



Press Release

COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE

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Contact: Susan Morgan, 269-4996, susan.morgan@alaska.gov

Feds award \$719,213 to Alaska for adoptions

Funds will be used to enhance services for foster child adoptions

(Anchorage, AK) — The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has awarded \$719,213 to Alaska to help increase the number of children adopted from foster care.

A 2008 law, the Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act, revamped adoption incentives to encourage states to find loving adoptive homes for foster children who need them — particularly older children and children with special needs.

In 2010, the U.S. DHHS awarded a total of \$39 million to 38 states and Puerto Rico for increasing the number of children adopted from foster care. Once a state receives adoption incentive dollars, it is free to use the money on anything related to adoptions, such as recruitment, adoption services or training.

This is the third year in a row that Alaska has received Adoption Incentive funds. The state's Office of Children's Services received \$224,000 in 2009, and \$194,000 in 2008.

"All children deserve loving, safe and permanent homes," said HHS Secretary Kathleen Sebelius. "It is gratifying that most states continue to excel in promoting the adoption of children from foster care. I sincerely thank every adoptive family that has welcomed a child into their home."

According to DHHS, states receive \$4,000 for every child adopted beyond their best year's total, plus a payment of \$8,000 for every child age 9 and older, and \$4,000 for every special needs child adopted above the respective baselines. The year 2007 is the baseline.

In 2008, adoptions from foster care in Alaska increased 12.6 percent, from 247 to 278. In 2009, adoptions increased 18.3 percent, to 329. Early data indicate at least 300 adoptions from foster care in the state during 2010.

"Finding forever homes for children of all ages who are unable to return home is one of Alaska's top priorities," said Christy Lawton, Acting Director of the Office of Children's Services.

"Finding the best match for the wonderful and unique children we serve requires continuous efforts and tenacity, but comes with great rewards. Every child deserves stability, security, and a family to come home to throughout childhood and beyond."

The Adoption Incentives program was originally created as part of the Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997.

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