

# 2010-2014 Alaska's Child and Family Services Plan



State of Alaska

Department of Health and Social Services  
Office of Children's Services

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# Acknowledgements

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On behalf of the Office of Children's Services, I would like to acknowledge all stakeholders and community partners that assisted in the development of Alaska's Child and Family Services 5-Year Plan. Alaska's plan not only incorporates the Program Improvement Plan goals and objectives but expands upon many initiatives that have been developed over the past few years. Although there are too many participants to thank individually, the following groups were integral in development of Alaska's Program Improvement Plan and Child and Family Services Plan:

Tribal State Collaboration Group; Court Improvement Project; Department of Law; Alaska Citizen Review Panel; Facing Foster Care in Alaska; Alaska Center for Resource Families; Greater Anchorage Area Partnership; Regional Quality Assurance teams; Children's Justice Task Force; Child Advocacy Centers; University of Alaska Training Academy; Division's of Juvenile Justice and Behavioral Health; and the Office of Children's Services staff.

We will be continuing our partnership during implementation of the plan over the next five years as Alaska continues to strengthen Alaska's Child Welfare System. Throughout this time, we will continue to engage partners by sharing progress towards our goals and soliciting input throughout the process.

OCS could not do this work without the active involvement and dedication of all stakeholders, community partners and staff. We look forward to continuing our work together to keep children safe and families strong.

Sincerely,



Tammy Sandoval, Director  
Office of Children's Services

# Table of Contents

<b>Acknowledgements</b>	ii
Section 1: <b>Overview</b>	4
Section 2: <b>Goals and Objectives</b>	14
Section 3: <b>Indian Child Welfare Act</b>	50
Section 4: <b>Title IV-B Subparts I and II</b>	62
Section 5: <b>Chafee Foster Care Independence and Education and Training Vouchers</b>	76
Section 6: <b>Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act</b>	83
Section 7: <b>Additional Requirements</b>	85
■ Quality Assurance System	
■ Evaluation and Technical Assistance	
■ Timely Home Studies Reporting and Data	
■ Juvenile Justice Transfers	
■ Intercountry Adoptions	
■ Monthly Case Worker Visit Data	
■ Licensing Waivers	
■ Health Care Services	
■ Disaster Plan	
■ Training Plan	
■ Financial	
Appendix A: Disaster Plan	
Appendix B: Training Plans for Staff and Resource Families	
Appendix C: CFS 101-I, II and III	
Appendix D: Certifications and Assurances	
Appendix E: Family Contact/Visitation Levels of Supervision	
Appendix F: Independent Living Work Plan	

## ■ Section 1: Overview

### ***Introduction***

The Governor of Alaska has designated the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services as the single state agency responsible for administering Title IV-B of the Social Security Act, Child Welfare Services, CAPTA, and Independent Living services. The Office of Children's Services (OCS) has administrative responsibility for development and implementation of the Child and Family Services Plan, including all policies and procedures relating to child protection services, child placement services, adoption promotion, family preservation and family support. In addition, the Office of Children's Services also administers the Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems grant, the Early Intervention/Infant Learning Program, and the Strengthening Families Initiative.

### ***Vision***

Safe Children, Strong Families

### ***Mission***

The Office of Children's Services' works in partnership with families and communities to support the well-being of Alaska's children and youth. Services will 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.

*The Office of Children's Services believes:*

- *All people should be treated with respect and dignity.*
- *All children deserve safe, stable, loving, and permanent families.*
- *Every family has unique and inherent strengths.*
- *The success of our interventions rests with the family; therefore, families should be included in making decisions about their children*
- *Community partners are essential to ensure healthy, safe families.*
- *Services should enhance cultural and family values.*
- *Services should be timely, accessible, and coordinated.*
- *Services related to parenting and health are essential to strengthen the growth and development of children and to prevent abuse and neglect.*
- *Data should drive our decisions about how and where we allocate resources and services.*

OCS partners with other state and community agencies that are dedicated to achieving safety, well-being and permanency for children, youth and families. Core services provided are intended to prevent child abuse and neglect and strengthen the ability of a family to protect and care for their children.

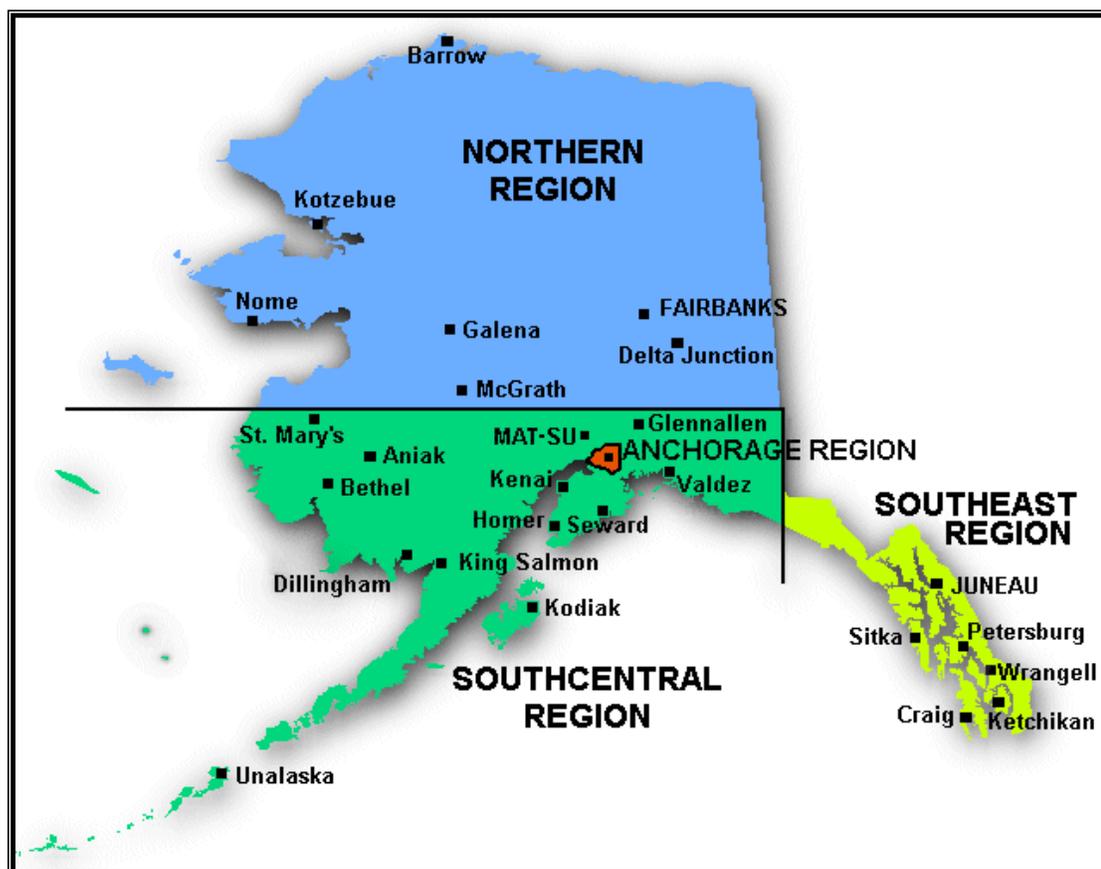
## Core Services

Core services provided through OCS to ensure that children are safe and families remain intact whenever possible include the following:

- Prevent and remedy child abuse and neglect.
- Investigate protective service reports and ensure services to children and their families when necessary.
- Develop permanency plans for children in out-of-home care.
- Facilitate early intervention and treatment services.

OCS supports 26 local offices in Alaska that deliver child welfare services. These local offices are managed and supported regionally within the OCS:

- Northern Regional Office (NRO) in Fairbanks: Nome, Kotzebue, Barrow, and surrounding towns and villages;
- South Central Regional Office (SCRO) in Wasilla: Mat-Su Valley, Kenai Peninsula, Bethel, Valdez, Kodiak, Dillingham, Aleutian Islands, and surrounding areas;
- Anchorage Regional Office (ARO) is responsible for Anchorage; and
- Southeastern Regional Office (SERO) in Juneau: Sitka, Petersburg, Ketchikan, Craig and surrounding communities.



## *Child and Family Services Continuum*

- **Alaska Children’s Trust**

The Alaska Children’s Trust (ACT) is a corpus trust fund that uses its earnings to fund primary prevention services. Thanks to private-sector fundraising efforts by the Friends of the Alaska Children’s Trust and investment earnings, the ACT funds community-based programs each year. Each year, the interest from the principal is awarded in a competitive grant process to community-initiated projects that prevent child abuse and neglect.

The Alaska Children’s Trust relies on gifts, bequests, and contributions of cash or other assets from individuals, corporate entities, legislative appropriations, and federal funds. The annual funding level for ACT is based upon annual income earnings from the trust. Grant awards are contingent upon legislative appropriations of funds to the ACT. The ACT places special emphasis on funding proposals that are community-based prevention. It focuses on underserved areas; parent education and support; programs engaging fathers/adult males in parenting; crisis nurseries and respite care for families with children with disabilities, mentoring/peer counseling and education projects.

- **Prevention and Early Intervention Services**

Prevention programs provided through OCS include a broad perspective and are provided not only to the children served through child protection services, but reach beyond to provide support for all young children in Alaska.

The Early Intervention/ Infant Learning Programs (EI/ILP) provide early childhood special education services to children with significant developmental delays and their families through 20 state grantees. EI/ILP is committed to promoting access to a flexible array of quality services to every Alaskan infant and toddler with special developmental needs and their families.

The EI/ILP program screens, evaluates, and develops individualized family services plans for children identified as having developmental delays or disabilities. Comprehensive, coordinated, home-based early intervention services provide the following: child development information to parents; home visits to provide early intervention services in a natural environment; physical, occupational, and speech therapy; specialized equipment; and referrals to other necessary services.

Multiple funding sources are used for this program, including state general funds, federal Part C funds, Medicaid and billing receipts from insurance and other third party payers. All children under three who have a substantiated abuse or neglect are referred to their local ILP program for screening and assessment.

- **The Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems (ECCS) Initiative**

The Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems (ECCS) Project is an initiative to promote positive development and improved health outcomes for Alaska’s children prenatal to age 8 by creating a culturally responsive, comprehensive and accessible service delivery system. Alaska worked with stakeholders all over the state to develop an “Early Childhood

Comprehensive Systems Plan.” This Plan is providing guidance on how Alaska can improve services for young children and their families. The plan builds on the knowledge that for children to be ready for school and successful in life they must be healthy, have their social emotional needs met, have good opportunities for learning and need to grow up in families that are supportive and nurturing.

The Interdepartmental Early Childhood Coordinating Council implements the plan and works to make sure young children have access to good health care and quality early childhood programs and that their families will get the kind of information and support that they need to keep their families strong. The Council is made up of representatives from the Departments of Health and Social Services, Education and Early Development, Labor and Workforce Development, Commerce and Economic Development and the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority, Governor’s Council on Disabilities and Special Education, and the Alaska Children’s Trust. Through special workgroups, private partners are also engaged in the work. Input from families and consumers is encouraged and welcomed.

- **Strengthening Families through Early Care and Education Program**

The Strengthening Families Initiative (SFI) is a proven, cost-effective strategy to prevent child abuse and neglect. The strategy involves building protective factors around children by supporting family strengths and resiliency in early childhood and family support programs. Protective factors include:

- Knowledge of parenting and child development
- Concrete support in times of need
- Parental resilience
- A child’s health and emotional development
- Social connections

The Strengthening Families framework can be adapted to any early childhood setting- child care centers, Head Start programs, preschools, and home visiting programs. Family support is offered to all families, not just those identified as “at risk.” It is a population based approach that puts family support in natural settings where approximately one-third of Alaska’s children, from birth to five, are served. There is work underway to culturally norm the protective factors to be more representative of our Native Alaskan families.

- **Child Protective Services**

OCS is committed to safety, permanency, and well-being for Alaska’s vulnerable children, youth, and families. OCS assesses allegations of abuse and neglect and provides family preservation services in the home when appropriate. If necessary, out of home care services are provided to protect the child. OCS’ goal is a safe, permanent home for every child through reunification, adoption or guardianship. OCS recruits adoptive and foster homes and helps older teens in care prepare for independent living.

Child Protective Services (CPS) is a specialized social service designed to keep children who are determined to be unsafe protected from further harm. This is accomplished by:

- Intake of reports of suspected abuse or neglect

- Investigating reports meeting screen in criteria
- Developing case plans that provide in-home counseling and supportive services to help children remain in their homes
- When it is determined that a child cannot remain in his/her own home safely, arranging appropriate placement, with relatives whenever possible
- Initiating legal action upon involuntary removal of children from their homes
- Exploring all possible alternate permanent homes for children who must be removed from their own homes
- Coordinating community and agency services for the family
- Whenever appropriate, developing concurrent permanency planning to expedite permanency, should parents not rehabilitate and a child is unable to return to their home

- **Intake**

Intake as a business function within OCS is currently under construction. Currently each of the 26 offices receives and screens protective services reports and determines whether to initiate an investigation. Intake involves ascertaining the current status of the child, the potential for immediate and/or future danger, and the location of the child and parents. Intake workers elicit information about the alleged victim and family in order to most accurately determine the potential high risk or safety threats to the child and to determine how quickly CPS needs to respond to the situation.

If the report does not meet the criteria for investigation, the report is screened out and referred to community resources if appropriate. OCS is in the process of developing regional intake units to specialize the intake process, reduce workload of case carrying staff in each of the 26 offices and create consistency in screening protective service reports across the state. Alaska will be regionalizing the intake process as part of the Program Improvement Plan.

- **Investigation/Initial Assessment**

In the work of the investigation/initial assessment, OCS workers engage the victim, family members and others who may be involved with the family to collect information to assess whether the child is safe or unsafe and if at risk, at what level. Parental protective capacities are also evaluated. If children are deemed to be unsafe or at high risk, the case will be opened and transferred for ongoing services. Ongoing services are provided either with the children remaining in their own homes with a safety plan in place or out of home because safety could not be assured.

The investigation also concludes with findings on the allegations. The two categories of findings are: a. substantiated: it is determined the child suffered harm or faces risk of harm as a result of abuse/neglect; b. not substantiated: it was not determined that the child

suffered harm through the action or inaction of caretakers and there are no facts to support the allegation.

OCS rolled out a new practice model for safety decision making throughout the life of the case in 2006. Implementation of the model has continued since that time using a framework for systematic change that includes workgroups designed to affect project management, policy and procedures, staff development, supervision, documentation and continuous quality improvement. Implementation efforts will be revised and prioritized through Alaska's Performance Improvement Plan process.

- **Child Protective Services Childcare**

Protective services childcare is a support service designed to help keep families together. It may be authorized for children at risk of abuse or neglect and for whom childcare during the day is part of a family treatment plan. Its objective is to enable the child to remain with his or her biological family or to return the child to the child's own family following an out of home placement.

- **Child Advocacy Centers**

Over the past two years, OCS has submitted and received Alaska State Legislative authority for state general funds to replace federal grants that would no longer be available for part of FY 2009 and all of FY 2010.

Child Advocacy Centers (CAC) provide child sexual abuse and severe physical abuse victims age 0 through 18 and their non-offending parents a safe, child-friendly place to interview, receive forensic medical examinations, and mental health services or referrals. Each victim is assigned a specialized family advocate who will remain with the child and family throughout the investigative process. CAC interviews are legally sound and neutral, and they coordinate fact-finding to avoid duplicative interviews. CACs are in place to assure Alaska children are not re-traumatized after experiencing child sexual or severe physical abuse and that all non-offending family members receive support and treatment when required.

The foundation of a CAC is the Multidisciplinary Team (MDT) that is comprised of community, tribal, medical, social service, and legal representatives. MDTs guide a case through the investigatory process that may lead to prosecution while making certain all non-offending family members receive the appropriate services to help them through the trauma. The CAC provides the best forum in which an investigation occurs to assure victims are not re-traumatized by repeated interviews and examinations.

In Anchorage, the CAC shares space with medical professionals, law enforcement, and a complete investigative unit of the Office of Children's Services. Since this MDT co-located, the referrals to the Anchorage CAC have increased 13%. Other CACs around the state are also planning for co-location of CAC and OCS staff. OCS is committed to continuing efforts toward supporting multidisciplinary co-location lease funding to place investigative units in Alaska's CACs.

- **Family Preservation and Early Intervention Services**

Family Preservation and Early Intervention Services awards grants statewide to agencies through three service models, including Family Support Services, Family Preservation Services and Time Limited Family Reunification Services. This service continuum provides services that support continued safety for children in their own homes; provide in-home services for families with identified safety and risk factors; and strengthen and support adoptive, foster, and extended families. These services help children at risk of foster care placement remain safely with their families and provide after care once a child has been returned from foster care.

Family Support Services are statewide, community based services that promote the safety and well-being of children and families and are designed to support young, first-time parents and parents with young children ages birth to 12 years. The focus is on primary and secondary prevention and support for families. Services include care coordination, in-home support and parent education. Referrals for these granted services are accepted from individual families, OCS, local medical providers, school districts, and other community providers.

Family Preservation Services focuses on tertiary prevention and/or service delivery targeting families with identified safety and risk factors that need a higher level of attention and intervention and is designed to prevent removal of children at risk of foster care placement. Services include care coordination, assisting families in caring for their child's safety, in-home support and family education. Service referrals are accepted from the local OCS field office in the grantee's home community.

Time Limited Family Reunification (TLFR) service grants are funded through a blending of federal Title IV-B, SSBG, and state general funds. TLFR services are designed to support the transition of children from out-of-home settings by facilitating the reunification of the children with their biological parents safely and appropriately in a timely fashion. Services include on-going family assessments, visitation planning and active support for Structured Family Time, parent/caregiver support, and Resource Family Licensing Support.

A significant change to the service model will be more emphasis on a clinical approach to service delivery with an increase in one-on-one work with reunifying families providing cognitive behavior support and continued active support of visits with parents and children during the reunification stage.

- **Alaska's Family-to-Family Program**

On a national level, Family-to-Family has worked for 14 years to change child welfare systems, most recently by advocating for more children to remain safely with their own families or a family-like connection whenever possible.

At its core, Family-to-Family applies four basic principles: a child's safety is paramount; children belong in families; families need strong communities; and child welfare needs to partner with communities and other systems for strong outcomes.

The Family-to-Family model provides Alaska’s communities with the opportunity and the tools to redesign the child welfare system to establish: a network of care that is neighborhood-based, culturally sensitive, and located where the children in need live; less reliance on institutional care, such as hospitals, shelters, correctional facilities, and group homes; an adequate number of foster families for any child who must, for safety reasons, be removed from the family home; a team approach including foster care families; and screening services to safely preserve the family while understanding the needs of the child.

The OCS Family-to-Family initiative has been fully implemented in Anchorage, and has experienced great success. OCS can truly say that Family-to-Family is no longer considered a “new” initiative, but is the way business is done. It has become fully integrated into practice and is a part of the mainstream culture of the staff and the community. OCS is confident that the value of Family-to-Family is understood by most, in particular the Team Decision Making (TDM) efforts. TDMs are utilized to make better placement decisions by holding a facilitated meeting that includes the family, their support systems, OCS and other knowledgeable providers. A TDM occurs when a child is still at home, and removal is under consideration and when a child has been taken into emergency care to determine whether the child should remain in care or return home or at other times when a placement change is being considered.

Family to Family was implemented in Fairbanks in 2008. This was OCS’ first opportunity to educate and inform the community of the efforts to spread the values of Family-to-Family and develop plans to fully implement the model. OCS’ next steps will be to begin the groundwork to bring Family-to-Family to the Wasilla field office and surrounding communities.

Future roll out locations will be based on the office and community’s readiness, resource availability to lead and drive the local efforts, and our continued support and technical assistance from the Anne E. Casey Foundation; currently the only funding OCS receives for the program.

- **Independent Living Services**

Independent Living services support education, vocational training and life skills of all youth statewide transitioning from foster care to early adulthood. These youths, 16 years and older, frequently lack the family or financial support and guidance needed to gain self-sufficiency in adulthood. Services provided to help these youths gain self-sufficiency include life skills assessments; transition learning plans; exit plans that identify a youth’s goals for education, employment, housing, health care, mental health care, and family/community connections; financial assistance, and identification of additional resources the youth may require.

Alaska has developed a core set of policies and procedures for their Independent Living Program including: adoption of the Ansell-Casey Life Skills as the primary assessment tool; the requirement that all youth have in their case plan a Transition Plan at age 14 and by age 17 an Exit Plan; set-aside funds for goods and services for youth to help them acquire the independent living skills identified in their plans; set-aside funds for post-secondary education or vocational training programs for youth; after-care supports for youth up to age 21 that includes set-aside funds for youth out-of-custody to help with critical needs such as housing, and employment search.

- **Foster Care Base Rate, Augmented Rate and Special Needs**

AS 47.14.100 mandates the Department to provide for the "...care of every child committed to its custody by placing the child in a foster home or in the care of an agency or institution providing care for children inside or outside the state." The Office of Children Services is responsible for finding temporary and permanent homes for children who cannot remain safely in their own home. CPS workers conduct a comprehensive case planning process directed toward the goal of reducing safety threats and increasing protective capacities of the biological parents. These case planning activities are directed toward assuring that every child in the state's care has a permanent family, capable of providing them with nurturance and protection. When this is not the child's family, then an alternate permanent family is found for the child.

The Foster Care Base Rate program reimburses foster care providers for the basic ongoing costs of raising a child. The Augmented Foster Care Rate benefit covers extraordinary costs and higher levels of supervision not otherwise covered with base rate benefits for children with special needs related to, for example, a disability. Foster Care Special Needs reimbursements are for expenditures related to the care of a child that are not covered through the Foster Care Base Rate program and that have been assessed on an as-needed basis. This program funds child care for working foster parents; respite care for parents of children at risk; clothing and food in emergency situations; travel related to the safety of the child or for continuity in placements such as foster family vacations, visitation with biological parents; and other costs associated with the individual needs of each child.

- **Tribal Title IV-E**

OCS administers the Tribal Title IV-E Reimbursement Program. OCS, through agreements with Alaskan Tribes and Tribal Organizations, passes through as much as \$1 million annually of Title IV-E federal funds. In conjunction with OCS, Tribal child welfare staff provide child welfare services to Alaskan Native children in out-of-home placement and children at risk of out-of-home placement. Tribal Organizations work closely with OCS to provide the federal government with the required, substantial documentation for IV-E determinations. Tribes are also working with OCS to develop a foster care information packet to be used for recruitment of Native Foster Homes. OCS is currently working with two Tribes/Tribal Organizations to explore the possibility of joining our Tribal Title IV-E Partners.

- **OCS Subsidized Adoption and Guardianship**

The Subsidized Adoption and Guardianship program facilitates permanent placements in adoptive and guardianship homes for an increasing number of children in state custody whose special needs make them hard to place. Adoption is viewed as the most permanent and preferable option for children who cannot return to their own homes.

Guardianships are considered for children who cannot be freed for adoption, but for whom a reasonably permanent home is provided through guardianship. This is often the best choice for children who cannot live with their parents but continue to have an important emotional tie to their families that should not be severed.

- **Residential Child Care**

Residential Child Care facilities provide high quality, time-limited residential treatment services for abused and neglected children in the custody of the Office of Children's Services. These facilities deliver 24-hour care for children who are unable to remain in their own home or who need more structure and treatment than foster care provides. OCS delivers levels of residential treatment that include emergency stabilization and assessment, intensive residential treatment, residential diagnostic treatment and residential psychiatric treatment. The Behavioral Rehabilitation Service, (BRS) Medicaid program provides funding for eligible treatment and care while the state pays for core services to ensure capacity. Core services support each program by funding room and board. Individual Service Agreements are available to provide specialized services for children as a funding source of last resort for needed treatment. OCS also provides training and technical support to Residential Child Care Providers through a training grant.

- **Licensing, Recruitment and Training of Foster Homes**

OCS licenses foster parents, provides for adoption home studies, places children with relatives and in foster and adoptive homes and helps to ensure that these out of home caregivers get the support they need. OCS contracts with the Alaska Center for Resource Families (ACRF) to provide training to foster, adoptive and relative placement caregivers. Training consists of a 15-hour CORE training, providing basic information on six aspects of caring for children in custody. Aspects include OCS services, impact of abuse, neglect and substance abuse on children, separation, grief and attachment issues foster children may experience, and appropriate parenting, discipline and guidance for the children in their care. Additional training on specific issues relevant to caring to children in care is provided through the ACRF as well.

OCS allocates resources specifically for recruitment activities, including creating and implementing a statewide media awareness campaign. In the past several years, television, radio and print campaigns have been conducted in both rural and urban areas. A new recruitment effort will begin during SFY10 to recruit Native Alaskan families along with plans to streamline the application and home study process.

## Section 2: Goals and Objectives

This section provides highlights of Alaska's progress made during the last five year plan from 2004 through 2009 and provides goals and objectives for the next five years.

### ***Key Accomplishments for 2004 through 2009***

Detailed progress toward each goal is further identified in each respective year's annual services and progress reports.

- ✓ 70 additional front line positions were funded by the Legislature.
- ✓ Continued implementation and refinement of a new practice model for safety decision-making throughout the life of the case.
- ✓ Decreased number of children in out of home placement; increased number of children achieving permanency.
- ✓ Decreased number of children placed out of state in residential treatment facilities and decreased number of children in in-state congregate care.
- ✓ Enhanced data reports to track investigations and home visits.
- ✓ Restructured grant funding to better respond to needs of families based on data and CFSR results.
- ✓ Developed and implemented new evaluation measures for grantees that will illustrate outcomes based on data.
- ✓ Established and maintained the Alaska Parent Line which provides support and assistance to parents.
- ✓ Over 6,000 CD-ROMS have been distributed throughout the state to mandated reporters, new OCS staff & community service providers on recognizing and reporting suspected child abuse and neglect.
- ✓ Alaska State Legislative allocated the use of state general funds to replace federal grants for the Child Advocacy Centers.
- ✓ Strengthening Families Leadership team continued support of 15 early care and learning programs implementing the Strengthening Families framework.
- ✓ F2F implemented in Anchorage, Fairbanks, and Mat-Su. Team Decision Making is operational in Anchorage and Fairbanks with an anticipated start date of February 2010 for Mat-Su.
- ✓ Increased foster parent recruitment efforts through Support, Development and Recruitment efforts statewide.
- ✓ A Native Foster Parent Informational Packet was developed by OCS and Tribal Title IV-E Partners as a method to recruit more native foster families.

- ✓ Increased ORCA managerial reports.
- ✓ Comprehensive orientation and training to resource families was developed and provided on-site courses, self-study courses, and/or online, web-based course work through the Alaska Center for Resource Families.
- ✓ The Court Improvement Project in collaboration with OCS developed new guidelines for family visitation titled “Family Contact”.
- ✓ Secured additional funding from the legislature which allowed new worker training to be expanded from two to four weeks.
- ✓ Developed and implemented a new supervisory training competency based curriculum.
- ✓ Tier 2 status was achieved for the State of Alaska SACWIS system, ORCA.
- ✓ AFCARS reporting met federal requirements for completeness, accuracy and timeliness. AFCARS Adoptions meets minimum acceptability for ACF data compliance.
- ✓ NCANDS reporting met federal requirements for CFSR safety data submission.
- ✓ Provided Knowing Who You Are cultural training to staff.
- ✓ Expanded Tribal State Collaboration Group meetings from two to three days.
- ✓ The State of Alaska through OCS, the Cook Inlet Tribal Council and the Native Village of Eklutna received a five year grant in the amount of \$500,000 per year to provide prevention services to Native families and Native children in the Anchorage area.
- ✓ Increased the number of Native foster homes from 289 in January 2005 to 594 in May 2009.
- ✓ Through an MOU with Kawerak, added Nome Eskimo Community to our Tribal Title IV-E pass-through program.
- ✓ Tribal representation on CFSR Statewide Assessment, Review, and PIP teams.
- ✓ Continued worker access to the MSW and BSW stipend programs at the University of Alaska Anchorage.
- ✓ Establishment of Regional Independent Living Specialists to address the needs of youth as they transition to adulthood.
- ✓ Collaboration with the University of Alaska to develop a Memorandum of Agreement to grant tuition waivers to youth.
- ✓ Collaboration with Casey Family Programs to support Alaska’s Youth Advisory Group, Facing Foster Care in Alaska (FFCA).

- ✓ Development of an Independent Living grant with Covenant House Alaska to provide life skills training to foster care youth and alumni.
- ✓ Collaboration with Alaska's Department of Labor to increase funding and job related opportunities.
- ✓ Creation and implementation of a judicial checklist to enable judges to more readily determine whether or not a youth is prepared to be released from state custody.
- ✓ Education Conferences were held on University of Alaska campuses in Anchorage, Fairbanks, and Juneau allow youth who are nearing graduation to experience campus life and hear about both college and vocational programs.
- ✓ Discussions were held with tribal organizations in Alaska who had youth in tribal custody to offer youth Chafee benefits and services.

Although Alaska did not meet the national standards for many of the areas measured in the CFSR, many indicators show an increase from the 2003 baseline data included in the 2004-2009 Child and Family Services Plan.

The chart below delineates the five national outcome standards that were part of the CFSR, Round 1. It compares the national standard, how Alaska fared at the initial review, and the most current measure in these areas.

National Outcome Standards	National Standard	CFSR	Baseline established for 2004-2009 plan	FFY06	FFY 06B 07A	FFY 2008ab	FFY 08B09A
Repeat Maltreatment	6.1% or less	23.4%	17.1%	10.3%	9.3%	9.1%	N/A
Incidence of child abuse and/or neglect in foster care	0.57% or less	1.91%	1.35%	1.1%	0.26%	0.38%	N/A
Placement Stability	86.7% or more	70.6%	74%	64.4%	65.8%	76.6%	76.4%
Length of time to achieve reunification	76.2% or more	58.3%	59.3%	66.1%	67.3%	61.9%	56.7%
Length of time to achieve adoption	32% or more	21.8%	23.9%	46.0%	22.0%	20.7%	24.6%

Note: Permanency related outcomes are based on the AFCARS 08 A & B files. The safety related outcomes are based on the 08 NCANDS submission. The outcomes measured by the onsite QA process covers a period of three consecutive quarters during FFY09.

## ***Goals and Objectives for 2010 through 2014***

The following goals and action steps mirror the Child and Family Services Review Program Improvement Plan as well as expanding upon activities that were not addressed in the PIP. Goals and activities were developed with numerous stakeholders and agencies throughout the state including:

Tribal State Collaboration Group; Court Improvement Project; Department of Law; Alaska Citizen Review Panel; Facing Foster Care in Alaska; Alaska Center for Resource Families; Greater Anchorage Area Partnership; Regional Quality Assurance teams; Children’s Justice Task Force; Child Advocacy Centers; University of Alaska Training Academy; Divisions of Public Assistance, Juvenile Justice and Behavioral Health; and Office of Children’s Services staff.

OCS will continue collaborating with the above listed stakeholder groups during the next five years to evaluate and monitor progress of the plan.

In addition to an annual narrative update, progress will be measured based on AFCARS, NCANDS, and quality assurance data located at the end of this section. Permanency related outcomes are based on the most recent AFCARS files. Safety related outcomes are based on the most recent NCANDS submission. Baseline outcomes related to other safety, permanency and well-being outcomes will be measured by the onsite quality assurance process to assist in examining trends over time. Alaska is currently establishing quality assurance baseline data, January 2009 through December 2009, which will be provided in the June 30, 2010 Annual Services Progress Report. Quality assurance data from January 2010 through May 2010 will also be provided in the annual report to demonstrate progress.

OCS’ strategies, goals and action steps are fundamental to good practice and will directly impact outcomes within safety, permanency, well-being and Alaska’s systemic factors.

<b>Strategy A: Practice Model Integration and Implementation</b>	
<b>Goal: To ensure the safety of children throughout the life of the case and provide relevant services to support the family and child.</b>	
<b>Action Steps and Benchmarks</b>	<b>Annual Update (includes date completed)</b>
<b>A.1.0 To provide clear program statements for implementation of practice model that will inform the individual practice and service delivery to children and families.</b>	
A.1.1 Develop individual program statements for intake, initial assessment, family services with an in-home and out-of-home program, service array section and resource family section.	

A.1.2 Develop dissemination and staff development plan for practice model and program statements. (reference B.3.1)	
A.1.3 Disseminate and provide staff development to all OCS staff related to practice model and program statements. (reference B.3.2)	
A.1.4 Develop dissemination and communication plan for practice model and program statements for stakeholders.	
A.1.5 Disseminate and communicate practice model and program statements to stakeholders.	
<b>A.2.0 Integrate and implement practice model into core functions statewide.</b>	
<b>A.2.1 All regions will initiate timely face to face contacts during the initial assessment.</b>	
A.2.1.1 Develop work plan for design and systemic implementation of intake.	
A.2.1.2 Issue a Program Instruction to all OCS staff related to timely assignment and initiation of all Protective Services Reports.	
A.2.1.3 Provide staff development to all OCS field management and front line workers based on the Program Instruction for timely assignment and initiation of all protective services reports. (reference B.3.3)	
A.2.1.4 Disseminate updated intake policy reflecting a two tiered response system to all OCS staff.	
A.2.1.5 Provide training to all statewide intake staff. (reference B.3.4)	
A.2.1.6 Provide education and training opportunities to tribes and stakeholders statewide regarding new intake practices. (reference B.3.5)	

<p>A.2.1.7 Managers and Supervisors will monitor ORCA reports to ensure timeliness of initiation and develop a response plan to address when timelines are not met. (reference B.2.2.1)</p>	
<p>A.2.1.8 Children Services Managers and the Child Welfare Administrator will track plan of responses related to timely initiation to ensure that program change activities are implemented and provide corrective action where indicated. (reference B.2.2.2)</p>	
<p><b>A.2.2 Refine and continue initial assessment implementation efforts.</b></p>	
<p>A.2.2.1 Develop work plan for continued focus and enhancement of the initial assessment.</p>	
<p>A.2.2.2 Provide staff development to all OCS field management and staff around the purpose, application and analysis of information gathered and how that informs the identification of safety threats and protective capacities/needs as well creation and management of safety plans. (reference B.3.6)</p>	
<p>A.2.2.3 Modify ORCA for tracking and monitoring of safety plans. (reference B.1.1)</p>	
<p>A.2.2.4 Managers and Supervisors will monitor quality assurance findings to ensure appropriate services are provided to children and parents to manage threats to safety and to ensure that safety plans are in place and develop a plan of response to address areas needing improvement. (reference B.2.2.3)</p>	
<p>A.2.2.5 Children Services Managers and the Child Welfare Administrator will track plan of responses related to management of safety threats and safety plans to ensure that program change activities are implemented and provide corrective action where indicated.(reference B.2.2.4)</p>	

**A.2.3 Increase the quality and frequency of case worker visits to ensure the safety, permanency and well-being of child and promote progress towards case plan goals.**

A.2.3.1 Develop quality home visit guidelines for engaging families including education, health and behavioral/mental health components.

A.2.3.2 Develop training materials for staff development in family engagement.

A.2.3.3 Provide staff development to all OCS field management and front line workers on quality home visits and family engagement activities.  
(reference B.3.7)

A.2.3.4 Managers and Supervisors will monitor quality and frequency of visits through ORCA, quality assurance review findings, and monthly supervisory case reviews and will develop a plan of response to address areas needing improvement.  
(reference B.2.2.5)

A.2.3.5 Children Services Managers and the Child Welfare Administrator will track plan of responses related to quality and frequency of visits to ensure that program change activities are implemented and provide corrective action where indicated.  
(reference B.2.2.6)

A.2.3.6 Modify ORCA in order to track case worker visits for in-home cases.  
(reference B.1.2)

A.2.3.7 Modify ORCA in order to track case worker visits for parents.  
(reference B.1.3)

**A.2.4 Implement family contact protocol to enhance the continuity of family relationships.**

A.2.4.1 Develop a method of measurement to monitor implementation of the family contact plan. (reference B.1.4)

<p>A.2.4.2 Modify ORCA to accommodate family contact plan and documentation. (reference B.1.5)</p>	
<p>A.2.4.3 Managers and Supervisors will monitor quality assurance review findings for family contact plans and develop a plan of response to address areas needing improvement. (reference B.2.2.7)</p>	
<p>A.2.4.4 Children Services Managers and the Child Welfare Administrator will track plan of responses related to family contact to ensure that program change activities are implemented and provide corrective action where indicated. (reference B.2.2.8)</p>	
<p>A.2.4.5 Court Improvement Project (CIP) will provide training to judges at the Fall Judicial Conference related to family contact planning. (reference B.3.8)</p>	
<p><b>A.2.5 Enhance administrative review process to ensure review recommendations are followed.</b></p>	
<p>A.2.5.1 Review and revise administrative review policy to include case flagging and follow up of review recommendations.</p>	
<p>A.2.5.2 Disseminate policy and provide staff development to all OCS field management and front line workers on the administrative review process. (reference B.3.9)</p>	
<p>A.2.5.3 Managers and Supervisors will monitor quality assurance findings for administrative review follow through and develop a plan of response to address areas needing improvement. (reference B.2.2.9)</p>	
<p>A.2.5.4 Children Services Managers and the Child Welfare Administrator will track plan of responses related to administrative review follow through to ensure that program change activities are implemented and provide corrective action where indicated. (reference B.2.2.10)</p>	

<b>A.2.6 Improve process for filing of termination of parental rights including adequate documentation of compelling reasons and timely permanency goal setting and changing.</b>	
A.2.6.1 OCS and Department of Law (DOL) will consult with the Court System for development of standardizing the process for filing of termination of parental rights (TPR) petitions or compelling reasons.	
A.2.6.2 Revise TPR/compelling reasons policy to reflect standardization of process.	
A.2.6.3 Provide training to AAGs related to filing compelling reasons. (reference B.3.10)	
A.2.6.4 Provide staff development to all OCS field management and front line workers regarding TPR/compelling reasons. (reference B.3.11)	
A.2.6.5 The Court Improvement Project (CIP) will monitor timely filing of TPRs and compelling reasons.	
A.2.6.6 CIP will convene and support a group of stakeholders to develop a strategic plan to address concurrent planning statewide.	
<b>A.3.0 Implement the practice model from intake to case closure at Innovation Sites - Anchorage and Fairbanks.</b>	
<b>Note: Items A.3.1 through A.3.6 will be implemented in Anchorage and Fairbanks.</b>	
<b>A.3.1 Develop and implement practice model components for family services cases.</b>	
A.3.1.1 Request technical assistance to assist in development of a curriculum that includes case transfer, assessment of protective capacities and needs, permanency planning, continued safety management and reassessment including conditions to return home and case closure.	
A.3.1.2 Develop a curriculum for integration and training related to extending the practice model through the life of the case.	

<p>A.3.1.3 Revise permanency planning policies to extend and support practice model integration.</p>	
<p>A.3.1.4 Provide staff development through use of training curriculum to all OCS management and front line workers in Anchorage and Fairbanks related to case transfer, assessment of protective capacities and needs, permanency planning, continued safety management and reassessment including conditions to return home and case closure. (reference B.3.12)</p>	
<p>A.3.1.5 Modify ORCA to support practice model integration and application within permanency planning. (reference B.1.6)</p>	
<p>A.3.1.6 Establish quality assurance process to monitor timeliness of case transfer, assessment of protective capacities and needs, permanency planning, continued safety management and reassessment including conditions to return home and case closure. (reference B.1.7)</p>	
<p>A.3.1.7 Managers and Supervisors will monitor quality assurance review findings related to case transfer, assessment of protective capacities and needs, permanency planning, continued safety management and reassessment including conditions to return home and case closure and develop a plan of response to address areas needing improvement.(reference B.2.2.11)</p>	
<p>A.3.1.8 Children Services Managers and the Child Welfare Administrator will track plan of responses related to case transfer, assessment of protective capacities and needs, permanency planning, continued safety management and reassessment including conditions to return home and case closure to ensure that program change activities are implemented and provide corrective action where indicated. (reference B.2.2.12)</p>	

**A.3.2 Develop and refine initial and on-going assessment of needs for children, parents, and resource families to ensure appropriate service identification and provision.**

<p>A.3.2.1 Develop work plan for the design and systemic reinforcement for initial and on-going assessment of needs.</p>	
<p>A.3.2.2 Provide staff development to all OCS field management and front line workers in Anchorage and Fairbanks to enhance appropriate identification of needs and service provision for children, parents and resource families. (reference B.3.13)</p>	
<p>A.3.2.3 Managers and Supervisors will monitor quality assurance findings to ensure appropriate identification of needs and service provision is occurring and develop a plan of response to address areas needing improvement. (reference B.2.2.13)</p>	
<p>A.3.2.4 Children Services Managers and the Child Welfare Administrator will track plan of responses related to identification of needs and service provision to ensure that program change activities are implemented and provide corrective action where indicated. (reference B.2.2.14)</p>	

**A.3.3 Safety and Risk will be addressed in all Team Decision Making (TDM) meetings.**

<p>A.3.3.1 Create policy for facilitation of TDMs to track and report that safety and risk factors are addressed in every TDM.</p>	
<p>A.3.3.2 Provide staff development to TDM facilitators in Anchorage and Fairbanks to ensure that safety and risk factors are addressed in every TDM. (reference B.3.14)</p>	
<p>A.3.3.3 TDM facilitators will ensure that safety plans are in place during reunification TDM if needed.</p>	

<p>A.3.3.4 Develop and implement quality assurance methodology to ensure risk and safety factors are addressed during TDMs. (reference B.1.8)</p>	
<p><b>A.3.4 Enhance case planning efforts through parent, child and tribal engagement.</b></p>	
<p>A.3.4.1 Develop guidelines with NRCCPS to bring parents, age appropriate children, and tribes together within 30 days to participate in case plan development for in-home cases and 60 days for out-of-home cases.</p>	
<p>A.3.4.2 Revise case plan policy to ensure parent, child and tribal involvement during case plan development including the appropriate establishment of permanency goals and the timely changing of permanency goals.</p>	
<p>A.3.4.3 Evaluate ORCA capabilities for case plan design and ability to document initial and on-going assessment of needs.</p>	
<p>A.3.4.4 Modify ORCA based on evaluation of case plan design and ability to document initial and on-going assessment of needs. (reference B.1.9)</p>	
<p>A.3.4.5 Continue staff attendance of Knowing Who You Are to increase cultural competency skills. (reference B.3.15)</p>	
<p>A.3.4.6 Provide staff development to all OCS field management and front line workers in Anchorage and Fairbanks related to involving parents, age appropriate children and tribes in case plan development including the appropriate establishment of permanency goals and the timely changing of permanency goals. (reference B.3.16)</p>	

<p>A.3.4.7 Managers and Supervisors will monitor quality assurance findings to review the involvement of parents, age appropriate children and tribes in case plan development including the appropriate establishment of permanency goals and the timely changing of permanency goals and develop a plan of response to address areas needing improvement. (reference B.2.2.15)</p>	
<p>A.3.4.8 Children Services Managers and the Child Welfare Administrator will track plan of responses related to involving parents, age appropriate children and tribes in case plan development including the appropriate establishment of permanency goals and the timely changing of permanency goals to ensure that program change activities are implemented and provide corrective action where indicated.(reference B.2.2.16)</p>	
<p><b>A.3.5 Implement Ice Breakers to increase placement stability.</b></p>	
<p>A.3.5.1 Develop Ice Breaker policy and protocol that address definition of roles, responsibilities, and documentation.</p>	
<p>A.3.5.2 Develop roll out plan to prepare and engage partners and staff in Ice Breakers.</p>	
<p>A.3.5.3 Implement F2F tool kit in Fairbanks and Anchorage.</p>	
<p><b>A.3.6 Redesign In-Home Program Model to increase number of children served in their own homes and enhance reunification efforts.</b></p>	
<p>A.3.6.1 Develop program statement for in-home family services.</p>	
<p>A.3.6.2 Request TA from NRC for redesign of an in-home family services program.</p>	
<p>A.3.6.3 Develop work plan with NRC for design and implementation of an in-home family services program.</p>	

A.3.6.4 Analyze existing Family Support, Family Preservation and Time Limited Reunification grants to ensure outcomes are reflective in supporting needs of children and families on a regional level. (reference C.3.2)	
A.3.6.5 Collect systematic data and develop reports that will provide data to track utilization at a youth/family level, local and regional levels.(reference C.3.3)	
A.3.6.6 Work with OCS leadership, regional CSMs and local offices to review data and realign resources if warranted based on analysis. (reference C.3.4)	
A.3.6.7 Assess data to determine if ORCA is representing accurate in-home population.	
A.3.6.8 Revise in-home policy and disseminate to all Anchorage and Fairbanks staff.	
A.3.6.9 Provide staff development to all OCS field management and front line workers in Anchorage and Fairbanks related to the in-home family services program. (reference B.3.17)	
<b>Strategy B: Accountability and Supervision</b>	
<b>Goal: To enhance the fidelity of the practice model through increased quality assurance, staff development and accountability.</b>	
<b>Action Steps</b>	<b>Annual Update (includes date completed)</b>
<b>B.1.0 Develop quality assurance processes to ensure program improvements are successfully implemented and modify ORCA.</b>	
B.1.1 Modify ORCA for tracking and monitoring of safety plans. (reference A.2.2.3)	

<p>B.1.2 Modify ORCA in order to track case worker visits for in-home cases. (reference A.2.3.6)</p>	
<p>B.1.3 Modify ORCA in order to track case worker visits for parents. (reference A.2.3.7)</p>	
<p>B.1.4 Develop a method of measurement to monitor implementation of the family contact plan.(reference A.2.4.1)</p>	
<p>B.1.5 Modify ORCA to accommodate family contact plan and documentation. (reference A.2.4.2)</p>	
<p>B.1.6 Modify ORCA to support practice model integration and application within permanency planning. (reference A.3.1.5)</p>	
<p>B.1.7 Establish quality assurance process to monitor timeliness of case transfer, assessment of protective capacities and needs, permanency planning, continued safety management and reassessment including conditions to return home and case closure. (reference A.3.1.6)</p>	
<p>B.1.8 Develop and implement quality assurance methodology to ensure risk and safety factors are addressed during TDMs (reference A.3.3.4)</p>	
<p>B.1.9 Modify ORCA based on evaluation of case plan design and ability to document initial and on-going assessment of needs. (reference A.3.4.4)</p>	
<p>B.1.10 ORCA modification for foster care placement agreement (reference C.2.2)</p>	

**B.2.0 Enhance the quality of supervision and increase accountability to keep children safe and make families stronger.**

**B.2.1 Enhance the quality of supervision to support effective practice.**

B.2.1.1 Request TA from National Resource Center for Organizational Improvement and Child Protection to work with supervisors to develop and implement a supervisory strategic plan.

B.2.1.2 Supervisory strategic planning team in collaboration with the NRCOI will develop a strategic plan.

B.2.1.3 Senior Leadership Team reviews and approves supervisory strategic plan.

B.2.1.4 Implement supervisory strategic plan.

B.2.1.5 Develop program case staffing guidelines for supervisors to ensure the safety, permanency and well-being of all children.

B.2.1.6 Evaluate and revise supervisory curriculum and incorporate relevant strategic plan components based on TA.

**B.2.2 Improve leadership accountability to ensure standards of service.**

B.2.2.1 Managers and Supervisors will monitor ORCA reports to ensure timeliness of initiation and develop a regional response plan to address when timelines are not met.  
(reference A.2.1.7)

B.2.2.2 Children Services Managers and the Child Welfare Administrator will track plan of responses related to timely initiation to ensure that program change activities are implemented and provide corrective action where indicated.  
(reference A.2.1.8)

<p>B.2.2.3 Managers and Supervisors will monitor quality assurance findings to ensure appropriate services are provided to children and parents to manage threats to safety and to ensure that safety plans are in place and develop a plan of response to address areas needing improvement. (reference A.2.2.4)</p>	
<p>B.2.2.4 Children Services Managers and the Child Welfare Administrator will track plan of responses related to management of safety threats and safety plans to ensure that program change activities are implemented and provide corrective action where indicated. (reference A.2.2.5)</p>	
<p>B.2.2.5 Managers and Supervisors will monitor quality and frequency of visits through ORCA, quality assurance review findings and monthly supervisory case reviews and will develop a plan of response to address areas needing improvement.(reference A.2.3.4)</p>	
<p>B.2.2.6 Children Services Managers and the Child Welfare Administrator will track plan of responses related to quality and frequency of visits to ensure that program change activities are implemented and provide corrective action where indicated. (reference A.2.3.5)</p>	
<p>B.2.2.7 Managers and Supervisors will monitor quality assurance review findings for family contact plans and develop a plan of response to address areas needing improvement. (reference A.2.4.3)</p>	
<p>B.2.2.8 Children Services Managers and the Child Welfare Administrator will track plan of responses related to family contact to ensure that program change activities are implemented and provide corrective action where indicated. (reference A.2.4.4)</p>	
<p>B.2.2.9 Managers and Supervisors will monitor quality assurance findings for administrative review follow through and develop plan of response to address areas needing improvement. (reference A.2.5.3)</p>	

<p>B.2.2.10 Children Services Managers and the Child Welfare Administrator will track plan of responses related to administrative review follow through to ensure that program change activities are implemented and provide corrective action where indicated (reference A.2.5.4)</p>	
<p>B.2.2.11 Managers and Supervisors will monitor quality assurance review findings related to case transfer, assessment of protective capacities and needs, permanency planning, continued safety management and reassessment including conditions to return home and case closure and develop a plan of response to address areas needing improvement.(reference A.3.1.7)(Anchorage and Fairbanks)</p>	
<p>B.2.2.12 Children Services Managers and the Child Welfare Administrator will track plan of responses related to case transfer, assessment of protective capacities and needs, permanency planning, continued safety management and reassessment including conditions to return home and case closure to ensure that program change activities are implemented and provide corrective action where indicated. (reference A.3.1.8) (Anchorage and Fairbanks)</p>	
<p>B.2.2.13 Managers and Supervisors will monitor quality assurance findings to ensure appropriate identification of needs and service provision is occurring and develop a plan of response to address areas needing improvement. (reference A.3.2.3) (Anchorage and Fairbanks)</p>	
<p>B.2.2.14 Children Services Managers and the Child Welfare Administrator will track plan of responses related to identification of needs and service provision to ensure that program change activities are implemented and provide corrective action where indicated. (reference A.2.3.4) (Anchorage and Fairbanks)</p>	

<p>B.2.2.15 Managers and Supervisors will monitor quality assurance findings to review the involvement of parents, age appropriate children and tribes in case plan development including the appropriate establishment of permanency goals and the timely changing of permanency goals and develop a plan of response to address areas needing improvement.(reference A.3.4.7)(Anchorage and Fairbanks)</p>	
<p>B.2.2.16 Children Services Managers and the Child Welfare Administrator will track plan of responses related to involving parents, age appropriate children and tribes in case plan development including the appropriate establishment of permanency goals and the timely changing of permanency goals to ensure that program change activities are implemented and provide corrective action where indicated. (reference A.3.4.8) (Anchorage and Fairbanks)</p>	
<p>B.2.2.17 Develop ORCA Dashboard to measure monthly supervisory case staffings</p>	
<p><b>B.3.0 Staff Development</b></p>	
<p>B.3.1 Develop dissemination and staff development plan for practice model and program statements. (reference A.1.2)</p>	
<p>B.3.2 Disseminate and provide staff development to all OCS staff related to practice model and program statements. (reference A.1.3)</p>	
<p>B.3.3 Provide staff development to all OCS field management and front line workers based on the Program Instruction for timely assignment and initiation of all protective services reports. (reference A.2.1.3)</p>	
<p>B.3.4 Provide training to all statewide intake staff. (reference A.2.1.5)</p>	

<p>B.3.5 Provide education and training opportunities to tribes and stakeholders statewide regarding new intake practices. (reference A.2.1.6)</p>	
<p>B.3.6 Provide staff development to all OCS field management and staff around the purpose, application and analysis of information gathered and how that informs the identification of safety threats and protective capacities/needs as well creation and management of safety plans. (reference A.2.2.2)</p>	
<p>B.3.7 Provide staff development to all OCS field management and front line workers on quality home visits and family engagement activities. (reference A.2.4.3)</p>	
<p>B.3.8 CIP will provide training to judges at the Fall Judicial Conference related to family contact planning. (reference A.2.4.5)</p>	
<p>B.3.9 Disseminate policy and provide staff development to all OCS Field management and front line workers on the administrative review process. (reference A.2.5.2)</p>	
<p>B.3.10 Provide training to AAGs related to filing compelling reasons. (reference A.2.6.3)</p>	
<p>B.3.11 Provide staff development to all OCS field management and staff regarding TPR/compelling reasons. (reference A.2.6.4)</p>	
<p>B.3.12 Provide staff development through use of training curriculum to all OCS management and front line workers in Anchorage and Fairbanks related to case transfer, assessment of protective capacities and needs, permanency planning, continued safety management and reassessment including conditions to return home and case closure. (reference A.3.1.4)</p>	

<p>B.3.13 Provide staff development to all OCS field management and front line workers in Anchorage and Fairbanks to enhance appropriate identification of needs and service provision for children, parents and resource families. (reference A.3.2.2)</p>	
<p>B.3.14 Provide staff development to TDM facilitators in Anchorage and Fairbanks to ensure that safety and risk factors are addressed in every TDM.(reference A.3.3.2)</p>	
<p>B.3.15 Continue staff attendance of Knowing Who You Are to increase cultural competency skills. (reference A.3.4.5)</p>	
<p>B.3.16 Provide staff development to all OCS field management and front line workers in Anchorage and Fairbanks related to involving parents, age appropriate children and tribes in case plan development including the appropriate establishment of permanency goals and the timely changing of permanency goals. (reference A.3.4.6)</p>	
<p>B.3.17 Provide staff development to all OCS field management and front line workers in Anchorage and Fairbanks related to the in-home family services program. (reference A.3.6.9) (Anchorage and Fairbanks)</p>	
<p>B.3.18 Provide staff development to OCS field management and staff related to documentation of compelling reasons in ORCA. (reference C.1.1)</p>	
<p>B.3.19 Provide staff development to OCS field management related to standardization of court hearing notification process. (reference C.1.3)</p>	
<p>B.3.20 DOL will provide training to AAGs at Annual AAG conference related to quality of permanency planning. (reference C.1.4)</p>	
<p>B.3.21 CIP will provide training to Judges at Fall Judicial Conference related to quality of permanency hearings. (reference C.1.5)</p>	

B.3.22 Provide staff development to all OCS field management and front line workers on policy, forms, and protocols for creating foster care agreements.(reference C.2.4)	
B.3.23 Provide training to all licensing staff on Casey Family Assessment Inventory (CFAI) instrument. (reference C.2.6)	
B.3.24 Develop an on-going evaluation system for each individual that has successfully completed SKILS and their supervisor.	
B.3.25 SKILS and Supervisory training curriculums will be updated to reflect all staff development provided in the PIP.	
B.3.26 Develop a diverse advisory group statewide to inform FYSTA curriculum effectiveness.	
B.3.27 Submit recommendations for review and approval to FYSTA and OCS for possible revisions.	
B.3.28 Develop standardized on the job training for workers between the four weeks of SKILS training.	
B.3.29 Implement on the job training for new workers in Anchorage and Fairbanks and acquire feedback from all workers that completed the training.	
B.3.30 Review feedback and revise curriculum if determined necessary.	

## Strategy C: Strengthening Systems

**Goal: To provide systems that ensure the safety, permanency and well being of children through the life of the case.**

Action Steps	Annual Update (includes date completed)
<b>C.1.0 Case Review System</b>	
C.1.1 Provide staff development to OCS field management and staff related to documentation of compelling reasons in ORCA. (reference B.3.18)	
C.1.2 Develop protocols related to statewide standardization of court hearing notification process.	
C.1.3 Provide staff development to OCS field management related to standardization of court hearing notification process. (reference B.3.19)	
C.1.4 DOL will provide training to AAGs at Annual AAG conference related to quality of permanency planning. (reference B.3.20)	
C.1.5 CIP will provide training to Judges at Fall Judicial Conference related to quality of permanency hearings. (reference B.3.21)	
C.1.6 CIP will research why there are last minute court hearing changes and determine if uniformity statewide is possible and make recommendations.	
C.1.7 Develop and implement a quality assurance measure for notification of court hearings for resource families.	

<b>C.2.0 Recruit and Retain Resource Families</b>	
C.2.1 Review and revise policy to standardize the process for foster care placement agreements.	
C.2.2 ORCA modification for foster care placement agreement. (reference B.1.10)	
C.2.3 Develop training protocol for foster care agreements.	
C.2.4 Provide staff development to all OCS field management and front line workers on policy, forms, and protocols for creating foster care agreements. (reference B.3.22)	
C.2.5 Develop policy and procedures for a new culturally competent assessment and evaluation of potential resource families (Casey Family Assessment Inventory- CFAI).	
C.2.6 Provide training to all licensing staff on Casey Family Assessment Inventory (CFAI) instrument. (reference B.3.23)	
C.2.7 Collect CFAI data outcomes related to the strengths and weaknesses of resource families along with training and support needs.	
C.2.8 Technical assistance and support from Denise Goodman to assist in development of a Recruitment and Retention Plan requested through Region 10.	
C.2.9 Establish a team to develop recruitment and retention plans for resource families for use on both a statewide and regional basis - these plans will encompass strategies for outreach and support to Alaska Native resource families and for the development of resource homes to meet the needs of specific children.	
C.2.10 Implement recruitment plan and monitor progress.	

C.2.11 Establish resource family advisory board.	
C.2.12 Use Support, Development and Recruitment process in Anchorage and Fairbanks to develop innovative strategies related to retention of foster homes. (Anchorage and Fairbanks)	
C.2.13 Establish requirement that ensures all resource families receive CORE training within one year from beginning of licensing process.	
C.2.14 Track new and current resource families and their compliance with training requirements.	
<b>C.3.0 Service Array</b>	
C.3.1 Request National Resource Center TA (or consultants) to assist in evaluation of grants.	
C.3.2 Analyze existing Family Support, Family Preservation and Time Limited Reunification grants to ensure outcomes are reflective in supporting needs of children and families on a regional level. (reference A.3.6.4)	
C.3.3 Collect systematic data and develop reports that will provide data to track utilization at a youth/family level, local and regional levels. (reference A.3.6.5)	
C.3.4 Work with OCS leadership, regional CSM's and local offices to review data and realign resources if warranted based on analysis. (reference A.3.6.6)	
C.3.5 Collaborate with Division of Behavioral Health to determine the possibility of increasing access and prioritizing behavioral health services to OCS clients.	

<b>C.4.0 Agency Responsiveness to the Community</b>	
C.4.1 Develop collaboration and coordination plan to monitor and evaluate CFSP and PIP status and progress including internal and external stakeholders.	
C.4.2 On-going monitoring/evaluation of the 5-year plan will take place during regularly scheduled meetings of the Regional Continuous Quality Improvement Teams, Court Improvement Project, Tribal State Collaboration Group, Birth Parents, Citizen’s Review Panel, Facing Foster Care in Alaska Youth & Alumni, OCS Executive Steering Committee, Greater Anchorage Area Partnership, Child Advocacy Centers, Children’s Justice Task Force, IV-B Grantees, partner divisions.	
<b>Strategy D: Enhance Tribal and State Relations / Reduce Disproportionality / Increase ICWA Compliance</b>	
<b>Goal: Keeping Alaska Native Families intact while providing a culturally competent continuum of services to protect and promote healthy communities.</b>	
<b>Action Steps</b>	<b>Annual Update (includes date completed)</b>
<b>D.1.0 Promote positive state and tribal collaboration relations, build tribal capacity, reduce disproportionality and increase ICWA compliance.</b>	
D.1.1 Continue to meet with Tribal State Collaboration Group (TSCG) 3 times per year and other scheduled meetings related to the Alaska Child Welfare Disproportionality Reduction Project	
D.1.2 Support work on goals, objectives, and tasks set forth in the Alaska Child Welfare Disproportionality Reduction Project’s Technical Assistance Plan	
D.1.3 Continue Tribal State Co-Chair meetings on a bi-monthly basis	

D.1.4 Support and collaborate with the Alaska Native Indian Child Welfare Association (ANICWA) Board Members	
D.1.5 Reach out to Tribes that are currently not attending TSCG to increase participation at TSCG – for those not who cannot attend provide an avenue for participation and communication	
D.1.6 Increase number of Tribal Title IV-E Agreements with Tribes/Tribal Organizations	
D.1.7 Continue to provide access to Title IV-E funding to Tribes/Tribal Organizations that provide child welfare related services to children that qualify under the Indian Child Welfare Act	
D.1.8 Request reconsideration from Region X to allow Tribal Title IV-E partners to claim training reimbursement at the enhanced training rates	
D.1.9 Work with Tribes that currently provide foster care for Tribal children to determine the feasibility of passing through Title IV-E Maintenance	
D.1.10 Provide assistance whenever possible to Tribes that are considering direct Title IV-E funding	
D.1.11 Provide information regarding how tribes can access Chafee funding for tribal youth in Tribal custody on an annual basis via various modalities	
D.1.12 OCS and Tribal partners will evaluate current rural social services grants to determine feasibility of redesigning services to a contracting case management program	
D.1.13 OCS and Tribal partners will continue to explore the feasibility of a Tribal case management program for the Bethel area	
D.1.14 Submit Tribal Foster Care Licensing Standards to Region X for approval; upon approval Region X submit to the DOL for consideration and approval for use in state child welfare system	

D.1.15 Work with ORCA Project Manager to determine feasibility of providing Tribes access to AK OCS ORCA	
D.1.16 Obtain formal agreement between OCS and Tribes to allow access ORCA information on case-related matters and share reciprocal data	
D.1.17 Conduct critical review of 20 year old Tribal State ICWA Agreement	
D.1.18 Develop ICWA Help Desk Manual for everyday use by state and Tribal workers	
D.1.19 Re-design ICWA webpage to allow easy access to all pertinent TSCG efforts and ICWA information	
D.1.20 Seek tribal participation in on-site QA reviews	
D.1.21 Conduct ongoing OCS ICWA team teleconferences, which includes the Tribes and others as needed	
D.1.22 Provide active technical assistance to all ICWA compliance grantees to ensure positive outcomes of grants and continued funding	
D.1.23 Increase placement preference data entered into ORCA	
D.1.24 Increase placement preference for Native children in out of home care	
D.1.25 Increase number of licensed Native foster homes	
D.1.26 Review analysis and recommendations from the ICWA Specialist Position Description work group to determine if any action is required	
D.1.27 Provide on-going ORCA data as requested by Tribes	

## Strategy E: Enhance Resource Family Systems

**Goal : Ensure safety of children in custody and enhance resource family recruitment and retention efforts**

**Action Steps**

**Annual Update (includes date completed)**

### **E.1.0 Expand use of assessment and evaluation processes for resource families through improved licensing standards, and timely completion of homestudy assessments.**

E.1.1 Assess and evaluate the utilization of CFAI tools by OCS licensing workers, to determine how useful the tools are in the assessment process for foster families in Alaska

E.1.2 Expand the use of the CFAI-AK version to relative care/ kinship provider assessments, adoption and guardianship homestudy assessments

E.1.3 Develop a tracking methodology for the completion of foster care licensing process, and adoptive and guardianship homestudy completions within timeframes

E.1.4 Establish homestudy completion for adoptive and guardianship homes to be completed within 90 days by FY 2011

### **E.2.0 Enhance resource family recruitment and retention efforts to the changing and emerging needs of children in care.**

E.2.1 Assess and evaluate current recruitment processes and determine where existing gaps exist in the recruitment process that may delay or hinder potential resource families from pursuing foster care licensure and/or adoptive approval

E.2.2 Establish baseline data through a data-driven methodology that outlines the current needs of children in care, for the development of a targeted recruitment system

E.2.3 Determine and map existing points of initial inquiry for new resource families and establish areas that can be consolidated, streamlined for improved system responsiveness for recruitment	
E.2.4 Develop an integrated, child-specific recruitment methodology through available recruitment tools such as adoption exchanges, Wendy’s Wonderful Kids, relative search efforts, Heart Gallery	
<b>E.3.0 Support for resource families will be improved with the development of a standardized and responsive system of inquiry.</b>	
E.3.1 Develop a standardized system of inquiry for resource families, that is logical and easy to follow, so that potential resource families are supported and encouraged in the process of kinship care, licensed foster care, pre- and post-adoption and pre-and post-guardianship support	
E.3.2 Establish a training process for all OCS staff on the standardized system of inquiry for initial inquiries from potential resource families	
E.3.3 Develop measures to assess and evaluate inquiry outcomes based on number of inquiries, how many families complete the process, how many families accept placement of a child	
E.3.4 Determine the feasibility of development of home development specialists who will focus on the assessment and support to resource families	
<b>E.4.0 Compliance with OCS licensing standards by licensed foster homes will improve so that more foster homes meet the “fully licensed” standards for Title IV-E funding.</b>	
E.4.1 Explore and analyze of the utilization and effectiveness of provisional licenses issued under emergency conditions, with necessary modifications to improve safety in foster homes as well as to improve compliance with Title IV-E “fully licensed” status	
E.4.2 Develop and implement ORCA enhancements to better support licensing functions and IV-E “fully licensed” compliance	
E.4.3 Develop and implement on-going training for all OCS staff on licensing standards	

E.4.4 Development training specific to licensing workers, inclusive of Title IV-E compliance standards	
<b>E.5.0 Resource Family Advisory Board and Association will become fully sustainable and autonomous.</b>	
E.5.1 Establish training, support, meeting schedules and strategic planning opportunities for the advisory board	
E.5.2 Assist the advisory board with development of the statewide resource family parent association	
E.5.3 Advisory board and association will be operating autonomously from OCS by Year 5	
<b>E.6.0 Resource family orientation and training services are needed to insure that all resource family providers are adequately prepared to meet the complex and evolving needs of children in care.</b>	
E.6.1 Resource family orientation processes need to be standardized on a consistent and statewide level	
E.6.2 Enhance resource family training to incorporate emerging best practices, such as Family to Family; family contact standards; continued familial and cultural connections for the child	
E.6.3 Develop baseline data between ORCA and the grantee database to develop an accurate data listing of resource families and to better track compliance with resource family training requirements	
<b>E.7.0 Supports for adoption and guardianship.</b>	
E.7.1 In post-adoption and guardianship, enhance method of tracking disruptions, displacements and dissolutions of adoptive and guardianship placements. Utilize data to enhance service needs and resources for adoptive and guardianship children and families	
E.7.2 Assess and evaluate the percentage of adoptive or guardianship children who are being placed in residential and/or psychiatric facilities. Determine if coordination of	

resources with Departmental partners is necessary to meet the needs of adoptive/guardianship children placed in residential/psychiatric facilities	
E.7.3 Fully implement the Title IV-E Guardianship Assistance Program (GAP)	
E.7.4 Create an effective plan for utilization of adoption incentive dollars, for services and support for resource families	
E.7.5 Development of purchase of services for adoptive children placed with private adoption agencies, who are in care of OCS	
E.7.6 Develop data-driven methods to report disrupted or dissolved international adoptions annually to ACF within federal guidelines	
E.7.7 Development of system for family preparation for adoptive and guardianship families and incorporate adoption and guardianship preparation training will be incorporated into the Services for adoption support grant in the FY 10 grant cycle	
E.7.8 Develop method so that the family's completion of adoption and guardianship training and results are incorporated in the adoptive or guardianship homestudy	
E.7.9 Improve policy and procedure outlining the full disclosure process of the child's special needs, medical history, educational history, mental health history, and any other pertinent information related to the child, including all assessments of the child, per federal policy guidelines for Title IV-E adoption subsidy funding	
<b>E.8.0 Regional and local emergency response plan and continuity of operations plans will be developed and fully implemented within each of the OCS service regions.</b>	
E.8.1 Train OCS management in ERP/COOP planning	
E.8.2 Develop and implement regional ERP/COOP plan for each region and local office within OCS	

E.8.3 Modify OCS state ERP/COOP base on regional plans, outlining a system of communication structure, reporting mechanisms, and consistent reporting to Region X as disasters occur in Alaska	
<b>Strategy F: Enhance Service Availability and Delivery</b>	
<b>Goal: Enhance the quality and accessibility of services for families and children throughout the state.</b>	
<b>Action Steps</b>	<b>Annual Update (includes date completed)</b>
<b>F.1.0 Through data collection and analysis, evaluate and realign resources and services to better meet needs of families and children throughout the state.</b>	
F.1.1 Develop a report that identifies risk factors to inform service delivery system	
F.1.2 Analyze data as it relates to programs within the service array and determine whether realignment of services is indicated to better meet needs of families and children	
F.1.3 Collaborate with DHSS Division Leaders to coordinate the services that are available to families, youth and children	
<b>F.2.0 Increase the use of the protective factors framework in preventing of child abuse and neglect.</b>	
F.2.1 Integrate the Strengthening Families Protective Factor’s framework into early childhood programs and systems	
F.2.2 Engage parents as decision makers in child abuse prevention efforts through the Strengthening Families Leadership Team	
F.2.3 Provide community training on protective factors	
F.2.4 Embed protective factors language in training for social workers	

<b>Primary Strategy G: SACWIS compliance</b>	
<b>Goal: Achieve full SACWIS compliance</b>	
<b>Action Steps</b>	<b>Annual Update (includes date completed)</b>
<b>G.1.0 National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD) fully implemented in the SACWIS system.</b>	
G.1.1 Integrate NYTD components into ORCA release schedule.	
G.1.2 Design survey component of NYTD	
G.1.3 Design reporting component of NYTD	
G.1.4 Implement survey component	
<b>G.2.0 Fully implement SACWIS components of Fostering Connections</b>	
G.2.1 Determine all parts of Fostering Connections the State will implement	
G.2.2 Determine which ORCA release the various components of Fostering Connections will be implemented	
G.2.3 Design Fostering Connections modules	
G.2.4 Implement Fostering Connections modules into ORCA	
<b>G.3.0 Residential Care IV-E payments will be fully documented in SACWIS</b>	
G.3.1 Work with Residential Child Care Program Coordinator, Fiscal staff, and other Subject Matter Experts to develop a strategy for implementation of RCC IV-E payments into ORCA	
G.3.2 Determine release date of enhancement	
G.3.3 Design RCC enhancement	

G.3.4 Implement RCC enhancement into ORCA	
<b>G.4.0 ORCA will be fully compliant with AFCARS</b>	
G.4.1 Completion of all AFCARS related Incident Reports	
G.4.2 Completion of EIS interface.	
<b>Strategy H: Workforce Stability</b>	
<b>Goal: Retain qualified workers.</b>	
<b>Action Steps</b>	<b>Annual Update (includes date completed)</b>
<b>H. 1.0 Increase worker retention and satisfaction by providing initial and on-going support and development.</b>	
H.1.1 Decrease turnover rate by 5% during calendar year 2010	
H.1.2 Develop system of recognition and rewards for accomplishments of specific organizational goals	
H.1.3 Complete evaluations timely specifically reviewing and reflecting on worker's job performance, development and satisfaction of the prior year	
H.1.4 Provide all employees with adequate supplies upon hire and as needed	
H.1.5 Evaluate feasibility of designing a structure with Social Worker III positions in each unit to develop a career ladder	
H.1.6 Support specific training needs of workers whenever possible (i.e. excel, word, DV, SA and MH training )	

H.1.7 Evaluate supervisor to staff ratios statewide to determine if reallocation of staff to supervisor is warranted	
H.1.8 Create schedule for CSMs, Staff Managers, Licensing Program Coordinator, Supervisors and Administrative Supervisors to visit their field offices at least once a year to provide leadership and support staff	
H.1.9 Continue Staff Survey on an annual basis and develop a plan to address results of the survey	
H.1.10 Continue Retention & Recruitment work group efforts implementing ideas/suggestions as offered in the group	

The following chart illustrates the goals for safety and permanency federal measures established during the development of the Program Improvement Plan. Progress towards these will be monitored and reported annually. Goals may be modified after completion of the Program Improvement Plan.

<b>AFCARS and NCANDS Data Measures</b>			
<b>Data Measures</b>	<b>FFY06b07a (CFSR Self Assessment)</b>	<b>FFY2008AB</b>	<b>Estimated Goal for FFY12</b>
Absence of Maltreatment Recurrence	90.7	90.9	91.4
Absence of Child Abuse and/or Neglect in Foster Care	99.57	99.58	99.67
Permanency Composite 1: Timeliness and Permanency of Reunification	122.4	99.5	102.4
Permanency Composite 2: Timeliness of Adoptions	81.1	111.7	composite goal met, however, strategies in PIP to address concerns
Permanency Composite 3: Permanency for Children and Youth in Foster Care for Long Periods of Time	125.4	103	105.9
Permanency Composite 4: Placement Stability	73.1	82.6	85.1

Note: FFY06b = 4.1.06 - 9.30.06; FFY07a = 10.1.06 - 3.31.07; FFY008ab = 10.1.07 - 9.30.08. Measures are based on Alaska's Data Profile, August 18, 2009 and will updated on annually based on current data.

## ■ Section 3: Indian Child Welfare Act

### *Introduction*

The Office of Children's Services strongly supports the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) and continues to build federal ICWA mandates into all levels of practice. OCS continues to develop positive collaborative and communicative partnerships with all Tribal organizations. This section illustrates how OCS incorporates ICWA requirements in day-to-day practice.

#### ***1. Identification of Indian children by the State Child Welfare agency.***

When receiving a Protective Services Report, the intake worker is required to document as much detail as the reporter can supply, including: child's tribe and village if Native (may be more than one tribe, list all) and tribe and village, if any, for both parents.<sup>1</sup>

OCS' policy states that upon receipt of a Protective Services Report, if OCS knows the tribal membership of a family, OCS will invite the tribe to participate in the investigation with the OCS worker.

In cases where OCS assumes emergency custody, workers are required to inquire of the parents if they are members of a tribe and whether the child is eligible for membership in, or is a member of, a tribe. If there is more than one tribe, the case worker will notify the tribe of the other tribe's identity.

#### ***2. Notification of Indian parents and Tribes of State proceedings involving Indian children and their right to intervene.***

If child is thought to be Alaska Native or American Indian, the Assistant Attorney General is notified of tribal affiliation in order that legal notice can be sent to the tribe for the initial hearing. The case worker also gives informal notice to the tribe by phone or fax, followed by a mailed notification, and should document the effort in the case record. The following information is required:

- A. Name of the child, child's birth date and birthplace.
- B. Name of Indian tribes in which the child is member of or may be eligible for membership.
- C. All names known, and current and former addresses of the Alaska Native or American Indian child's biological mother, biological father, maternal and paternal grandparents and great grandparents or Indian custodians, including birth, married and former names or aliases, birth dates, place of birth and death, tribal enrollment numbers and/or other identifying information.

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<sup>1</sup> In this context, "village" is where the family was raised, and a child's tribe is where the child is either a member, or is eligible for membership in that tribe and is the biological child of an individual who is a member of a tribe. The parent(s)' tribe and the child's tribe are not necessarily the same.

- D. At the time of formal notice to the tribe, the worker or Assistant Attorney General will provide the tribe with the “Tribal Membership” form.
- E. Courtesy notices will be sent to an entity designated by the child’s tribe to act on behalf of the tribe.
- F. The social worker notifies the child’s tribe of Child In Need Of Aid proceedings involving adoptive parents or Indian custodians to the same extent it notifies tribes in proceedings involving the biological parents when removal from an adoptive home or from the care of an Indian custodian is the possible end result.

### ***3. Special placement preferences for Indian children.***

As soon as possible after a child has been removed the case worker is required to contact the child’s tribe to obtain the tribe’s recommendation as to appropriate placement.

When a child is not placed within ICWA preference there will be an internal review of every case every thirty days until the child has been placed within the preferences, the tribe agrees to an alternative placement, or the child is placed in a potential permanent placement.

The case worker is required to conduct a diligent search for a placement that meets the child’s special needs; most approximates a family, and is in reasonable proximity to the parent(s) or Indian custodian. A diligent search includes the following:

- Contact has been made with the child’s tribe for placement possibilities.
- Identification and contact has occurred with the child’s extended family.
- Licensed Native foster homes have been contacted or considered.
- Placements in nearby and culturally related tribal communities have been considered.
- Homes recruited by native social services agencies have been contacted.
- All efforts to find an appropriate placement, and actual placements used must be documented using the Placement Search form (06-9719).

The case worker must ask the child’s tribe to identify and locate placements within the preferences, and provide such information to the state as soon as possible. The case worker and child’s tribe share information on potential placements.

The case worker, together with the child’s tribe, decides the most appropriate placement for the child at a placement staffing that should take place within thirty days from the time the search began. If the worker and the child’s tribe disagree on the placement of a child, the worker notifies the tribe in writing of its intent not to follow the tribe’s recommendation.

If no identified placement for a child can be located within the preference, the worker is required to provide a list of potential foster or adoptive placements from other sources to the child’s tribe.

If an Indian child in custody is to be moved from one placement setting to another, and the child is not being returned to the parent or Indian custodian, the new placement must be made in accordance with the provisions of the ICWA. Written notice of all changes of placement must be sent to the parents, Indian custodian, and tribe, including return home.

#### ***4. Active efforts to prevent the breakup of the Indian family.***

All workers assigned to the case are responsible for maintaining contact standards with the members of the family with whom they are working. This includes ensuring family members are referred for identified services, and that active efforts are being made.

- Active efforts are provided to prevent removal from the family.
- Active efforts are provided to re-unify the family that includes active efforts to assist the family's receiving all needed services in order to satisfactorily complete the case plan.
- Active efforts are provided for children placed in out of home care so they retain contact with their family, culture, customs and tribal connections.

OCS' duty to make active efforts for Alaska Native children includes the duty to:

- Identify family support services that will assist the parent, Indian custodian, or guardian in remedying the conduct or conditions in the home that made the child a child in need of aid;
- Actively offer the parent, Indian custodian, or guardian, and refer the parent, Indian custodian, or guardian to, access to services needed to mitigate the reason for involvement with OCS. The worker must refer the parent or guardian to community-based family support services whenever community-based services are available and desired by the parent or guardian.

Services for Parents/Legal Guardians/Indian Custodians to Support Reasonable and/or Active Efforts:

- Mental Health Assessments for Parents/Legal Guardians/Indian Custodians
- Drug and Alcohol Assessments for Parents/Legal Guardians/Indian Custodians
- Counseling and/or Therapy for Parents/Legal Guardians/Indian Custodians
- Parent/legal guardian/Indian custodian Traveling to Treatment Center

#### ***5. Use of Tribal courts in child welfare matters. Tribal rights to intervene in State proceedings, or transfer the proceedings to the jurisdiction of the Tribe.***

- A. Tribal Court: In the Indian Child Welfare Act, tribal court is defined as: "a court established and operated under the code or custom of an Indian tribe, or any other administrative body of a tribe which is vested with authority over child custody proceedings". Tribal courts will vary from tribe to tribe. A tribal court need not be a distinct judicial body. Thus, a tribal council or other governing body of a tribe may serve as a tribal court. ICWA explicitly recognizes that tribal governmental bodies that are not distinctly judicial may conduct child custody proceedings and that

actions taken by these governmental bodies, such as adoption orders, are entitled to the same recognition as if the body were a state court.

B. Exclusive or Concurrent Jurisdiction over Specific Territory: According to federal law, a tribe in Alaska may exercise exclusive jurisdiction over its children that reside in the tribe's village if it has successfully petitioned to the Secretary of the Interior for exclusive jurisdiction over specific territory other than a reservation, as defined within the petition, and the petition has been granted. The Native Village of Barrow and the Native Village of Chevak are the only villages at the present time that have been granted the right to exercise exclusive jurisdiction over child protection proceedings involving their children. The Native Village of Metlakatla has petitioned for and obtained the right to have concurrent jurisdiction over child protection proceedings involving children domiciled in Metlakatla.

C. Concurrent Jurisdiction as a Result of Transfer to Tribal Court:

- 1) According to federal law, in any state court proceeding for the foster care placement of or termination of parental rights to an Indian child the court shall, upon request of the parent, Indian custodian, or child's tribe, transfer the proceeding to the jurisdiction of the tribe.
- 2) When a case is transferred to tribal court and the tribal court has exercised jurisdiction, the state court action is dismissed. The state retains concurrent jurisdiction but cannot exercise its jurisdiction while the tribal court is exercising jurisdiction, except to protect a child who is in immediate danger.

D. Transfer of Jurisdiction to Tribal Court:

- 1) Request for Transfer: In any state court child custody proceeding pertaining to an Indian child, the child's parent(s), Indian custodian, or tribe may, in writing, request the court to transfer the child custody proceeding to the tribal court of the child's tribe. Based on the request, the court, in the absence of good cause to the contrary, shall transfer such proceeding to the jurisdiction of the tribe, absent objection by either parent or declination by the tribal court of such tribe.
- 2) Reasons Why a Case Would Not be Transferred: A determination will be made by the court whether or not to transfer. The following factors will be considered:
- 3) either parent or Indian custodian objects to the transfer; or
  - a) the tribe declines jurisdiction; or
  - b) good cause to deny the transfer. The burden of establishing good cause to the contrary shall be on the party opposing the transfer. Examples of some of the reasons for a finding of good cause are listed below:
    - i. Good cause not to transfer the proceeding exists if the Indian child's tribe does not have a tribal court as defined by the Act to which the case can be transferred.

- ii. Good cause not to transfer the proceeding may exist if any of the following circumstances exists:
  - The proceeding was at an advanced stage when the petition to transfer was received and the petitioner did not file the petition promptly after receiving notice of the hearing.
  - The Indian child is over twelve years of age and objects to the transfer.
  - The evidence necessary to decide the case could not be adequately presented in the tribal court without undue hardship to the parties or the witnesses.
  - The parents of a child over five years of age are not available and the child has had little or no contact with the child's tribe or members of the child's tribe.
  - A transfer of jurisdiction is contrary to the best interests of the child.

E. Child Protection Responsibilities:

- 1) OCS is required to investigate all protective services reports it receives pertaining to children in Alaska, including reports for tribal children residing within a village that has exclusive jurisdiction, unless the state and the tribe entered into an agreement, for example Native Village of Barrow.
- 2) OCS has the authority to take emergency custody of a child based on AS 47.10.142, including tribal children residing within a village that has exclusive jurisdiction.
- 3) Exclusive Tribal Jurisdiction:
  - a) OCS lacks jurisdiction to file a child custody proceeding for children whose tribe has exclusive jurisdiction over child protection proceedings involving its member children. Consequently, after completing an investigation, OCS should provide its investigative report to the tribe for necessary action.
  - b) If a child who is a member of a tribe with exclusive jurisdiction resides outside of the tribe's geographic area at the time the protective services report is received, OCS must investigate the report and, if necessary, take custody of the child under state law.
- 4) Concurrent Tribal Jurisdiction:
  - a) Metlakatla: OCS should investigate protective services reports it receives on children who are members of the Metlakatla Indian Community and take emergency custody if warranted under state law.
  - b) Transfer Jurisdiction: If a protective services report is received on a child for whose case jurisdiction has been transferred to tribal court

and the tribal court has exercised jurisdiction, OCS should investigate and provide information to the tribal court about the results of its investigation.

- 5) Exclusive State Jurisdiction: Except when a tribe has exclusive or concurrent jurisdiction, the state has exclusive jurisdiction over child protection proceedings involving Indian children until a petition for transfer to tribal court is approved by the superior court and the tribal court has exercised its jurisdiction.
- 6) Request for Transfer of Jurisdiction:
  - a) If a parent, Indian custodian, or the child/children's tribe requests transfer of jurisdiction to the tribe, the worker will inform all parties to the case, the AAG, and the supervisor.
  - b) The process will include consultation by the worker and the supervisor with the AAG. If there is disagreement with the transfer of jurisdiction, the worker and the supervisor will consult with management.
- 7) When Jurisdiction Has Been Transferred:
  - a) When jurisdiction has been transferred to a tribe, the worker will consult with the AAG regarding which records from the case file will be provided to the tribe.
  - b) OCS will not cease its responsibilities toward the child until the tribal court exercises its jurisdiction, and OCS will continue to investigate any new Protective Services Reports received.
  - c) The worker will arrange for release of PFD Trust Funds and other benefits.
  - d) Prior to transfer, the worker will ask the relevant parties, including the Regional ICWA Specialist, for a staffing to ensure a smooth transfer.
  - e) Once jurisdiction has been transferred, the division will no longer carry any financial or case management responsibilities for the case.

### ***Coordination with Tribes Regarding the Section 422 Protections for Indian Children***

This section addresses the use of tribal courts in child welfare matters and also addresses who is responsible for providing the protections for tribal children. The Department of Law, through a published opinion regarding an Alaska Supreme Court decision, known as the

C.R.H. decision, has reviewed the implications of the decision with both the Office of Children's Services and the tribes.

The state is operating a:

- statewide information system with 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;
- case review system (as defined in section 475(5)) for each child receiving foster care under the supervision of the state;
- service program designed to help children, when safe and appropriate, return to families from which they have been removed or be placed in a permanent placement; and
- pre-placement preventive services program designed to help children at risk of foster care placement remain safely with their families.

The State of Alaska provides Section 422 protections to all tribal/Native children and non-Native children under placement and care authority of the state. Tribes are responsible for providing Section 422 protections for children whom they have placement and care authority.

## ***Tribal State Collaboration Group***

Tribal State Collaboration Group meets three times each year where issues faced by Alaska Native children and their families who are involved with OCS are examined. There is a joint, tribal-state leadership and inclusive membership of both parties. The group addresses all policies relating to ICWA compliance as well as other policies that impact Alaska Natives. In this forum, tribes and the state share, review and discuss strategies related to their Child and Family Services plans.

OCS reviews ICWA issues for compliance at every case planning conference, including:

1. Compliance with the active efforts requirements of the ICWA prior to removal of an Alaska Native/American Indian child from his/her home
2. Compliance with placement preferences
3. The active efforts requirements of the ICWA after removing an Alaska Native/American child from his/her home
4. Assistance with access to provision of appropriate remedial services for the Alaska Native or American Indian family at issue
5. Permanency planning progress
6. Provision of notices as required by the ICWA, state law and judicial procedure, state-tribal agreements, and internal policies and regulations of the division
7. Consultation/communication with the tribe/tribal designee
8. When possible, reliance upon an expert from the child's tribal community who has extensive knowledge of the tribe's cultural standards regarding parenting practices, or

someone who the community recognizes as familiar with tribal parenting practices, in judicial proceedings

9. Documentation of all of the above efforts

Case workers, both investigative and ongoing provide all of the services listed above and receive training on these items in both their SKILS and the two day Advanced ICWA Training which has recently been redesigned in a TSCG collaboration effort.

OCS has identified at least one ICWA expert/specialist per region to provide consultation and assistance to other OCS staff. The role of the Regional ICWA Specialist includes but is not limited to:

1. Facilitating and/or participating in Alaska Native or American Indian child/ren case conferences.
2. Working effectively with tribes located within the State of Alaska, and with tribes located outside Alaska on a case-by-case basis.
3. Providing:
  - a. Ongoing ICWA training to regional and field OCS staff;
  - b. Consultation and assistance with training to staff regarding ICWA compliance; and
  - c. Training in the cultural concepts of family and tribal identity that form the basis of the Act.
4. Consultation and training are currently being provided on an individual basis regarding the ICWA.
5. Out-of-preference placements of Native children without tribal approval will be conducted every 30 days for the purpose of monitoring these cases and documenting efforts to bring the cases into ICWA compliance.
6. Regional ICWA Specialists conduct the 30-day reviews in three regions. In the Anchorage Region, the ICWA Help Desk Liaison conducts these reviews. This position is supported in partnership with OCS and Cook Inlet Tribal Council.
7. Acting as contact person for workers from other regions or out-of-state who are trying to establish contact with a village to conduct a relative search. This includes identifying the contact person, and in many cases, assisting the contact or referring the caller to the closest OCS field office to assist with a personal contact.
8. Developing and maintaining contacts with villages within their identified region.
9. Participating as an OCS ICWA Team member in statewide teleconferences with the Statewide ICWA Program Coordinator and attending all statewide Tribal State Collaboration Group meetings.

## ***Disproportionate Representation***

During the next few years, OCS will be continuing to work with our tribal partners to specifically address the disproportionate representation of tribal children in out-of-home care. As part of this process, we will be looking at a number of different issues including the following:

- Cultural competency training
- Increase native foster homes
- Expand tribal case management services
- Develop family group conferencing as a tool for decision making to empower families
- Increase tribal capacity to advocate for Native Alaskan families

These efforts are included in Section 2 - Goals and Objectives of this plan and will be reported on annually.

## ***Western and Pacific Child Welfare Implementation Center***

In April of 2009, Central Council of Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska, together with 15 other Alaska Title IV-B tribes/tribal organizations, applied for and received an award for assistance to further tribal efforts related to disproportionality and building tribal capacity.

The project will assist Alaska Title IV-B tribes/tribal organizations, the Office of Children Services and the Court System to develop a targeted strategy and action plan for addressing systems change with a keen focus on several crucial issues impacting Native families in the arena of Indian Child Welfare. Issues identified include:

- Reducing disproportionality in out of home placements through supporting full compliance with the Indian Child Welfare Act by the State of Alaska
- Building tribal/state cooperation and capacity in key Indian Child Welfare programs and institutions, including tribal courts, tribal foster care licensing, and tribal Indian Child Welfare data/reporting/evaluation systems

These efforts are included in the Alaska Child Welfare Disproportionality Reduction Project Technical Assistance Plan and is part of our work over the next five years.

## ***Collaboration with ANICWA***

OCS continues collaboration with the ANICWA. During the SFY09, the second annual Alaska Child Welfare Summit was held, bringing workers and community partners together to jointly discuss ICWA, rural practices, state processes, court processes, and historical trauma.

Additionally, the ANICWA Board of Directors works to recruit for Alaska Native foster homes. ANICWA held a meeting this year in Kotzebue and Nome in which the recruitment of Alaska Native foster homes was discussed. Several tribes requested follow up information to disseminate.

## ***Rural Social Service Program Grants with Tribal Organizations***

The Rural Social Services Program went out as a competitive grant program for the SFY09-11 funding cycle. The targeted service area remained the same in SFY09, targeting rural areas in the Northern and Southeast regions. In SFY10, the decision to expand the service area to include Bethel was based on the need for services. Due to funding limitations, existing grantees have experienced a reduction in funding to accommodate the new service area.

To enhance the structure and outcomes for this program, services were outlined in three distinct categories: Family Support, Family Preservation and Time Limited Reunification Services. Applicants were limited to providing services in two of the three categories. After reviewing grantee performance and assessing the needs of the local OCS offices in these service areas, it was determined that OCS will exclude Family Support Services from the SFY10 and SFY11 grant periods.

OCS and tribal partners will evaluate current rural social services grants with grantees to determine feasibility of redesigning services to a contracting case management program.

## ***Tribal IV-E Program***

The Alaska Tribal Title IV-E Reimbursement Program is authorized by Title IV-E of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 672-679) and is an open-ended entitlement, funded with a combination of federal and tribal matching funds.

The Federal Authority for the Tribal Title IV-E Reimbursement Program is as follows:

- Adoption Assistance and Child Welfare Act (PL 96-272);
- Adoption and Safe Families Act (PL 105-89);
- 45 CFR 1356.60 (b) and (c);
- Department Appeals Board, DAB 1899; and
- Part E of Title IV of the Social Security Act.

The Objectives of the Tribal Title IV-E Reimbursement Program are as follows:

- To facilitate cooperation between the Office of Children Services (OCS) and tribes/tribal entities;
- To increase opportunities for tribes/tribal entities to provide services to tribal citizens;
- To increase and support tribal child welfare infrastructures;
- To provide for the best interests of Alaska Native children;
- To meet the policy goals of the Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978 (ICWA)
- To assure compliance with the Adoption and Safe Families Act; and

- To provide tribes/tribal entities access to federal funding under the Title IV-E administration and training regulations.

Under the Title IV-E Tribal Program, the Office of Children's Services passes through federal Title IV-E funds for administration and training on child welfare related activities to ten tribes/tribal organizations. Reimbursement is for the categories of administration and training only, however, training is only reimbursed at the administration rate. OCS will submit a formal request to allow Tribal IV-E partners to claim at the training rate as stipulated in the Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008. Eligibility to participate in this program is limited to those tribes and tribal organizations having an approved five-year child welfare plan on file with Region X of the ACF.

Activities under these grants are monitored through quarterly certification of expenditures, face-to-face meetings and on-site visits. OCS completes the Title IV-E eligibility determination on the children served by these programs, determines the penetration rate and calculates the reimbursement for each grantee. Technical assistance is provided to all on a regular and ongoing basis.

Tribes/tribal organizations that have contracts for IV-E pass through funds, include:

- Aleutian/Pribilof Islands Association provides case management services to children and families on the Aleutian chain who are in need of child welfare services.
- Association of Village Council Presidents (AVCP) provides case management and related services to children and families in the Bethel and the Y-K Delta Region.
- Bristol Bay Native Association provides case management services to Dillingham and surrounding villages.
- Central Council Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska has ICWA workers in Juneau and rural communities in Southeast Alaska. These workers provide case management services and adoption services to children in state foster care and their families.
- Cook Inlet Tribal Council (CITC) operates an ICWA Help Desk, which is staffed by one full time CITC worker and located in OCS' Anchorage office. This position is a point of contact for ICWA workers throughout Alaska and OCS workers needing assistance in contacting or coordinating services for an Alaska Native child. The other positions provide supervised visitation for children and families as well as case management for children and families involved in the state child welfare system.
- Kawerak, Inc. provides case management services to children and families involved in the State child welfare system in Nome and in the villages under their service umbrella. In January of 2006, Kawerak signed a Memorandum of Agreement with Nome Eskimo Community to provide case management services to children and families.
- Maniilaq, Inc. has four workers that provide case management services to children in state custody and their families in the Kotzebue region. Maniilaq also has a position dedicated to recruiting and licensing foster homes in the area.
- Sitka Tribe of Alaska's ICWA Department has 3 staff of which 1.5 are dedicated to provide case management services to children and families involved with the state child welfare system.
- Tanana Chiefs Conference has one full time social worker dedicated to providing case management activities to families and children involved in the state child

welfare system. TCC also has one full time foster care recruiter/licensing worker who provides services to prospective and current foster / adopt families. TCC provides services to children and families who are either enrolled or eligible for enrollment with one of the thirty-seven tribes in the TCC region.

Alaska will seek permission for tribes to claim at the training rates outlined in the Foster Connections legislation. If granted, this would allow short term training to be provided to staff of Tribal IV-E partners who serve Title IV-E eligible children with whom the Office of Children's Services has state Title IV-E agreements and contracts, tribal attorneys, tribal child advocates, tribal judges and court personnel on IV-E allowable topics specified in 45 CFR 1356.60(b) and (c) and the Child Welfare Policy Manual, section 8.1.H. Title IV-E federal reimbursement for training shall be claimed as allowable in the "The Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008" (Public Law 110-351). OCS shall approve all training prior to submittal for reimbursement to ensure compliance with state and federal law, regulations and policy. Records shall be kept of all approved training.

## ■ Section 4: Title IV-B Subparts I and II

### *In-Home Family Services Continuum*

In January 2005, the Office of Children's Services modified the grantee process for grants funded by Title IV-B I and II and improved the availability of services provided. OCS has implemented programs to mitigate gaps in Alaska's service array and address the diverse and individualized needs of families and children. The following section describes the in-home family services provided statewide to ensure the safety, permanency, and well being of every child. These funds support the following programs:

- Family Support Services
- Family Preservation Services
- Time Limited Family Reunification Services
- Adoption Support Services

### *Family Support Services*

Family Support Services (FS) were developed to respond to the concerns and needs of families within a community. FS are "community-based services to promote the well-being of children and families, designed to increase the strength and stability of families (including extended families), to increase parents' confidence and competence in their parenting abilities, to afford children a stable and supportive family environment, and otherwise to enhance child development" (1993 OBRA provisions, P.L. 10366). Family Support Services are targeted to families within a community with potential difficulties and concerns related to the proper functioning of the family and care of the children.

#### *Program Goals*

OCS intends to implement Family Support Services that provide services to families throughout Alaska in support of these federal goals for service delivery:

- Comprehensive supports for parents
- Promote the development of parenting skills
- Improve family access to formal and informal resources
- Support the needs of parents with disabilities through respite or other activities
- Provide referrals for health and child development services
- Promote meaningful parent leadership

With these funds, OCS will develop and foster family support programs that provide these services to families throughout Alaska in support of the Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention (CBCAP) and IV-B I and II goals for service delivery.

#### *Program Objectives/Outcomes*

OCS has determined specific outcomes for the FS programs supported with IV-B I and II funds. Proposers are to describe how their proposed programs will support these outcomes:

- Decreased incidents of repeat maltreatment
- Reduced reliance on out-of-home care
- Improve family/child functioning

Activities specifically required through these services must directly support each outcome. Programs will be evaluated based on these outcomes and will be required to fulfill specific outputs as outlined in the evaluation section of the request for proposals.

### ***Service Description***

The services for the IV-B I and II Family Support Program includes the following services:

- Daily in-home support services
- Facilitated access to resources
- Service Coordination of:
  - Early childhood services
  - Medical services
  - Educational/employment services
- Parent education and support
- Transportation services

OCS will make referrals to Family Support services for families needing support for basic needs and crisis stabilization. Families referred will not have an open OCS case. Families can also be referred by other services, such as schools or early education programs, medical services, other community agencies, or clients may self-refer.

### ***Daily In-Home Support Services***

Family Support services are home based services delivered in the natural setting of the home rather than an agency setting. The family-centered nature of these services, directed at improving overall family functioning to prevent child abuse and neglect, are more effective when they are provided in the family's natural environment. In-home services include parent education and support, ongoing assessment, and ensuring a safe home.

### ***Facilitated Access to Resources***

Families needing family support services often come to the program because they are in crisis or are struggling to meet the basic needs of their families. If families are unable to secure resources to respond to their crises or provide for their basic needs, circumstances can progress and safety and stability in the home may be compromised. Often, these crises can be alleviated when a family is connected to tangible resources or services to support those needs. Providers will work with families to secure the resources and services needed to maintain family stability. This includes direct assistance with scheduling appointments and transportation to appointments; help with completing applications and gathering relevant qualifying documents.

### ***Service Coordination***

Service coordination is an active, ongoing process that involves assisting families by helping them identify the array of services they are already engaged in, compiling information about those services, and facilitating access to services needed but not yet utilized. As circumstances change, service coordination is critical in supporting those changes by continuously informing and assisting clients with obtaining needed services. Individual family members served will receive services to coordinate and actively support involvement in early childhood services, medical services, education/employment and behavioral health

services. Each member of the family should be considered when coordinating services, with special attention given to young children ages birth to three years.

### ***Parent Education and Support***

Providers will be required to provide Parent Education and Leadership Training. The purpose of this component is to provide hands-on education to caregivers in a home environment and/or agency-based group parenting education classes to allow families to learn parenting techniques and share experiences in a group environment. Programs should reflect the need of the population and account for the cultural context in which it is delivered. While enhancing parenting skills is the primary focus of the training being solicited through this proposal, training can cover a broader range of education, including financial literacy, leadership and advocacy skills, goal setting, self-esteem and other skill-building information that will enhance a parent's ability to provide and protect their children.

### ***Transportation Services***

Grantees must be able to provide transportation for families to support their service goals. Transportation can be provided directly to clients or by providing access to public transportation through taxi vouchers, community shuttle services and/or bus tokens.

### ***Target Population***

Family Support services are needed in communities throughout the state of Alaska. OCS will refer children who are at risk of child abuse or neglect and/or at possible risk of out-of-home placement. Services will be provided to families with children when there have been concerns of child abuse and the family requires intervention to prevent future risks to child and family safety.

Families can be referred by OCS staff, or by other community providers (such as hospitals, treatment facilities, and schools), or self-referred. The identified priorities for services are as follows:

1. Families with children, birth to twelve years old, referred by or involved with OCS.
2. Families with children ages birth to twelve years old, in need of a comprehensive array of support services and who are self-referred or referred by other community providers, including hospitals, child care centers, residential treatment facilities, and schools.
3. Expectant teen parents and young mothers.

### ***Family Preservation Services***

Family Preservation (FP) Services were developed to respond to the concerns, interests, and needs of families within a community. FP services are "to fund community-based family support services that promote the safety and well-being of children and families, to afford children a safe, stable and supportive family environment, to strengthen parental relationships and promote healthy marriages, and otherwise to enhance child development" (93.556 Promoting Safe and Stable Families). Family Preservation Services are preventative services targeted to families within a community who face potential

difficulties and concerns related to the proper functioning of the family and care and safety of the children. Services are delivered to prevent the need for out-of-home placements of the children.

### ***Program Goals***

OCS intends to implement Family Preservation Services for families throughout Alaska in support of these federal goals for service delivery:

- Family centered services for parents
- Parent education, mutual support and self-help
- Promote the development of parenting skills
- Improve family access to formal and informal resources
- Home visiting and respite services
- Provide referrals for health and child development services
- Promote meaningful parent leadership

These services are intended to provide intervention services for families who have been identified at a high level of risk or unsafe.

### ***Program Objectives/Outcomes***

OCS has determined specific outcomes for the FP programs supported with IV-B I and II funds. Proposers are to describe how their proposed programs will support these outcomes:

- Decreased incidents of repeat maltreatment
- Reduced reliance on out-of-home care
- Improve family/child functioning
- Increase family participation in safety/case planning and decision-making at all levels of services

Activities specifically required through these services must directly support each outcome. Programs will be evaluated based on these outcomes as outlined in the evaluation section of the request for proposals.

### ***Service Description***

The services for the IV-B I and II Family Preservation Program includes the following:

- Ongoing family assessments
- Safety plan monitoring and service coordination
- Developing family support teams
- Parent education and support
- Transportation services

OCS staff and the grantee will work as a team to provide services to families and children.

### ***Ongoing Family Assessments***

Assessment is an ongoing process through the duration of service delivery. Assessment should look at progress and client achievement, and also account for changes in family circumstances and need. All OCS funded programs will use the North Carolina Family Assessment Scales version NCFAS G+R. Two scales, the NCFAS-General and the NCFAS-Reunification are being combined into the NCFAS-G+R and will be the scale used. The NCFAS-G+R will measure an Improvement in Family/Child Functioning at these

designated timeframes: intake, in three months intervals, at the completion of service, and three months following the end of services.

### ***Safety Plan Monitoring and Service Coordination***

To avoid duplication and confusion for families, a referral from OCS will include the OCS Safety Plan. Grantee staff will work with the assigned OCS staff to maintain and support the OCS safety plan. Any issues related to safety are continually monitored and reported to the assigned OCS staff.

Service coordination is an active, ongoing process during the provision of services. Service coordination helps families by identifying the array of services they are already engaged in, compiling information about those services, and facilitating access to services needed but not yet utilized. As circumstances change, service coordination is critical in supporting those changes by continuously informing and assisting clients with obtaining needed services. Providers will work with individual family members to coordinate and actively support involvement in early childhood services, education/employment services and medical services, if needed. Special attention is to be given to young children ages birth to three years.

### ***Family Team Development***

The primary focus of these services is the development of support systems for individual families with children at risk of out-of-home placement. Families will be offered services to facilitate the identification of both formal and informal natural supports as resources, and the coordination of these supports, to ensure the continued safety and stabilization of family circumstances.

### ***Parent Education and Support***

Providers will be required to provide parent education training. The purpose of this component is to provide hands-on education to caregivers in a home environment and/or agency-based group parenting education classes to allow families to learn parenting techniques and share experiences in a group environment. Programs should reflect the need of the population and account for the cultural context in which it is delivered. While parenting is the primary focus of the training being solicited through this proposal, training can cover a broader range of education, including financial literacy, leadership and advocacy skills, goal setting, self-esteem and other skill-building information that will enhance a parent's ability to provide and protect.

### ***Transportation Services***

Grantees must be able to provide transportation for families to support their service goals. Transportation can be provided directly to clients or by providing access to public transportation through taxi vouchers, community shuttle services and/or bus tokens.

### ***Target Population***

Family Preservation services are needed in communities throughout the State of Alaska. The priority population for services are children referred by OCS who are at high risk or unsafe. Services will be provided to families with children where there has been a determination of high risk or safety threats present. Each member of the family should be

considered when coordinating services, with special attention given to young children ages' birth to three years.

Referrals will come exclusively from the Office of Children's Services, who will have a case open for in-home services. OCS staff and the grantee staff will work as a team to provide services to families and children referred to this program.

## ***Time Limited Family Reunification Services***

Time Limited Family Reunification (TLFR) Services are provided to families when a child enters the foster care system. They are designed to expedite a reunification of the child(ren) with their parents in an appropriate environment. These services are the key to successful reunification and the primary mechanism through which family relationships are maintained while a child is in out-of-home care. Additionally, the services provide the context for increasing parental capacity, building strong parent-child bonds, and promoting a safe environment for a child. If a permanent plan other than reunification is to be considered, TLFR services continue to support the child during times of transition.

### ***Program Goals***

OCS will implement Time Limited Family Reunification Services for families throughout Alaska in support of these federal goals for service delivery:

- Prevent the unnecessary separation of children from their families
- Improve the quality of care and services to children and their families
- Ensure permanency for children by reuniting them with their parents, by adoption or by another permanent living arrangement

OCS has prioritized funds to develop ongoing visitation services/family contact for families with children in out-of-home care. Through partnerships in our Alaska communities, families can grow together and children will remain safe and secure in their own homes.

### ***Program Objectives/Outcomes***

OCS has determined specific outcomes for the TLFR programs supported with IV-B I and II funds. Proposers are to describe how their proposed programs will support these outcomes:

- Decreased incidents of repeat maltreatment
- Reduced reliance on out-of-home care
- Improve family/child functioning

Activities specifically required through this service model must directly support each outcome. Programs will be evaluated based on these outcomes as outlined in the evaluation section of the request for proposals.

### ***Service Description***

The services for the IV-B I and II Time Limited Family Reunification Program includes the following:

- Visitation services/family contact
- Transportation services

OCS will make referrals to Time Limited Family Reunification Services when it is determined through the practice model process that existing family circumstances have compromised child safety in the home and an in home safety plan is not feasible, therefore removal is necessary.

### ***Family Contact/ Visitation Services***

Family contact/visitation services are for families who need ongoing support to meet reunification goals. Developed by an interdisciplinary team, OCS, in collaboration with the State of Alaska Court Improvement Project, has outlined protocols for visitation to be implemented using these funds. These protocols have been developed to help OCS workers decide the appropriate level of supervision during visitation between a parent(s) and child(ren) and to guide courts in making determinations about visitation in child welfare cases.

Family contact/visitation services need to keep children connected to their parents, a range of family members, and other important figures in their lives, including their culture and community. Activities facilitated during visitation should be responsive to the case plan goals and structured to increase family/child functioning and maintain the positive connection. The visitation protocols include three levels of supervision:

- Unsupervised
- Intermittent supervision
- Structured family time
  - Low supervision
  - Moderate supervision
  - High supervision

Successful proposers must be able to be *Resources for Supervision* for all three levels of supervision within the protocol. Appendix E provides a description of the *Levels of Supervision, Determining Levels of Supervision* and *Resources for Supervision*.

Family contact/visitation will be facilitated in the agency setting, the community and the family home. The agency setting must reflect the diverse cultural aspects of the community and be open and flexible to meet the scheduling needs of the children and families served. The schedule of operations must include evening and weekend visitation. Structured activities must be offered during visits to promote family interaction.

### ***Transportation Services***

Grantees must be able to provide transportation for parents and children to support visitation schedules. Transportation can be provided directly to clients or by providing access to public transportation through taxi vouchers, community shuttle services and/or bus tokens.

### ***Target Population***

Time Limited Family Reunification services are needed in communities throughout the State of Alaska. The priority population for services are OCS referred families with children who are in an out-of-home OCS placement. Services will be provided to families with children where there have been substantiated allegations of child abuse or neglect.

Prior to service delivery, children and families are thoroughly assessed to determine if any safety threats are present. If safety threats are identified, the process further identifies the root cause of a parent's inability to provide a safe home environment for their children. At this point, OCS will make a referral to the appropriate program to address the underlying issues identified in the assessment.

## ***Adoption Support Services***

Services for adoption support were established to provide pre and post-adoption support to all Adoptive families who reside in the State of Alaska; this included adoptive families created through public, private and international adoptions.

### ***Program Goals***

The Services for Adoption Support funded through Title IV-B, Subpart 2 consists of four program goals:

- Pre-adoptive and pre-guardianship families require family preparation prior to the finalization of the adoption or guardianship. Family preparation for adoptive or guardianship families will improve the number of successful adoptions or guardianships in the long-term.
- Support services to adoptive or guardianship families are necessary to promote child safety, placement stability and effective strategies to meet the special needs/challenges of the child. Support services assist the families in identifying and utilizing familial, community-based, and Tribal supports to maintain the child with their family and to prevent adoption or guardianship disruption.
- Community outreach and education of services for adoption support to adoption and guardianship families. Community based and OCS staff evaluation of services, communication and resources are important to program and service improvements.
- Services for adoption or guardianship support are vital to rural families, to maintain the continued cultural, familial, safety and permanency needs of adoptive or guardianship children. Rural adoption and guardianship families will have access to services for adoption support that is in balance with services provided in urban areas of Alaska. Support services through community and OCS partnerships are necessary for families located in rural Alaska.

### ***Program Objectives/Outcomes***

OCS has determined specific outcomes the Adoption Support Services program which include:

- Family preparation training to all pre-adoptive families
- Support services and peer mentoring for adoptive families
- Information and referral to community-based resources
- Services provided statewide in urban and rural settings

### ***Service Description***

The grantee is required to accept referrals for services for adoptive families. Adoptive families will receive an initial assessment to determine their level of need. Based on the assessment, families can also be referred by other services, such as community-based mental health centers, educational assistance programs, and other community agencies.

### ***Target Population***

The Services for Adoption Support program will serve all adoptive families residing in Alaska at all stages of the adoptive process through post-adoption. Families who adopted through public, private and international adoptions are eligible for services. Adoption Support services are provided on a statewide basis through one service grantee.

## ***Guiding Principals***

In order to support a more family-focused service delivery design, OCS has developed a set of guiding principles to manage and coordinate services that a family needs, or is receiving in order to achieve successful outcomes. The following principles must be part of their proposed service delivery model:

### ***Individualized and Strength-Based***

The relationship of the family to the agency must be one of mutual partnership, each learning from and teaching the other, and the agency recognizing the family as the experts on their child(ren). Recognition of the strengths of family relationships and building upon those strengths in service planning to achieve optimal outcomes for children and their families.

### ***Time Intensive***

In order to adequately meet the needs of the priority population, the majority of staff time must be spent providing direct services. Direct services are defined as either face-to-face, in-home contact with a client or contact by telephone. Each proposal must offer a minimum of 50% direct in-person, home-based service hours to be provided under the grant. Out of that 50%, telephone contacts to clients cannot exceed 20% of the direct services required. For example, in 7.5 hours of daily staff time, at least 50% or 3.75 hours must be direct client contact. Of those 3.75 hours, no more than 45 minutes can be phone contact. Time spent in travel status cannot be counted as direct service time.

### ***Cultural Competence***

Cultural Competence is a vehicle used to broaden our knowledge and understanding of individuals and communities that we work with. Organizations that strive for cultural competence consistently work to achieve a better understanding of the needs of their stakeholders. Programs must ensure continued education for workers in the area of cultural competency and the history of the people being served. In addition, educational and recreational opportunities for families served are to be reflective of the culture. Services should incorporate cultural activities whenever possible and encourage families and child(ren) to share their knowledge about the cultural groups they belong to.

### ***Extended Family Involvement***

In some cases, families lose their connection to their supports through their families or through the community, often due to abuse, violence, stress, or addiction. Part of the job of a helping professional is to help families recover and again learn to access their own or community informal resources. Special attention must be given to involving extended paternal family of non-resident fathers. Services should encourage the use of natural supports and extended family and integrate those supports into the safety planning and service planning process whenever possible.

Each of these principles directly support the outcomes OCS is hoping to achieve with these services. Proposers will be evaluated based on their ability to integrate these principles into their service model. Heavy weight is put on these items during the scoring process.

Proposers must also outline how they will accomplish these service activities:

- Referral and initial intake
- Case staffing and sharing of information
- Documentation
- Completion of services
- Case reviews and back-up

Each of these items are evaluated during the Proposal Evaluation Committee and Personnel Review process. Decisions around funding is based on the ability of the proposer to adequately address each of these components of the service delivery model.

### ***Measures of Progress***

During FY08-09, program staff developed a series of reporting tools to assist OCS in tracking the effectiveness of the services being funded by the agency. These tools incorporate the federal reporting requirements for IV-B I and II and the Community Based Child Abuse Prevention (CBCAP) Program. Additionally, they will provide guidance to providers in gathering information to help OCS determine whether these services are having an impact on the federal CFSR outcomes related to safety, permanence and well-being.

Information collected from funded providers will include:

1. NCFAS G+R Assessment Findings (quarterly): These reports will illustrate whether providers have been successful in increasing the protective factors (life domains) based on the findings of their NCFAS assessments. This information will be shared with providers, as well as OCS supervisors and interested workers on an annual basis.
2. Family Services Outcomes Quarterly Report (quarterly): These reports will provide demographic information about the family and the types of services provided to each individual family member. This report also tracks the number of home and school-based visits, the number of service hours and events such as removal, reunifications and voluntary placements of children outside the home. This information will be compiled and compared against the information in the ORCA system to determine whether children have received another report of harm during or closely following service provision. The findings will be shared with providers, as well as OCS

supervisors and interested workers on a quarterly basis, or twice yearly depending on the quality of data received from providers as they work to provide new information.

3. Program Logic Model Progress Report (biannually): This report will be completed by each grantee. They will provide updates on the agency’s ability to meet their goals and objectives as outlined in their service model. The information will help to determine whether the grantee was successful in meeting the objectives/outcomes of their funded program. Information will be compiled into an annual report on the progress and innovation of funded providers. It will be shared statewide.
4. Cumulative Fiscal Report (quarterly): These reports will help to track the spending of grant funds. OCS will work with individual grantees to ensure funds are expended in support of the goals and objectives of the grantee and will work with them to expend funds completely and appropriately.

For the period of SFY 2010 through 2014, OCS will be tracking the data received from funded providers to gauge whether the service model is proven effective in reaching the outcomes related to each service model.

Collectively, all of these reports will help OCS to determine where grantees need further assistance and support in meeting all of their goals. They will provide information about each grantee’s ability to work within the funded service model and offer guidance to OCS and the grantee around any site reviews and/or corrective action plans that are necessary.

## ***Decision Making Process***

Title IV-B-I and II funds are allocated to each program based on the required percentages in the Federal Program Instruction. Available funds are then allocated to the four OCS regions based on population, numbers of clients in out-of-home care, and community resources as follows:

<b>Region</b>	<b>Family Support</b>	<b>Family Preservation</b>	<b>Time Limited Family Reunification</b>
Anchorage (ARO)	25%	10%	17%
Northern (NRO)	25%	30%	28%
Southcentral (SCRO)	25%	25%	25%
Southeast (SERO)	25%	35%	30%

The above percentage for the Anchorage Region is lower due to the community success in securing other funding sources to support this work separate from the State of Alaska.

The following chart provides percentages of the breakdown of Title IV-B, Subpart II funds.

Title IV-B, Part II	Percent Allocated
Family Support	20%
Family Preservation	31%
Time Limited Family Reunification	22%
Adoption Promotion	20%
Administration	7%
Total	100%

Proposals are solicited and reviewed in accordance with the applicable provisions of 7 AAC 78 State of Alaska Department of Health and Social Services Grant Regulations. Applications were evaluated by the Grants & Contracts Support Team for minimum responsiveness and technical requirements and forwarded to the Office of Children’s Services to be reviewed by the OCS Program Coordinator. Proposers who do not meet the minimum responsiveness do not get forwarded to the OCS Program Coordinator and are excluded from further review and discussion.

If more funding is requested by proposers than is available to fund each program, a Proposal Evaluation Committee (PEC) is formed and a review of all proposals is held. PECs are comprised of four committee members, which include staff of the State of Alaska, community stakeholders and family services providers (who have not submitted a proposal for funding). PECs are open to any who are interested, but the audience is not allowed to ask questions or provide input during the PEC process.

Additionally, the Program Coordinator conducts a Personnel Review of the proposals and provides input and guidance to the PEC during the review. The Program Coordinator makes the recommendations for funding programs based on the outcomes of the PEC. All proposals and documentation of the review process are available upon request. Recommendations include special conditions of award and modifications to proposed project scope and budgets.

### ***Consultation and Coordination***

Title IV-B I and II funded programs are nestled in the continuum of services developed through the Service Array of the state child welfare agency. These programs are closely linked to other services provided by OCS. They are also supported by other programs in other State of Alaska DHSS divisions, and federal and private partners nationwide. The following information outlines the partnerships we are currently working on related to these services.

### ***Bring the Kids Home***

OCS is collaborating with the Division of Behavioral Health (DBH) to expand Family Preservation Services to serve families experiencing multiple pathologies in which one or more child(ren) has an emotional disorder or a substance abuse disorder, or families in which one or more of their parents has a chronic mental illness, a substance abuse disorder or a developmental disability and their child(ren) are at risk of developing a chronic disorder. The goals of this collaboration will be to:

- Reduce trauma associated with out-of-home placement, which has shown to lead to negative long-term impacts;
- Improve family functioning so parents can take responsibility for their children; and
- Reduce the number of children who develop more severe disorders and require long-term residential treatment.

The project will utilize the Family Preservation model supported with IV-B I and II, allowing us to expand our scope of evaluation and increase OCS' ongoing efforts to keep children in their homes. DBH and OCS will be working to secure these funds to implement these services in FY2011.

### ***Public Health Nursing***

The Public Health Nursing Program will be linked to the Family Support grant programs, providing guidance in the review and award process of grants and coming to the table as changes are made to the service model. As the Public Health Nursing Program has interest in establishing medical homes for all children in Alaska, the Family Support service model will address the coordination of medical services for families served by the program.

### ***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.

### ***National Family Preservation Network***

OCS will be collaborating with the National Family Preservation Network (NFPN) to implement the updated North Carolina Family Assessment Scale (NCFAS) within our grantee population statewide. NFPN will provide training and technical assistance to

NCFAS users. They will also compile assessments into a single database and develop reports to be provided to OCS. NFPN and OCS have worked together in the past to secure funding for Alaska to support the NCFAS implementation and will continue to look for resources to support the initiative.

### ***Community Based Child Abuse Prevention (CBCAP)***

The IV-B funded Family Support, Family Preservation and Time Limited Family Reunification Program Coordinator is also responsible for the coordination of the Community Based Child Abuse Prevention (CBCAP) funding through the Administration for Children and Families (ACF). OCS will be utilizing the technical assistance center, the FRIENDS National Resource Center, to provide training to grantees, community stakeholders and families in the areas identified through the ongoing community needs survey process.

### ***Alaska Youth and Family Network***

The Alaska Youth and Family Network (AYFN) is an established statewide network with an active board that includes parents from communities statewide. Their mission, “Alaska Youth and Family Network advocates for families and children with social / emotional / behavioral challenges and related disabilities to be included as equal partners with professionals in developing policies, programs and ensuring adequate mental health and substance abuse services, prevention and information for Alaskan children and youth,” makes them an ideal partner in supporting the parents served by these programs.

OCS will be working with the Alaska Youth and Families Network (AYFN) to identify partnership opportunities and be a continued resource for the Network. This partnership will provide opportunities and resources for parents to develop skills and receive training to support further leadership development and personal growth.

### ***Court Improvement Project***

The Program Coordinator has been working closely with the Court Improvement Project (CIP) Visitation Subcommittee to develop and implement a new family contact/visitation protocol for families with children in out-of-home care. These protocols have been developed to help OCS workers decide the appropriate level of supervision during family contact/visitation between a parent(s) and child and guide courts in making determinations about family contact/visitation in child welfare cases.

To support this implementation, training, practice guidelines and a series of forms have been developed to assist the documentation needed for visitation planning, referrals to supervision resources, and visit observations. An initial policy is scheduled for release on July 1, 2009.

### ***Coordination with Tribes***

Due to the disproportionate number of Native children in out-of-home care and involved with OCS, these programs link with the State of Alaska funded Rural Social Services (RSS) tribal programs to ensure that the population is being served by prevention and reunification efforts. Currently, the RSS program service model incorporates the same criteria as the IV-B I and II funded programs. Their services will be included in the overall evaluation and grantee feedback process to ensure their input in the continued development and delivery of these services.

## ■ Section 5: Chafee Foster Care Independence and Education and Training Programs

*Identify the State agency or agencies that will administer, supervise or oversee the programs and provide a statement that indicates that the State agency will cooperate in national evaluations of the effects of the programs in achieving the purposes of CFCIP.*

The State of Alaska, Office of Children's Services provides administration, supervision, and oversight for the Chafee Foster Care Independence and Education and Training Voucher programs. The State of Alaska will cooperate with national evaluations (NYTD) of the effects of the programs in achieving the purposes of the Chafee Foster Care Independence Program.

***Description of Program Design and Delivery:*** *The following addresses how the State will design, conduct and/or strengthen programs to achieve the purposes of section 477(a)(1-7) of the Act.*

### ***1. Help youth transition to self-sufficiency***

The Office of Children's Services through the Independent Living Program provides Life Skills Training using the *Preparation for Adult Living* model (PAL). The PAL curriculum provides youth in foster care and foster care alumni training in areas including budgeting and financial skills, substance abuse prevention, preventive health activities, and skill development related to obtaining employment, transportation, and housing. There are plans to expand PAL training to rural hubs during next year. Life skills training on CD-ROMs is also available to youth in rural communities across the state. The Independent Living (IL) Program is working with the University of Alaska to develop a tutoring program for youth attending the university that are experiencing difficulties in school. Additionally, the IL Program is collaborating with the Department of Labor's youth programs to assist youth in preparation for employment and finding part-time employment while they are in state custody. Other services that are provided are included in the descriptions that follow.

### ***2. Help youth receive the education, training, and services necessary to obtain employment***

The *Preparation for Adult Living* curriculum includes an employment component that provides skill development related to work ethics and job interviewing. Recent collaboration with Alaska's Department of Labor Youth Employment Program resulted in obtaining additional funding for the IL grant with Covenant House Alaska. This additional funding currently provides funding to assist youth in the creation of resumes, training to enhance their skills in locating and maintaining employment, and also provides funds for employers to pay foster youth and alumni to gain work experience. Collaboration with the Department of Labor to assist youth to receive services related to employment will be an ongoing effort.

***3. Help youth prepare for and enter postsecondary training and education institutions***

Alaska's IL Program allows youth interested in education or postsecondary training the opportunity to participate in the annual education conference held at one of the University of Alaska campuses. This conference exposes youth to college life, vocational training, and the chance to hear about the Job Corps. The IL Program collaborates with the University of Alaska to provide tutoring services to youth in custody so they are more likely to receive either a high school diploma or a GED prior to exiting state custody. Through the IL Program, training is provided to OCS staff, foster parents, and Guardians ad Litem to reinforce the importance of education as a way of improving the outcomes of youth who exit the foster care system. OCS in collaboration with the Court System, Office of Public Advocacy and Facing Foster Care in Alaska is drafting a Memorandum of Understanding with Alaska's school districts to further support youth to succeed in obtaining either a high school diploma or GED. The IL Program also provides incentives for youth who obtain their high school diplomas or GED as well as providing funds to pay for tutoring when a need is identified.

***4. Provide personal and emotional support to youth aging out of foster care through mentors and the promotion of interactions with dedicated adults***

The IL Program will provide training to OCS staff and foster parents related to the importance of youth having connections with adults who will play a significant role in their lives. Each region has a dedicated Regional Independent Living Specialist (RILS) to assist foster care alumni identify resources and funds to help youth in their transition to adulthood while maintaining cultural connections. The IL Program is in the process of collaborating with other community resources to create mentoring opportunities for youth in custody and alumni of the foster care system. This may include educational mentoring, employment mentoring, or individual mentoring based upon the needs of the youth.

***5. Provide financial, housing, counseling, employment, education, and other appropriate support and services to former foster care recipients between 18 and 21 years of age to complement their own efforts to achieve self-sufficiency and to assure that program participants recognize and accept their personal responsibility for preparing for and then making the transition from adolescence to adulthood***

One of the IL Program goals is to maintain a grant in the Anchorage area to assist youth locate housing, employment, education, and appropriate support services as many foster care recipients age 18 to 21 reside in Anchorage or the surrounding area. This is in addition to the support provided by the Regional Independent Living Specialist located in the Anchorage region. The IL Program will continue to collaborate with the Department of Labor's Youth programs to identify training resources and employment opportunities for Alaska's youth. The annual education conference also acquaints youth with vocational training programs, apprenticeship opportunities as well as Alaska's Job Corps program. For youth in other regions that are unable to attend the annual education conference, their assigned Regional Independent Living Specialist can provide resources, training, and referrals to eligible youth.

**6. *Make available vouchers for education and training, including postsecondary training and education, to youths who have aged out of foster care***

Youth that have been in state or tribal custody for at least six months after their 16th birthday, youth that have exited foster care as adults, or who were adopted or entered a guardianship after age 16½ and have obtained either a high school diploma or a GED, qualify for Education and Training Voucher (ETV) funds. To date, all youth who applied for funding and met the requirements, received ETV funding. Assistance in applying for ETV funds is provided by the Regional Independent Living Specialists and the Independent Living grantee. The Independent Living Program Coordinator is responsible for ensuring payments are made to the qualified postsecondary training and/or college.

During the past school year (9/08-present), youth receive ETV or University Support; 11 were new recipients and 21 were on-going.

**7. *Provide the services to youth who, after attaining 16 years of age, have left foster care for kinship guardianship or adoption***

Alaska serves all youth who have either exited foster care after age 18 or entered into adoption or guardianship after reaching the age of 16½.

***Serving Youth Across the State***

***Ensure that all political subdivisions in the State are appropriately served by the program.***

The Office of Children's Services is divided into four regions. Each region has a Regional Independent Living Specialist assigned to work with youth. 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 training for the youth and alumni that reside in the Anchorage area. In order to expand training to youth that live in other areas of the state, plans are in place to provide the PAL training via three day "lock-ins" in rural hub communities. This will allow youth from smaller villages to fly into a hub city rather than paying for travel costs to send youth to Anchorage. Another alternative allows youth to complete life skills training by DVDs. Efforts will continue to include youth in tribal custody as part of Alaska's IL Program.

***Serving Youth of Various Ages and States of Achieving Independence***

***Describe how youth of various ages and at various states of achieving independence are to be served; describe how the State is serving specific age groups; and identify any State statutory or administrative barriers which need to be eliminated or amended to allow the State to serve a broader range of eligible youth.***

Alaska has not identified any statutory or administrative barriers that impact providing services to youth. The youth's assigned RILS provides information about the IL Program and provides assistance in identifying and accessing needed services.

Due to lower case loads in the Northern and Southeast Regional offices, the RILS in these regions, often times attend administrative reviews on all youth in care and in out of home placement age 14 and older. Although, these youth do not meet Independent Living Program eligibility criteria, the RILS can provide information to all case participants. The Ansell Casey Life Skills Assessment is also available to youth of all ages to help identify the youth's strengths and needs in terms of their life skills attainment. The RILS are available to provide instructions on this activity if a youth or worker is interested. All RILS participate in reviews on all youth age 16 and older, who are in care and in out of home placement. Again, during these reviews, the RILS provide information on IL services and funding available to the youth.

For youth age 15 and older, life skills training classes are available. At age 15, youth are eligible to attend the states Preparation for Adult Living (PAL) life skills classes. Youth who participate and complete this life skills training curriculum are provided with a \$150 stipend for their attendance, participation, and completion of the program. Youth who live in the Anchorage area who have completed the PAL curriculum are then invited to participate in post PAL trainings. Youth who live in the hub office areas, of Fairbanks, Wasilla, and Juneau are invited to participate in ongoing life skills training classes provided through the RILS in those offices. Youth who complete an on-going life skills training class are paid a \$25 stipend.

In addition, for youth age 16 and older, it is state policy that the youth participate in the Ansell Casey Life Skills Assessment for information gathering purposes. The results of this assessment are then recorded in the case file and are to become a part of the youth's case plan. Also for youth age 16 and older, the RILS, case worker, and youth will meet to develop an exit plan specifically addressing the strengths and needs of the youth in regards to their transitional living goals. Youth age 16 and older are also provided the opportunity to participate in life skills correspondence trainings. This provides youth who are unable to attend in person trainings with the opportunity to learn and gain life skills.

All qualified youth who have a high school diploma or a GED are eligible for ETV funds. In addition, youth up to age 23 are eligible for ETV funds provided they began their education prior to turning 21 years. For youth still in state custody, assistance may include funding for categories such as education, employment, extra-curricular activities, and cultural events. For foster care alumni, often times services are needed to assist alumni to achieve post-secondary education, housing, and employment. IL funds are available to meet these needs and are available for such diverse purchases as transportation, emergency food, and initial housing needs (cleaning supplies, basic furniture. etc.). Alaska's IL Program provides short term housing as described below.

### **Room and Board**

***States are required to certify that no more than 30 percent of their allotment of Federal funds will be expended for room and board for youth who left foster care because they attained 18 years of age but have not yet attained 21 years of age. The***

***State must have developed a reasonable definition of “room and board” and provide the definition in the CFSP. Also include a description of the approach(as) being used to make room and board available to youth ages 18 through 20.***

Alaska’s IL Program defines room and board as short term financial assistance for housing costs used for youth to access or maintain stable housing. One time only financial assistance is available for crisis housing. Short term emergency funds are available for the purchase of food.

The IL Program provides short term housing for qualified youth that are employed, attending training, or actively seeking employment. The funding is allocated at 100% of housing costs for the first two months or 100% of housing costs for one month plus 100% of housing deposit. An additional two months of housing costs can be accessed at 50% of the costs for one month, and at 25% of the costs for one month. Crisis housing assistance is available one time only and cannot exceed the amount of one month’s housing costs. Alaska has never exceeded 30% of the Federal allotment.

Obtaining adequate housing can be a major problem for youth leaving custody due to high costs and limited availability. The IL Program collaborates with the Transitional Living Program and the Alaska Housing Finance Corporation to strategize ways to acquire housing for homeless youth. Efforts include assisting youth in completing necessary documentation and supporting organizations in their attempt to attain additional funding for the homeless population.

Foster care alumni can receive IL funds for emergency food while they seek access to food stamps. The funding is limited to \$100 per month for no more than three months.

### **Medicaid Coverage**

***Describe how the State has used, or is coordinating efforts to use, the option to expand Medicaid to provide services to youth ages 18 to 20 years old that have aged out of foster care. If the State does not choose to provide Medicaid to all young people under the age of 21 who were in foster care under the State’s responsibility on their eighteenth birthday, the State should describe what “reasonable categories” of children it has chosen to provide Medicaid services to, if any.***

For children in custody who are eligible for Title IV-E and associated Medicaid, Title IV-E eligibility ends at age 18 unless they are expected to graduate from high school by their 19th birthday, in which case eligibility ends at the end of the month that they graduate. For children in custody who are not Title IV-E eligible, a determination is made whether they would be eligible for Alaska’s “Denali Kid Care” (DKC) program or "Under 21" Medicaid program. A Medicaid eligible child who is released from custody remains Medicaid eligible for 12 months after custody was released, but this "continuous eligibility" cannot extend past the end of the month that the child turns 19 (*continuous eligibility was extended from 6 months to 12 months effective 4/1/09*). A youth may remain in state custody until age 20 and may be eligible for DKC Medicaid (up to age 19) or "Under 21" Medicaid (up to age 21) after Medicaid coverage based on custody or Medicaid coverage based on continuous eligibility ends.

Over 60% of youth in state custody are Alaska Native, which allow these youth to access free medical services through Indian Health Services. A bill was put forth in Alaska Legislature in 2009 expanding Medicaid to foster care alumni, however, the bill has not yet passed.

### **Trust Funds**

***Describe the design of the State's trust fund program for youth, if applicable.***

Alaska does not offer a state trust fund. Alaska does have a permanent fund dividend program. When a dividend is received on behalf of a youth it is placed in a trust account and released after the age of 18 with a court order. These funds may be released if the youth needs assistance that OCS is unable to provide, however, court action is required to release any funding during their time in care.

### **Education and Training Vouchers Program**

***Describe the State's methods of operating the voucher program efficiently and provide assurance that the State will comply with the specified conditions.***

When a youth reaches 17 years of age, an exit plan will be developed. The RILS will use this opportunity to discuss post-secondary education and ETV funds. When a youth wishes to access ETV funds, a packet is completed and submitted to the RILS to ensure the youth meets the qualifications. The RILS are available to assist youth to complete the application packet if needed. The packet is reviewed by the RILS and the Independent Living Program Coordinator. If the youth meets the qualifications, funds are sent to the qualified post-secondary education and training center to cover the cost of tuition, fees, books, room and board. As mentioned above, Alaska has been able to fund all ETV applicants to date. During the past school year (9/08-present), there were 21 on-going youth and 11 new youth that received ETV or university support.

### **Consultation and Collaboration with Tribes**

***Describe how the State consulted and coordinated with a wide range of stakeholders, including youth, other Federal and State programs for youth, and Tribes. Specifically describe how the State consulted and coordinated with each Indian tribe in the State to ensure that benefits and services under Chafee will be available to Indian children on the same basis as to other children. Address each specific area identified in the PI about which States are to consult and coordinate.***

In order to ensure Chafee benefits and services are available to Native children in tribal custody, the IL Program sought the names of those tribes in Alaska that had adolescent youth in tribal custody and asked their involvement to develop a process to enable their youth access to IL and ETV funds. Meetings have been held annually with letters and emails to follow up. These meetings are scheduled to continue on an annual basis to determine the effectiveness of the process. In addition to seeking tribal input, the IL Program seeks input from the state's youth advisory group, Facing Foster Care in Alaska. In the upcoming years, the IL Coordinator will attend the TSCG meetings in Juneau to discuss the available services.

### **Determining Eligibility for Benefits and Services**

***Address how the State will use objective criteria to determine eligibility benefits and services, and for ensuring fair and equitable treatment of benefit recipients.***

In order to be eligible for independent living services, Alaska has established that youth must be in foster care for six consecutive months after turning 16 years of age. This criteria was established due to the limited funds available to finance the program and the number of youth that qualify. Youth in foster care, youth who have exited foster care to guardianships or adoption after age 16½, youth in tribal custody who have reached age 16½, and alumni of foster care who exited foster care as adults also qualify for independent living services. This includes youth in tribal and state custody. Although more community resources are available for IL recipients in the larger areas, funds are dispersed based on need.

### **Training**

***Provide information on specific training planned for FY 2010 – 2014 in support of the goals and objectives of the State’s CFCIP. This information may be incorporated into the training plan section of the CFSP, and noted as CFCIP training.***

The Regional Independent Living Specialists will continue to provide training to OCS staff in their region. RILS also recruit youth and alumni to participate in the training. New staff orientation includes training on the needs of IL youth and the resources available to youth at Covenant House Alaska in the Anchorage region. The IL Program will work with the resource family training grantee to further incorporate independent living components into their training curriculum. The RILS will work with FFCA to recruit youth panels to assist in training foster parents in their regions. The IL Program will offer to training to CASA volunteers and Guardians ad Litem at the annual CASA/GAL conference as well as hold trainings as requested by the community and regional offices. Additionally, training related to adolescent development, the effects of abuse and neglect on child and adolescent development and interviewing skills with children, adolescents and families are included in SKILS and are further defined in Appendix B – Training Plans.

### **Preparation to Implement National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD)**

***Describe the steps the State has taken and plans to take in preparation for NYTD implementation.***

The Independent Living Program Coordinator and OCS data staff have attended both NYTD conferences. All youth that will be part of the first cohort will be surveyed. In an effort to ensure that youth age 19 and 21 complete the survey, IL staff will make individual contact after the survey has been mailed. Efforts are currently in progress to revise the method that IL activities are identified in the state’s SACWIS system, ORCA. All IL expenditures currently are documented in ORCA with the exception of the Covenant House Alaska grant and Reimbursable Services Agreements with the University.

A detailed IL work plan was developed in partnership with Facing Foster Care in Alaska and is included as Appendix F of this plan. The work plan will be updated and provided annually as part of the Child and Family Services Plan Annual Services Progress Report.

## ■ Section 6: Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act State Plan

### ***A. The program areas selected for improvement from the 14 areas delineated in section 106(a)(1) through (14) of CAPTA.***

The Department of Health and Social Services, Office of Children's Services (OCS) will use CAPTA grant funds to develop and implement projects that support and improve Alaska's child protective services system in area seven of the fourteen areas over the next five years. The Office of Children's Services will continue to focus on developing, strengthening and facilitating training.

- improving the skills, qualifications, and availability of individuals providing services to children and families, and the supervisors of such individuals, through the child protection system, including improvements in the recruitment and retention of caseworkers

### ***B. An outline of activities that the State intends to carry out with its State Grant funds pursuant to section 106(b)(2).***

The Department of Health and Social Services, Office of Children's Services (OCS) has partnered with the University of Alaska to develop and support the Family and Youth Services Training Academy (FYSTA). Over the next five years, OCS intends to use CAPTA grant funds to co-sponsor the FYSTA and provide training to OCS front line and supervisory personnel. Funding will allow the University of Alaska to develop curriculum in a multitude of areas to include intake, assessment, and safety decision-making through the life of the case. CAPTA funds will also support a modification of the core curriculum should other training needs be identified as a result of program or policy development.

With CAPTA grant funds, OCS intends to improve the skills and qualifications of OCS workers and law enforcement/judicial partners who provide services to children and families in the child protection system. OCS workers and partners will develop knowledge, understanding, awareness, and skills for interviewing children who are the alleged victims of child sexual abuse.

### ***C. A description of the services and trainings to be provided under the State Grant as required by section 106(b)(2)(c) of CAPTA.***

Appendix B illustrates the training curriculum offered through the University of Alaska Training Academy.

***D. The assurances form that has been completed and signed.***

Reference Appendix D.

***E. Substantive changes, if any, in State law that could affect eligibility.***

There are no statutory changes that are substantive and would affect eligibility.

***F. Any changes to the State's provisions and procedures for criminal background checks identified in the State's CFSP for prospective foster and adoptive parents and other adult relatives and non-relatives residing in the household.***

There are no changes to the state's provisions and procedures for criminal background checks.

***G. A request for FY2010 funds in the CFS-101, Part I and an estimate of expenditures in the CFS-101, Part II.***

Reference Appendix C.

## ■ Section 7: Additional Requirements

### ■ Quality Assurance System

The Office of Children's Services has implemented a program of continuous quality improvement (CQI). This program serves to incorporate and focus on a system of services to families which meets state and federal standards. All areas of practice are continuously examined to ensure that quality services are delivered to families and children.

A system of information gathering on practice as well as resource availability is operational. This system of information gathering serves as a base for the CQI program. The information gathered is compiled and results in regular on-going feedback on practice and resource needs to management, supervisors, and staff to ensure that programs provide quality services and that services are adjusted as indicated to meet the needs of the families.

The SACWIS system, ORCA, contains case management information outcomes on cases. A regular system of reports is disseminated as well as ad hoc reports are developed. This provides a continuous stream of information readily available to managers, supervisors, and staff.

A system of quality assurance reviews of case records is maintained which is based on the federal child and family services review model. For each field office review, a random sample of cases is drawn, and the federal child and family services instrument is used. A formal report is developed for each review and a debriefing is held with the field office. This provides management with a system of information on which they can base programmatic changes. This review system identifies systemic elements which are of concern as well as providing some individual case feedback.

An annual plan is developed to ensure that the system of quality assurance reviews is conducted throughout the state. This plan sets a schedule for quality assurance reviews of cases in field offices throughout the state. On-site visits are conducted for the larger field offices with cases mailed into the evaluation unit for review of the smaller field offices.

A standardized system for reviewing the implementation of the safety assessment process is in place. A peer quality review process is conducted by supervisors working in pairs to review the quality of randomly selected completed safety assessments. In addition, the Quality Assurance Team completes a review on a monthly basis of a sample to monitor compliance. Both the managers and quality assurance reviews are compiled in a report presenting statewide data, which is distributed to management and supervisors.

A plan is developed which provides for input from stakeholders on at least an annual basis. Surveys are carried out for the judicial community, tribal groups, licensed foster parents, unlicensed relative caregivers, community providers, and consumers. In addition, the annual survey of the Office of Children's Services staff is carried out by the evaluation unit. The reports of these activities are posted on the OCS website as well as the individual reports are distributed to managers and staff.

Each region has a CQI Committee. This committee is comprised of tribal representatives, consumers, providers, and community members. This committee is joined by regional management staff and serves to provide an outside perspective in examining the quality of services. The committee is provided with regular data reports and program information. The committees meet at least quarterly and documentation is kept of their processes and recommendations.

Coordination efforts to ensure that the on-site review process maintains a relationship with the administrative review process continues. The system for administrative reviews provides for reviews which are scheduled for ninety days from the date of removal and every six months thereafter. The Evaluation Unit Manager (who is the statewide manager for quality assurance) meets monthly with the administrative reviewers from throughout the state via teleconference. This provides a flow of information from the administrative review system into the quality assurance system to maintain an ongoing system of continuous quality improvement.

In order to track supervisor/social worker utilization and completion of administrative review recommendations a system for “flagging” cases which need action is in place. If a need for specific case activities is identified during the review, an electronic notice will be sent to the supervisor. This review feedback is also received by the worker who attends the review. The case review is documented in the case record by the administrative review facilitator. This documentation includes the recommendations from the group.

Goals and objectives that address OCS’ quality assurance system are included in Section 2 of this plan.

## **Evaluation and Technical Assistance**

The Office of Children’s Services continues to receive technical assistance from the National Resource Center for Child Protection Services as work on the new practice model continues. Technical assistance was received during the development of the Child and Family Services Review Statewide Self Assessment and other CFSR related activities.

Technical assistance will be sought during the implementation of the Program Improvement Plan from the National Resource Center for Child Protective Services, the National Resource Center on Permanency Planning, Casey Family Programs, Annie E. Casey Foundation, the National Resource Center for Organizational Improvement, Western and Pacific Implementation Center and the National Resource Center for Child Welfare Data and Technology.

## **Timely Home Studies Reporting and Data**

Under Public Law 109-239, “the term ‘interstate home study’ means a home study conducted by a State at the request of another State, to facilitate an adoptive or foster placement in the State of a child in foster care under the responsibility of the State.”

The law does not cover home study requests for parents; the law went into effect October 1, 2006.

The Alaska Interstate Compact Office is staffed by a Deputy Compact Administrator and Clerk. The Alaska ICPC office utilizes an ICPC database, the state SACWIS system (ORCA), spreadsheets and physical files to keep records and track the progress of each case. Upon receipt of an ICPC home study and placement request, the case is entered into the ICPC database and assigned to an Alaska social worker using ORCA. Transmittals are attached to each request stating what type of study is needed and when the study is due, even, if a placement recommendation cannot be given yet. In some cases, adoption home study requests are assigned to contracted adoption agencies by the assigned social worker. The AK ICPC office tracks the progress of the studies using a spreadsheet for each of the four state regions. Reminders regarding the due dates are sent out every other month.

**FY 06-07 (October 1, 2006 – September 30, 2007)**

88	Total number foster and adopt home study requests received
07	Number of requests withdrawn
81	Total number of foster and adopt home studies completed
26 (30%)	Total number of requests completed in 60 days or less
07 (10%)	Additional requests completed in 61 –75 days
48 (60%)	Number completed in over 75 days

Frequency with which the State needed the 60day deadline extended to 75 days: 70%

Reasons why the extended compliance period was needed:

Beyond agency's control:

- Placement resource relocation
- Placement resource marital problems
- Fingerprint results pending
- Travel delays to remote wilderness areas and communities

Within agency's control:

- Case Assignments Errors
  - To contractor in error
  - Delays in field worker assignments
- Inequitable distribution of assignments to workers
- Delays in submission of completed home studies to ICPC office
  - Time spent waiting for signatures (contractor and field supervisors)

The extent to which the extended compliance period resulted in the resolution of the circumstances that necessitated the extension: 10%

Action taken by the state and any relevant Federal agency to resolve the need for an extended compliance period:

- Designated staff for ICPC in Southcentral field office
- On-Site training and technical assistance
- ICPC office home study tracking / reminders to the assigned workers

**FY 07-08 (October 1, 2007 – September 30, 2008)**

75	Total foster and adopt home study requests received
04	Number of requests withdrawn
71	Total foster and adopt home studies completed
21 (30%)	Total number of requests completed in 60 days or less
10 (10%)	Additional requests completed in 61 –75 days
40 (56%)	Home studies completed after 75 days

Frequency with which the State needed the 60 day deadline extended to 75 days: 70%

Reasons why the extended compliance period was needed:

Beyond agency’s control:

- Placement resource relocation
- Placement resource marital problems
- Fingerprint results pending.
- Travel delays to remote wilderness areas and communities.
- Additional sibling added mid process.
- CPS history in another state, additional documentation needed.
- Home visit scheduling problems, family vacations & work schedules.
- Pending CPS investigations.

Within agency’s control:

- Delays in submission of completed home studies to ICPC office.
  - Time spent waiting for signatures (contractor and field supervisors)
- Inequitable distribution of assignments to workers

The extent to which the extended compliance period resulted in the resolution of the circumstances that necessitated the extension: 10%

Action taken by the state and any relevant federal agency to resolve the need for an extended compliance period:

- Individual one-to-one training and assistance from AK ICPC office
- Due date reminders provided every other month
- On-Site training and technical assistance

## **Juvenile Justice Transfers**

The following table represents the number of children released to the Division of Juvenile Justice due to a legal determination. The reporting population is derived from the ORCA Table “Court Disposition” with a legal status of “Released – DJJ custody” for the respective fiscal years.

### Children Released to DJJ Custody

FFY 2008	FFY 2009 partial 10/1/08-5/12/09
25	11

## ■ Intercountry Adoptions

Based on the federal reporting standards outlined in the ACF Child Welfare Policy Manual, the State of Alaska has not received any reports of disrupted or dissolved adoptions for children adopted internationally during FFY08.

During FFY 2009, OCS developed a purchase of services option for children with high needs and who are free for adoption. These services are primarily utilized for children who are adopted through our Alaska Adoption Exchange in out-of-state placements, and require ongoing post-adoption services and support from a child placement agency. During the next five years, OCS will be expanding this service to adoptive families in Alaska. Currently, the program is a service through the Subsidized Adoption Program in Alaska and supports post-adoption supports to families.

To date, the number of children in the custody of OCS who are adopted overseas have been very low. Typically, adoptive families who adopt overseas are generally military families. As such these families are referred to the military family support services programs for additional adoption and post-adoption support services.

## ■ Child Welfare Waiver Demonstration Projects

Not Applicable to Alaska at this time.

## ■ Monthly Case Worker Visit Data

### Monthly Caseworker Visit Data and State Plan Requirements

How the State will use the additional funds under IV-B 2 to support monthly caseworker visits with children who in foster care.

Alaska received a total of \$20,574 in IV-B 2 for FFY09 to support monthly caseworker visits with children in foster care. The funds were used to pay for the travel costs associated with monthly caseworker visits in the Southcentral Region. The total SFY09 cost was \$99,300.

The procedures developed to track and report caseworker visit data; goals and strategies

Caseworker visit data is tracked and reported through ORCA. In an effort to better document caseworker visits, ORCA was modified in 2008 to provide more in depth reporting fields to assist in accurate tracking of caseworker visits with children and

parents. Guidance on proper ORCA documentation of visits was provided to all staff. These reports are provided to all regions on a monthly basis in order for managers to work with staff to increase caseworker visits. A major focus of Alaska Program Improvement Plan is to increase the frequency and quality of caseworker visits. Strategy A.2.3, illustrates the action steps that will be implemented to ensure that case worker visits meet the goals listed below.

Alaska has recalculated the monthly caseworker visit goals based on the number of children who were visited each and every full calendar month that they were reported to be in foster care during the FY period from October 1 through September 30 per federal directive of May 2009. Alaska's goals for FFY08 through FFY11 are as follows:

Federal Fiscal Year	Percentage of Caseworker Visits
2007	3.1%
2008	4.0%
2009	10.0%
2010	50.0%
2011	90.0%

During FFY07 and FFY08, Alaska's caseworker visit rates were 3.1% and 4.7% respectively.

The State standards for content and frequency of caseworker visits which ensure children are visited on a monthly basis.

Current state policy regarding the frequency and content of visitation provides that parents and children must be visited once every 30 days. Certain cases will require higher levels of contact, which is determined by many factors including case status, age of the child, parent's protective capacity, identified safety threats and risk factors, client need, and best practice standards.

## Licensing Waivers

In accordance with P.L. 110-351, Alaska will provide following information regarding the use of licensing waivers and variances by December 15, 2009.

- the number and percentage of children in foster care placed in licensed relative foster family homes
- the number and percentage of children in foster care placed in unlicensed relative foster family homes

- the frequency of case-by-case waivers of non-safety licensing standards for relative foster family homes
- the types of non-safety licensing standards waived
- an assessment of how such case-by-case waivers of non-safety licensing standards have affected children in foster care, including their safety, permanency and well-being
- reasons why relative foster family homes may not be licensed despite authority to grant such case-by-case waivers of non-safety licensing standards
- actions the state plans to take or is considering taking in order to increase the percentage of relative foster family homes that are licensed while ensuring the safety of children in foster care and improving their permanence and well-being
- suggestions the state has for administrative and or legislative actions to increase licensed relative care

## ■ Health Care Services Plan

Alaska's goal is to ensure a coordinated strategy to identify and respond to the health care needs of children in foster care placements, including mental health and dental health needs.

### ***How we address the Components of a Health Care Services Plan:***

The following is the schedule for initial and follow-up health screenings that meet reasonable standards of medical practice:

1. When a child has been taken into custody and is placed out-of-home, the worker will provide the out-of-home care provider with an EPSDT Guidelines and Periodicity Schedule (D-090) at the time of placement.
2. The out-of-home care provider will arrange for an initial EPSDT screening to be completed within thirty days of the placement. At the time of the screening, the out-of-home care provider will provide the medical provider with an EPSDT Guidelines and Periodicity Schedule.
3. For children in custody who are placed at home, the assigned worker will inform the parents about the availability of EPSDT services and the benefits of preventive care.

### ***How health needs identified through screenings will be monitored and treated:***

1. The medical provider will give EPSDT exam results and recommendations to the out-of-home care provider and the out-of-home care provider will ensure that the assigned worker receives a copy of the results and recommendations.

2. The worker follows up on recommendations for treatment and/or further assessment. Follow-up includes arranging for recommended treatment identified by the EPSDT screening whether or not the treatment is covered by Medicaid.
3. It is recommended that administrative reviewers will include EPSDT exams in their file reviews and medical exams and follow-up will be included on the case transfer checklists in each region. This recommendation is an action item included in Section 2 – Goals and Objectives.

***How medical information will be updated and appropriately shared, which may include the development and implementation of an electronic health record:***

1. When a child is placed out-of-home, the most recent information available regarding the child’s medical and mental health history is given to the out-of-home care provider.
2. Upon receipt of the EPSDT exam results and recommendations, the assigned worker will enter the results in ORCA and place the hard copy in section 1 of the case file.
3. The assigned worker ensures that at a minimum the following information is entered in ORCA:
  - The date of the EPSDT screening is entered on the Medical Profile page;
  - All conditions identified in the EPSDT screenings are summarized under “Health Problems” on the Medical Profile page; and
  - All recommended and provided treatment is summarized in a Medical case note. If the treatment is ongoing it should be included in the child’s case plan.
4. OCS complies with the HIPAA confidentiality requirements

***Steps to ensure continuity of health care services, which may include establishing a medical home for every child in care:***

The EPSDT Workgroup recommends that a child stay with his medical home whenever possible. This is currently not addressed specifically in OCS policy, other than on the Consent for Emergency and Routine Medical Care (06-9716) form - the form includes the names and phone numbers of the child medical providers and instructions that the providers should be used “if practical”. This will be included in Section 2 – Goals and Objectives once the action items related to this topic are identified.

It is further recommended that the following policy be added to CPS Manual section 6.3.1: “To ensure continuity of health care services for children in out-of-home care, every effort will be made to ensure that services continue to be provided by the same medical providers as prior to the child’s removal from home.” This will be included in Section 2 – Goals and Objectives.

***How we actively consult with and involve physicians or other appropriate medical or non-medical professionals in assessing the health and well-being of children in foster care and in determining appropriate medical treatment for the children:***

Consultation is provided for each individual child in custody. On a policy level, the EPSDT Workgroup is addressing currently these issues. For example, the OCS Workgroup drafted the recommendations for the EPSDT process and the Program Coordinator consulted with the State EPSDT Workgroup.

**OCS EPSDT Workgroup Members:**

Coleen Turner, Children's Services Manager, Northern Region  
Margit Garry, Social Worker IV, Homer  
Sara Childress, Staff Manager, Anchorage  
Caroline Bruschi, Social Worker IV, Southeast Region  
Shirley Pittz, Program Officer, Anchorage

**State EPSDT Workgroup Members:**

Faith Allard, State Medicare Rural Hospital Flex Program Manager, Division of Health Care Services  
Stephanie Wrightsman-Birch, Section Chief, Women's, Children and Family Health, Title V and CSHCN Director, Division of Public Health  
Jerry Fuller, Medicaid Director, Division of Health Care Services  
Jeri Powers, Medicaid Assistance Program Manager, Division of Health Care Services  
Cindy Christensen, Practitioner Relations Program Manager, Division of Health Care Services  
Barbara Hale, Children's Health Insurance Program Managers, Division of Health Care Services, Office of Medicaid & Health Care Policy  
Nancy Cornwell, Medicaid Assistance Administrator, Division of Health Care Services  
Sarah Hargrave, QA/QI Nurse Consultant, Division of Public Health, Public Health Nursing Program  
Renee Gayhart, Tribal Health Program Manager, Division of Health Care Services, Office of Medicaid and Health Care Policy  
Shirley Pittz, Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems Program Officer, Office of Children's Service

## **Disaster Plan**

Alaska is currently modifying the current disaster plan. OCS implemented parts of the disaster plan in May 2009 with the annual spring flooding in many Alaska villages and communities. From this experience, OCS is currently working on modifying the disaster plan to more accurately meet the needs of families and children. Reference Appendix A for a copy of the current plan.

## ■ Training Plan

The University of Alaska Anchorage School of Social Work, under contract with OCS, operates the Family & Youth Services Training Academy (FYSTA). FYSTA provides ongoing statewide training, education, and certification in child welfare to OCS child protection employees, tribal, and community partners, who will provide and/or direct services to abused and neglected children under OCS supervision. Newly hired child protective services caseworkers and staff are required to attend four weeks of intensive Child Welfare training. This training is provided in separate two-week increments allowing for the participant to have one month of field orientation between sessions to maximize the transfer of learning. This initial training is followed by additional advanced training courses that are completed within the first year of employment.

FYSTA and OCS are also partnered to provide specialized training to our front line supervisory staff. OCS recognizes the pivotal role supervisors play in achieving strong outcomes for our families. This curriculum totals seven classroom days provided in a split structure over a three-month timeframe. Supervisors engage in active dialogue and learning about management styles, effective leadership, and the role of the coach in child welfare while also having valuable time to learn from their peers that form statewide connections.

The quality and depth of training provided to child welfare staff in the State of Alaska has greatly improved over the last five years. Alaska is now in line with training standards across the country and continues to invest time, resources, and evaluation methods to monitor and identify ways to enhance all of our training programs. A copy of the training plan is included in Appendix B.

Alaska Center for Resource Families (ACRF) provides training to all unlicensed relatives, licensed foster families, adoptive and guardianship families. Training services are not limited to families through the Office of Children's Services; families who are referred through private agencies or are self-referred receive services through the ACRF. ACRF provides trainings in the following training categories:

1. Orientation: Held jointly with the Office of Children's Services licensing staff. This orientation serves as an introduction to all prospective and new resource families interested in caring for children in custody. Training hours are not attached to the orientation, but all families are encouraged to attend.
2. CORE training: CORE training is the pre-service training for all new resource families with the OCS. The CORE training is an eight session training curriculum that totals 16 credit hours upon completion. The training covers the following topic areas:
  - a. Understanding the Office of Children's Services
  - b. Foster Parenting
  - c. Adoption and Legal Guardianship
  - d. Impacts of Child Abuse and Neglect
  - e. Positive Parenting
  - f. Cultural Considerations
  - g. Birth Family, Relative Care, and Keeping Connections

- h. Adolescents and Independent Living Skills
  - i. Training and Foster Parent Resources
3. Specialized trainings: Currently the ACRF offers 120 courses in specialized topics covering a broad spectrum on information and needs for resource families. Attached to the CFSP is the ACRF lending library listing that outlines all trainings currently available for specialized training for resource families.
  4. Alternative trainings: Resource families may receive credit for trainings that they receive from other tribal and community based training resources. Examples of alternative trainings include: Tribal parenting courses, first aid and critical response trainings, child-specific trainings tied to the child's case plan, such as individual education plans or mental health trainings, to name a few. The resource family is required to submit a certificate of completion and an outline of the course taken to determine the appropriate number of credit hours. ACRF tracks all training hours through a training database and reports completed training hours to the OCS on a quarterly basis.

ACRF provides training in various learning formats: On-site trainings at the four regional ACRF office locations, self-study modules available to families through the mail, web-based trainings that are available through the ACRF website ([www.acrf.org](http://www.acrf.org)), and telephonic trainings to rural Alaska families. Reference Appendix B for the ACRF training matrix.

At this time OCS has not created a new trainee group under Title IV-E. However, OCS will continue to support Alaska's stakeholder's participation in existing trainings. As Alaska moves forward with implementation of the Program Improvement Plan and this plan, new trainee groups may be developed.

## Adoption Incentive Payments

Should the OCS receive adoption incentive funds between FFY 2010 to 2014, the OCS will utilize the funds to expand adoption homestudy services, adoption subsidy, child and family preparation trainings to the field and regional staffs, provide specialized training opportunities to adoption staffs, and/or enhance post-adoption support services for families.

## Financial Information

### 1. Payment Limitations – Title IV-B, Subpart I

States may not spend more Title IV-B, Subpart I funds for child care, foster care maintenance and adoption assistance payments in FFY2010 than the state expended for those purposes in FFY2005.

Alaska spent no FFY2005 Title IV-B, Subpart I funds for child care, foster care maintenance and adoption assistance payments.

The amount of state expenditures of non-federal funds for foster care maintenance payments that may be used as match for the FFY2010 Title IV-B, Subpart I award may not exceed the amount of such non-federal expenditures applied as State match for Title IV-B, Subpart I in FFY2005.

Alaska used no non-federal funds for foster care maintenance payment as match for the FFY2005 Title IV-B, Subpart I award.

States may spend no more than ten percent of Title IVB, Subpart I funds for administrative costs.

Alaska spent no Title IV-B, Subpart I funds for administrative costs.

## **2. Payment Limitations – Title IV-B, Subpart II**

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

As illustrated in the Appendix C, CFS-101, Part III, Alaska spent:

\$248,780 or 31% of its FFY2007 award on Family Preservation services.

\$173,953 or 22% of its FFY2007 award on Community-Based Family Support services.

\$160,219 or 20% of its FFY2007 award on Time-Limited Family Reunification services.

\$170,204 or 21% of its FFY2007 award on Adoption Promotion and Support services.

States may spend no more than ten percent of Title IVB, Subpart II funds for administrative costs.

As illustrated in Appendix C, CFS-101, Part III, Alaska spent \$47,742 or 6% of its FFY2007 award on administrative costs.

## **3. FFY2009 Funding – Revised Budget Request**

If the state has been allocated for FY2009 and wishes to receive more funds than its previously submitted CFS101 for FY2009 indicated, it must submit a revised FFY2009 budget form.

Alaska will submit a revised FFY2009 budget form should unneeded portions of other State allocations of Title IVB, CFCIP and ETV funds be reallocated to other states.

If the state intends to release or apply for funds for reallocation for the Title IVB, Subpart II program, the CFCIP or the ETV program, please note the amounts you are releasing or requesting on the appropriate lines of the FFY2009 CFS101.

Reference Appendix C, CFS101, Part I.

#### **4. FFY2010 Budget Request – CFS101**

Complete Part I of the CFS101 form to request Title IVB, Subpart I and Title IVB, Subpart II, CAPTA, CFCIP and ETV funds.

Reference Appendix C, CFS101, Part I.

Complete 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.

Reference Appendix C, CFS101, Part II.

Use the FFY2010 estimated allotment as the basis for budget requests for the Monthly Caseworker Visits funds under Title IVB, Subpart II.

Reference Appendix C, CFS101, Part II.

#### **5. FFY2007 Title IVB Expenditure Report – CFS101, Part III**

Complete the CFS101, Part III to include the actual amount of funds expended in each program area of Title IVB funding by source, the number of individuals and families served, and the geographic service area within which the services were provided.

Reference Appendix C, CFS101, Part III.