 7/1/2022<br>Data Processing Manager 1 – filled 10/10/2022<br>Microcomputer/Network Tech 1 – FBX (on-call) – to be filled as needed<br>Microcomputer/Network Tech 1 – JNU (on-call) – to be filled as needed<br>Microcomputer/Network Tech 1 – ANC (on-call) – to be filled as needed<br>Systems Programmer 1/2 – filled 12/19/2022 |
| 2      | Alaska Pioneer Homes / Alaska Pioneer Homes Payment Assistance | Align Alaska Pioneer Homes Payment Assistance with Need | (\$3,000.0) Gen Fund (UGF)   | In FY21, the Pioneer Homes Payment Assistance allocation received \$6.1 million UGF through Ch. 23, SLA 2020 (HB 96) to align payment assistance with inflation and Social Security cost of living adjustments. Around the same time, COVID-19 began to spread, which reduced occupancy rates. The Department notes this \$3 million decrement is associated with lapsing approximately \$7 million UGF in FY21. Although it is not certain how occupancy rates will trend going forward, at this time the reduction appears to be sustainable.<br><br>The total number of elders served includes 592 in FY19, 594 in FY20, 607 in FY21, and 601 in FY22. | FY21 lapse was approximately \$7 million, and initial projections for the FY22 lapse was \$7.5 million. What was the final lapse amount for FY22?<br><br>How many elders have been served in FY23 thus far, and are turnover rates continuing to trend toward pre-pandemic levels? Does the Department anticipate that current funding levels will be sufficient in FY23 despite high inflation? | In FY2022, the Pioneer Home Payment Assistance component lapsed \$5,506.3.<br><br>The Pioneer Homes has served 525 elders thus far in FY2023. Turnover rates are trending toward pre-pandemic levels. The division anticipates the current funding levels will be sufficient for the remainder of FY2023.  |
| 3      | Alaska Pioneer Homes / Pioneer Homes                           | Federal Reimbursement from the Veteran's Administration | \$800.0 Fed Rcpts (Fed)  | In FY19, a \$525.0 increase in federal authority was approved to support the Veterans and Pioneer Home in Palmer upgrading its certification to be reimbursed for a higher Nursing Home level of care than Domiciliary Care, for up to 14 residents. This FY23 increment provides authority to further expand the reimbursement rate for those 14 higher-need beds to a 'Nursing Home Service Connected' (NHSC) rate.   | The U.S. Department of Veteran's Affairs (U.S. DVA) updates the reimbursement schedule annually each calendar year. Does the Department anticipate that this level of federal receipt authority will be sufficient for the remainder of FY23?  | The division anticipates that the level of Federal authority will be sufficient for the remainder of FY2023.   |

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| 4      | Inpatient Mental Health / Designated Evaluation and Treatment | Disability Law Center Settlement | Total: \$10,875.0<br>GF/Match (UGF) \$4,500.0 I/A Rcpts (Other) \$1,875.0 GF/MH (UGF) | Initial funding for this settlement was appropriated during SLA 2021 through a supplemental in the Judgments, Claims, and Settlements appropriation (\$7.4 million UGF and \$4.5 million Federal Receipts). This increases base funding in the Designated Evaluation & Treatment (DET) allocation (previously housed in the DHSS / Behavioral Health appropriation) to satisfy settlement terms entered into between the State and the plaintiffs in The Disability Law Center of Alaska, Inc. v. State of Alaska, Department of Health and Social Services, 3AN-18-09814CI, to fund the programs described in the court-ordered plan.<br><br>The \$4.5 million I/A is supported with federal receipts in the Medicaid appropriation.<br><br>Items 4 and 5 are related. | How has capacity been expanded in the various programs outlined in the court-ordered plan?<br><br>What is the current API patient capacity? If it is below 80 beds (anticipated number from prior years), is 80 beds an unrealistic goal? | The funds have kept capacity stable in the crisis psychiatric continuum of care and have allowed us to keep the expanded disproportionate share hospital (DSH) agreements that started in FY19, which allowed the department to provide agreements beyond just the historical three hospitals that had DSH agreements (Fairbanks Memorial Hospital, Bartlett Regional Hospital, and Providence Alaska Medical Center). The state has now been able to consistently award a total of 7 to 10 agreements each year depending on the hospitals' facility-specific limit and if they qualify to enter into an agreement. In Alaska, our DSH categories are all behavioral health-related encompassing services to Alaskans before a more acute level of care may be necessary. Additionally, the department was able to provide administrative grants in FY 21 to DES and DET providers that help cover increased costs to administer the program at their facility. The administrative grants did not have multi-year appropriation authority. As such, with the budget being signed into law just days before the start of the fiscal year, we were not able to offer them for FY 22. However, funding was included in the FY 23 budget and the department is in the process of awarding these agreements for FY 23. The funds also covered increased costs in the secure transport contract, which saw increased utilization during the COVID-19 PHE due to the inability to transport clients on commercial airlines.<br><br>API's current capacity is 71.<br>Achieving a census of 80 is challenged by staff availability, patients needing to room alone (which ties up a bed in a 2 bed bedroom), gender mix and patients needing a 1:1 (meaning additional staff needed to be within arm's length of this patient with no other assignments). |
| 5      | Inpatient Mental Health / Alaska Psychiatric Institute        | Disability Law Center Settlement | \$678.0 GF/MH (UGF)   | The terms of the Disability Law Center Settlement under Case No. 3AN-18-9814 CI require the department to seek an appropriation for crisis placement provider agreements to increase capacity for individuals requiring timely evaluations and treatment in the least restrictive settings. This increased funding in Alaska Psychiatric Institute's budget will satisfy the crisis stabilization component of the settlement to divert individuals experiencing a behavioral health emergency to API and away from law enforcement, emergency medical services, and hospital emergency rooms.<br><br>Items 4 and 5 are related.  | Please provide an update on how the Department has utilized this funding to satisfy the crisis stabilization component of the settlement.   | API is utilizing this funding for crisis placement provider agreements for placement of civil psychiatric patients.   |

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| 6      | Children's Services / Front Line Social Workers | Expand Support Positions to Broaden Centralized Services and Field Support Services | Total: \$2,851.0<br>\$1,017.0 Fed Rcpts (Fed)<br>\$1,834.0 Gen Fund (UGF)<br>26 PFT Positions | Twenty-six positions were added to ensure appropriate ratios between Social Services Associate and administrative staff to caseworkers, along with staff to support and train co-signers of the Alaska Tribal Child Welfare Compact. These new positions will transport children in custody, provide centralized administrative services, and assist with training and implementation of the Alaska Tribal Child Welfare Compact. | What is the status of the 16 new Social Services Associates, 7 new administrative positions in Centralization Services, and 3 new positions in Tribal Compact Services Support Unit? If a position has been filled, please provide a hire date. If there are data points available to demonstrate the impact(s) of these new positions, please provide them. | <p>26-1001 - Social Services Associate - Filled 11/28/2022<br/>                 26-1002 - Social Services Associate - Filled 11/22/2022<br/>                 26-1004 - Social Services Associate (Compact Unit) - Filled 12/28/2022<br/>                 26-1005 - Social Services Associate (Compact Unit) - Filled 01/03/2023<br/>                 26-1009 - Program Coordinator 1 - Filled 11/28/2022<br/>                 26-1022 - Social Services Associate - Filled 12/26/2022<br/>                 26-1023 - Social Services Associate - Filled 11/29/2022<br/>                 26-1008 - Social Services Associate - Awaiting approval from HR to hire selected candidate, to be filled by 01/27/2023<br/>                 26-1016 - Social Services Associate - Awaiting approval from HR to hire selected candidate, to be filled by 01/27/2023<br/>                 26-1003 - Social Services Associate - First posted 09/21/2022, three extensions thru 12/27/2022<br/>                 26-1006 - Social Services Associate (Compact Unit) - Interviews scheduled for the week of 01/17/2023<br/>                 26-1007 - Accounting Technician 1 - First posted on 11/01/2022, one extension thru 12/27/2022</p> <p>The remaining positions are either awaiting final review by the Classifications Unit to establish their PCN numbers and Position Descriptions, or the postings to recruit for them are being finalized and are getting ready to be advertised on Workplace Alaska.</p> <p>The division anticipates that all 26 positions will be filled by 03/31/2023. While the division is optimistic about the positive impact that these additional support positions will have on its ability to meet the needs of the communities it serves, it is too early in the implementation of this initiative to provide direct and specific data-driven examples.</p> |
| 7      | Children's Services / Front Line Social Workers | Add Four Long Term Non-Permanent Protective Services Specialist 4                   | Total: \$912.0<br>\$292.0 Fed Rcpts (Fed)<br>\$620.0 Gen Fund (UGF)<br>4 TMP Positions        | Feedback provided through OCS staff surveys indicates improved and consistent supervision is needed to support new and tenured frontline social worker staff. This new long-term, non-permanent, supervisory unit will provide consistent supervision to help staff navigate caseloads and manage competing priorities.   | Have all four long-term non-permanent (LTNP) positions been created and filled? If filled, please provide the hire dates. What changes in staffing and program support have occurred because of the additional funding and positions?  | <p>The intent of these four LTNP Protective Services Specialists 4 was to have them classified as on-call non-permanent (OCNP) positions. The Protective Services Specialist 4 is defined as the supervisory level of the Protective Services Specialist series. In contrast to the General Government Bargaining Unit, the Supervisory Bargaining Unit does not have language in its bargaining agreement to allow for OCNP positions. Therefore, a Letter of Agreement (LOA) would need to be executed between the state and the bargaining unit in order to allow OCNP supervisors to exist.</p> <p>In early July, the Office of Children's Services, in coordination with the Department of Family and Community Services (DFCS), Department Support Services, drafted its request to DOPLR to initiate the process of drafting the actual LOA. In early December, DFCS was notified by DOPLR that the request for LOA would not be supported and provided the explanation that supervisory functions are not suited for on-call type personnel. DOPLR provided alternative options, such as placing Protective Services Specialists 3 in acting status when appropriate, or utilizing short-term non-permanent (STNP) personnel. The division has considered these options and has determined that, for various reasons, they are not ideal alternatives to fulfill the purpose of the original request.</p> <p>Department of Family and Community Services (DFCS), Department Support Services is continuing discussions with the Division of Personell and Labor Relations on a viable solution.</p>  |

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| 8      | Children's Services / Front Line Social Workers | Workforce Stabilization Bonuses for New and Existing Staff               | Total: \$3,480.1<br>\$1,252.8 Fed Rcpts (Fed)<br>\$2,227.3 Gen Fund (UGF) | Bonus funding for union OCS staff is intended to address the high turnover rates faced by OCS in recent years; the turnover rate for case-carrying workers has consistently hovered around 60% since April of 2020. Retention bonuses will reflect ten percent of the employee's annual salary, with 40 percent awarded at the end of year one and 60 percent at the end of year two. Employees receiving bonuses must be in good standing. | Please provide an update on how the effort to improve recruitment and retention of staff has been impacted by this additional funding for bonuses.<br>How is the Department administering the multi-part distribution of these bonuses? | The OCS retention incentive program requires Letters of Agreement (LOA) with the General Government Bargaining Unit and the Supervisory Bargaining Unit. Work began in early July to consider the details of the needed LOAs. Technical issues including Federal laws need to be solutioned to allow us to correctly implement this incentive.<br><br>A slight variation to the original program has been proposed which allows some flexibility to staff by issuing personal leave to eligible employees instead of cash. The leave could then be cashed out at the same value as originally intended, banked and used as leave, used to contribute to a deferred compensation plan, or any combination of these options.<br><br>The current status of this program is that the LOAs are with the respective unions for review.   |
| 9      | Children's Services / Front Line Social Workers | Manage Secondary Traumatic Stress for Child Welfare Workers Initiative   | \$169.7 Gen Fund (UGF)<br>1 PFT Position                                  | Over time, frequent traumatic exposure experienced by caseworkers during their day-to-day work can make them susceptible to post traumatic stress disorder. To mitigate this stress, a Mental Health Clinician 3, range 21, located in Anchorage, will build a critical incident debriefing program aimed to reduce distress and restore workforce performance.   | Has this position been created and filled? If filled, please provide a hire date.   | This position is created under PCN 26-1024. Interviews are scheduled for the week of January 16th.   |
| 10     | Children's Services / Family Preservation       | Alaska Impact Alliance - Support and Evidenced Based Program Development | \$200.0 Gen Fund (UGF)  | The Alaska Impact Alliance promotes community-based action planning to include evidence based, culturally relevant programs and services with an emphasis on supporting diverse populations and reducing child maltreatment.  | What programs or services provided by the Alaska Impact Alliance (AIA) is this funding supporting? Based on the information available on AIA's website, most services appear to be under development.                                   | The division is utilizing this \$200.0 to support the Alaska Impact Alliance via its FY23 Strengthening Families of Alaska RSA with the University of Alaska, Anchorage.<br><br>Strengthening Families™ (SF) is a research-informed, strength-based approach to helping families reduce stress, address risk factors, promote healthy development, strengthen families, and prevent child abuse and neglect. The overarching goal is the promotion of child and family well-being. It is based on engaging families, programs, and communities in building five protective factors that help families succeed and thrive, even in the face of risk and challenges.<br><br>The Child Welfare Academy (CWA) will provide project management of prevention coordination, including Strengthening Families framework and Plans of Safe Care. Additionally, CWA will provide training and technical support to identified communities; support for attendance at trainings and gatherings, and provide materials needed to meet the goals of the project.<br><br>In connection with the Alaska Impact Alliance, CWA will support the development of local prevention programming to include evidence based, culturally relevant programs and services with an emphasis on support to diverse populations. CWA will continue to work with the Alaska Impact Alliance to continue efforts to engage communities in developing community-specific prevention programming aimed at reducing child maltreatment. |

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| 11     | Children's Services / Foster Care Special Need     | Youth with Complex Trauma Placement Support  | \$700.0 Gen Fund (UGF)   | Additional funding is intended to reduce the number of youth with complex trauma being placed in high-cost out-of-state facilities. With appropriate compensation and support to foster care providers, many children with complex trauma will likely be able to remain in Alaska in a traditional foster home setting.   | How is the Department supporting foster care providers with this increase in funds? Has this additional funding allowed a greater number of foster youth with complex trauma to remain in Alaska?        | The department is seeking a regulation change to allow for a higher stipend be provided to foster parents in efforts to support them taking and maintaining placement of youth with complex needs. OCS will also utilize these funds to assist foster parents in paying for external services for children not available through medicaid or the waiver.  |
| 12     | Children's Services / Foster Care Special Need     | Support for Foster Youth Aged 18-21          | \$1,000.0 Gen Fund (UGF) | Increased funding will support youth ages 18-21 who are currently or have been in the foster care program as they transition into adulthood. A capped annual amount will be provided for allowable expenses such as housing, household goods, employment support, transportation, utilities, financial management, or other identified needs.   | Please provide some additional information about the number of foster youth in this transition group and how the cap is defined (is it per youth, per allowable expense per youth, or some other means). | <p>There are approximately 720 eligible youth aged 18-21 that interface with the Independent Living Program. 233 of that population is in OCS custody, while 487 are not.</p> <p>To date, \$225,000 has been approved to directly benefit eligible youth under this funding.</p> <p>Currently, eligible youth in OCS custody can receive up to \$2,500 in benefits from this program, while youth out of custody are eligible to receive up to \$3,000.</p> <p>Common categories of assistance that this funding has been used for so far include housing (utilities, rent assistance, short term crisis housing needs), basic living needs (basic furniture, household essentials, pre-paid cell phones), transportation (assistance obtaining permit/license, insurance, seasonal maintenance, bus passes, down payments) food, education, medical, cultural events and items, and extra curriculums.</p> <p>In order to maximize the reach and effectiveness of this funding, OCS plans to contract with Facing Foster Care of Alaska (FFCA) in quarters 3 and 4 of FY23 to distribute a majority of the remaining funds to eligible youth. FFCA has demonstrated an excellent rapport with the foster youth of Alaska, and can efficiently and effectively advertise the availability of this funding source to get it into the hands of youth that are transitioning into adulthood.</p> |
| 13     | Children's Services / Tribal Child Welfare Compact | Support for the Tribal Child Welfare Compact | \$3,300.0 Gen Fund (UGF) | <p>Increased funding is intended to enhance provisions of prevention activities by the Tribes, build capacity, and focus efforts on secondary prevention for identified at-risk children and families. The following changes were approved by the legislature:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Create a distinct Tribal Child Welfare Compact allocation within the OCS appropriation;</li> <li>2. Accept the Governor's request to increase funding by \$1.4 million UGF; and</li> <li>3. Add an additional \$1.9 million UGF to bring total funding up to \$5 million UGF, the amount the Tribal Co-Signers indicate is needed to fully implement the agreement.</li> </ol> | What is the status of the Compact now that funding levels align with the amount Tribal Co-Signers indicate is needed to fully implement the agreement?   | The Alaska Tribal Child Welfare Compact Allocation (H040) was created. To date 95% of FY2023 budget has been expended in support of the Compact.  |

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| 14     | Various             | Cross-appropriation Transfer Authority up to \$10 million | Net Zero             | \$10 million of the requested \$20 million in cross-appropriation transfer authority was approved for DFCS (up to \$15 million was approved for DOH). | Now that the split of the Department of Health and Social Services has taken place, has the \$10 million cap for cross-appropriation transfer authority with DFCS been sufficient to meet DFCS's need for this authority? | The department anticipates the \$10 million cross-appropriation transfer authority will be sufficient to meet the needs of DFCS. |