

2017

Annual PROGRESS & SERVICES Report



State of Alaska • Department of Health & Social Services
Office of Children Services

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SECTION 1: GENERAL INFORMATION

This is the second update to Alaska’s 2015-2019 Child and Family Services Plan (CFSP). This document addresses the requirements of ACYF-CB-PI-16-03 and is designed to provide an annual report of progress made towards accomplishing the goals and objectives of the CFSP, the CAPTA update, and the CFS 101, parts I, II, and III.

OVERVIEW

The Governor of Alaska has designated the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS) as the single state agency responsible for administering Child Welfare Services (title IV-B, subpart I), Promoting Safe and Stable Families (title IV-B, subpart II), Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA), and Chafee Foster Care Independence and Education & Training Vouchers (ETV).

The Office of Children’s Services (OCS) has administrative responsibility for the development and implementation of the CFSP, including all policies and procedures relating to child protection services in Alaska. In addition, OCS has been responsible for administration of the Early Intervention Programs and Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems Planning.

The CFSP is a five year strategic plan that sets forth the goals and objectives needed to strengthen the overall child welfare system in Alaska. Alaska’s plan for 2015-2019 was submitted June 30, 2014, and was approved November 6, 2014. The CFRS Round 3 is scheduled for Alaska in 2017; Alaska has requested to complete a self administered CFRS. Currently, the State of Alaska is not currently under a Program Improvement Plan (PIP) for any programs. In November 2015, Alaska is successfully completed a title IV-E audit, and was not required to develop a PIP. Like most public child welfare agencies, Alaska has seen a dramatic increase in the number of children and families served and in out of home placement since 2014.

Alaska has a disproportionate number of Alaskan Native children involved in the child welfare system. Alaskan Native children are the subject of a disproportionate number of child abuse reports, substantiated reports of abuse/neglect, and custody/placement into foster care. Consequently, the OCS dedicates time and resources towards nurturing our relationships with Tribal partners, developing practice and policy strategies to increase Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) compliance, targeted Alaskan Native foster home recruitment, and the purchase of culturally-appropriate family support services. Many of these strategies will be highlighted throughout this report. Additionally, the impacts of social challenges such as homelessness, substance abuse, poverty, and other factors has only added to the significant challenges that OCS faces every day with families. The table below shows OCS’ statistics on the increased numbers of children in out-of-home care for one or more days during the calendar year:

Table 1: Count of Children in Out-of-Home Placement during each of the last Five Calendar Years

Region	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Anchorage	994	1,059	1,176	1,322	1,580
Northern	465	422	510	575	671
Southcentral	710	716	723	832	926
Southeast	239	245	251	255	269
Western	327	339	243	277	281
Alaska, unique count (includes children in Trial Home Visits)	2,733	2,776	2,902	3,254	3,723

Source: State of Alaska (SOA) Online Resources for Children in Alaska (ORCA) Report Children in Out of Home Placement RR00161

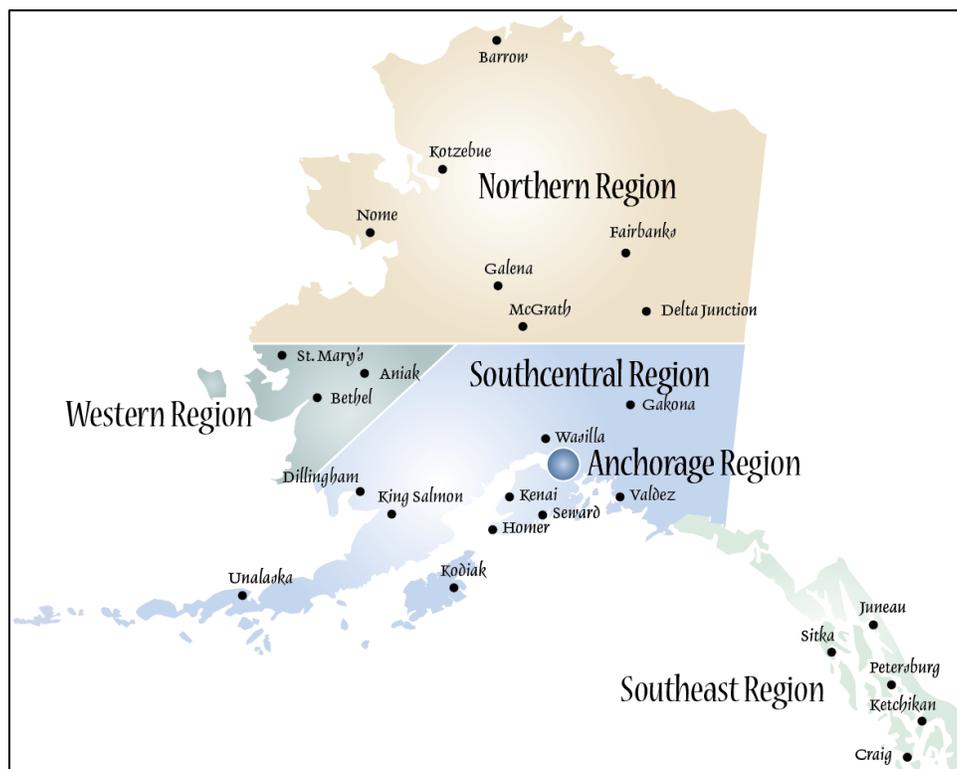
During the past two years, Alaska has faced a significant and profound budgetary crisis which has presented additional challenges for OCS during this past year. While OCS has not made significant cuts in services, the Governor’s Office has encouraged state departments to look at doing “less with less.” To this end, OCS is working diligently with the larger DHSS to find cross-cutting efficiencies and efforts to streamline direct services and resources for children and families. The State of Alaska is progressing with these efficiencies (both programmatic and budgetary) through the Results-Based Accountability and Budgeting processes.

AGENCY STRUCTURE

2015 Update: The Director has overall responsibility for the administration of the OCS. The Deputy Director is responsible for statewide program management and the Division Operations Manager oversees field operations. The OCS operates Alaska's state administered child protection services and is organized into five geographic regions, with 24 (staffed) field offices statewide. A Protective Services Manager II administers each OCS service Region:

- The Anchorage Regional Office (ARO) is responsible for the Municipality of Anchorage and the communities of Eagle River, Chugiak, and Whittier.
- The Northern Regional Office (NRO) is located in Fairbanks and is responsible for management of the Fairbanks, Nome, Kotzebue, Barrow, Galena, McGrath, and Delta Junction field offices and the surrounding areas. The Galena office is no longer a staffed office, but the community continues to be served by Northern Region staff.
- The Southcentral Regional Office (SCRO) is located in Wasilla and is responsible for management of the Wasilla, Kenai, Valdez, Kodiak, Dillingham, Homer, King Salmon, Gakona, Seward, and Unalaska field offices and the surrounding areas. The Unalaska office is no longer a staffed office, but the community continues to be served by Southcentral Region staff.
- The Southeastern Regional Office (SERO) is located in Juneau and is responsible for management of the Juneau, Craig, Sitka, Petersburg and Ketchikan field offices and the surrounding areas.
- The Western Regional Office (WRO) is located in Bethel and is responsible for management of the Bethel, St. Mary's, Aniak, Dillingham, King Salmon, Homer, Seward, Valdez, Kodiak, and Unalaska field offices and the surrounding areas.

2016 Update: There have been no changes in agency structure since the 2016 APSR was submitted; see map below.



*OCS no longer has staff based in Galena and Unalaska. Both communities are served by other field offices in NRO and SCRO.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES, MISSION AND VISION STATEMENT

OCS' Practice Model provides guidance with the following guiding principles:

- A child's safety is paramount.

- A determination that safety threats are present within a family does not equate with removal of a child from their home. The assessment of safety threats directs staff to make informed decisions about safety planning that will control and manage the threats identified. These actions may be in-home, out-of-home or a combination of the two.
- Relevant services will be sought with respect for and understanding of the families' culture and specific needs.
- Collaboration with Alaska Native Tribes is fundamental to best practice.
- Families are treated respectfully, thoughtfully and as genuine partners.
- A person's right to self determination is valued and supported.
- A safety intervention system is congruent with strengths based and family centered practice.
- Assessing for the safety of children is what we do; family centered practice is how we do it.
- Interventions are identified using the family's perspective about what needs and strengths exist that are selected in collaboration through family engagement.
- By engaging in a collaborative problem solving process with the family, case plans will be specific to the uniqueness of each family served.
- Enhancing parent/caregiver protective capacities are essential for the ability of families to protect their children.
- OCS needs partnerships within the community and stakeholders to achieve strong outcomes for children and families.

Vision Statement: Safe Children, Strong Families

Mission Statement: OCS 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.

COLLABORATION AND COORDINATION

The OCS is highly invested in collaboration, coordination, and partnership with Tribal partners and stakeholders. In the past year OCS has engaged in substantial, ongoing and meaningful collaboration in implementing the 2015-2019 CFSP and the development of the APSR. Through collaboration efforts with internal and external partners, OCS is able to assess the needs of children and families in Alaska, use the input to modify goals, and monitor progress towards achieving the outcomes and objectives.

2015 Update: The lead OCS position responsible for oversight, collaboration, and coordination of the Child and Family Services Plan was vacant from July 1, 2014 – December 8, 2014. Due to this vacancy the agency efforts were minimal prior to January 2015.

- January 12, 2015 - Meeting held in Anchorage to review and implement the CFSP and discussed the priorities, strategies, and objectives. Recommendations were made to update, change, and enhance the CFSP objectives. Present at the meeting were OCS managers, Department of Law, Facing Foster Care in Alaska, Court Improvement Project and the OCS ICWA Program Coordinator. Through discussion and review of current data, it was determined that specific goals to address services to children under the age of five should be incorporated throughout the plan, as this is the population at greatest risk of maltreatment.

Recommendation: After reviewing the plan, the group did recommend changes to dates for completion of items. Plan for improvement objective 1.C.1 was changed. Although the assessment of resource families will continue to be a focus in this objective, the group recommended focusing on the complete assessment through background check process to ensure safe environments, and not implementing a brand new Resource Family Assessment process. These changes were incorporated into this APSR submission.

- April 8, 2015 – OCS supervisors, managers, Tribal and community partners met in Anchorage to review the CFSP priorities and strategies. Breakout sessions recommended changes, highlighted work completed, and identified barriers to the priorities, strategies, and objectives in the CFSP. Small workgroups met to discuss the strategies in the CFSP. Each group was asked to review the objective and activities, identify priorities, efficiencies, and suggested changes. Focus groups was on the following CFSP strategies 1.A, 1.B, 1.C, and 2.A. The work groups determined the goals were appropriate based on what is happening in OCS practice, they noted that some strategies already have work happening to draw on, and identified some of the key components that are already on the plan. The most effective workgroup was the resource family support workgroup focused on 1.C.

Recommendation: They identified a need to review position descriptions for licensing staff, identify point of contact for families (customer services), and identify financial support options for families outside of the foster care stipend. New position descriptions are included with this APSR submission.

- May 7, 2015 – Tribal State Collaboration Group Meeting presentation and handouts provided to OCS managers, Tribal Partners, Department of Law, Guardians ad Litem, and the Court Improvement Project. A follow up phone conference for Tribal Partners was held May 15th for further discussion of the CFSP and APSR. The presentation was brief with minimal discussion. Two follow up calls were scheduled, but only the 5/15 call had Tribal partners call in. The phone conference included 8 Tribal partners and two OCS staff; they were told they could also send written comments by 5/30/15 but no written comments were received.

Recommendation: Input included clarifying the term used through the document; Alaska Native is appropriate to use but no Native Alaskan. It was suggested that OCS review 1.A.3 that IA notices be sent timely; this is part of OCS policy already. There was discussion in the phone and face to face meeting about the OCS centralized intake plan and timeline. The timeline was changed in the CFSP plan for improvement with this APSR submission.

- May 11, 2015 and June 8, 2015– The Resource Family Advisory Board (RFAB) met and reviewed/discussed the CFSP. No recommendations for updates or changes were provided by this group.

In the coming year, Tribes and other partners listed in this section will be involved in continued efforts through meetings and workgroups aimed at implementing CFSP strategies and achieving the objectives set out in the plan. In preparation for the 2017 APSR, meetings and phone conferences will be scheduled with stakeholders to continue to actively work on the identified strategies, and gather information needed to complete the APSR and update the CFSP. Tribal representatives will continue to be included on Executive Steering Committee and the OCS Policy Committee. OCS will continue to partner closely with Facing Foster Care in Alaska on youth issues through regular meetings and collaboration on implementation of strategies to improve outcomes for youth. OCS will continue to partner with the Department of Law and Court Improvement Project through regular meetings to assess progress and implement strategies to improve outcomes for children and families. OCS will continue to fund and support the Resource Family Advisory Board to assess and implement changes to improve support to Alaska's Resource Families.

2016 Update: OCS is strongly invested in partnership and collaboration with internal and external stakeholders. In the past year new methods to gain stakeholder input were implemented to encourage ongoing, year-round stakeholder engagement related to the CFSP and APSR. Quarterly conference calls with stakeholders and monthly OCS leadership videoconferences were key tools in assessing the goals, objectives, data, and progress related to the CFSP and modifying the plan. Positive feedback has been received from participants in these meetings. These meetings provided the OCS with opportunities to gather information and feedback regarding work towards improving outcomes for children and families, and partner with others to analyze data and brainstorm creative solutions. As part of the statewide assessment, and in preparation for the development of 2017 APSR, OCS initiated the following collaborative efforts to engage clients, stakeholders, and partners in the implementation of the CFSP:

- Quarterly Stakeholder Calls: Conference calls were scheduled as a method of sharing information and gathering input from stakeholders. OCS facilitated the meetings by teleconference or webinars, and invited the following partners to join these quarterly discussions: Tribal State Advisory Team (TSAT) partners, Public Defenders Office, Assistant Attorney General's Office (AAG), Guardians Ad Litem (GAL), Court-Appointed Special Advocates (CASA), Court Improvement Project (CIP), Citizen Review Panel (CRP), Facing Foster Care in Alaska (FFCA), OCS managers, Alaska Center for Resource Families (ACRF), Child Welfare Academy (CWA), and Supervisory Leadership Council (SLC).
 - October 29, 2015 a webinar meeting was held. The CFSP and APSR was reviewed and discussed. This core group of stakeholders expressed interest in learning more about the CFSP and OCS' strategies to improve outcomes. Relative searches and background checks for resource families were identified as areas for future discussion.

Recommendation: focus the January call on relative search and background checks for resource families. Purpose of focus is to provide stakeholders with current practice and data, and gain feedback and input for future work on these issues.

- January 22, 2016 a teleconference meeting was held to discuss relative searches and background checks for resource families. The team did not identify changes needed to either item, but there were additional questions from the Alaska Public Defender's Office.

Recommendation: provide additional consultation with DOL and Public Defender's Office on the topics to further explore options for improved partnership. A series of follow up meetings were held to discuss relative searches and background checks with the OCS, the Department of Law and the Public Defender's Office. The Public Defender's Office was provided with OCS policy and other supporting documents to assist in understanding the processes in place for these two items. The Public Defender's Office staff may be able to assist with relative search when they are meeting with clients, and could share information they receive when relevant.

- April 29, 2016 a webinar meeting was held. Prior to this meeting a survey regarding needs and service assessment was emailed to this stakeholder group to gather input about the needs of OCS clients. Results of the survey were reviewed and discussed in this meeting, as was current data and the 2017 APSR. This informal "survey monkey" served to give a starting point for the 4/29/16 discussion regarding needs as they pertain to improving child welfare outcomes for Alaskans. A more in-depth needs assessment will occur in the next year to assist the OCS Services Array Unit in identifying and reviewing service needs to assist in developing and implementing services in the state. Results of the survey were as follows:

- Fourteen individuals or 40% of the group completed the survey.
- 71% of the respondents stated they were very familiar with the CFSP and 28% being somewhat familiar with the CFSP.
- 85% responded they have access to OCS data re: safety, permanency, and well-being
- Discussion occurred about service accessibility in the State of Alaska. The group talked about a need for more information about what services are available in each community. A map is available on the OCS website to identify OCS grantee service providers. There was also discussion regarding family contact for children in OCS custody.

Recommendations: The group recommended expanding "the map of services" to include all DHSS grant and contract services, not just OCS grantees. The OCS Services Array Unit will work on this in the coming year to provide more visibility to services available in Alaska. It was requested that the next quarterly meeting focus on reviewing family contact plans, family contact data, and discuss this issue in more detail. No changes were made to the goals and objectives in the CFSP. These meetings will continue on a quarterly basis as a method to share information with stakeholders and gather feedback from stakeholders.

- Monthly OCS leadership meetings focusing on the CFSR, CFSP, and APSR occurred in the past year. Participants included Director Lawton, Deputy Director Spartz Campbell, Division Operation Manager Erickson, KariLee Pietz, Kim Guay, Bernita Hamilton, and Kristie Swanson. Phone or video conference meetings were held on the following dates: 9/23/15, 10/21/16, 11/13/16, 1/7/16, 2/17/16, 3/16/16, 4/20/16, and 5/18/16. Each priority, strategy, and objective was discussed in these meetings. Such meetings will continue as a method for ongoing collaboration specific to the CFSP, APSR, and CFSR processes.

These meetings were a positive way to provide ongoing collaboration and coordination of OCS management regarding the CFSP, to report back on updates or changes in strategies, and to discuss other work happening in the division and department that may enhance the APSR. The data was reviewed, priorities were adjusted, and additional guidance was provided on areas identified in the CFSP Plan for Improvement. During these monthly meetings OCS leaders developed a consistent understanding of the direction of the agency. Examples of specific review and modification of the CFSP include:

- Objective 1.A.1 (centralized intake) was discussed in detail and continues to be an agency priority to improve how reports are received and how they are screened.
 - Objective 1.B.4 (visits with parents and children) was discussed at several meetings and a need was identified for a report to track parent contacts. After researching the issue we became aware that this report is available for OCS in ORCA Report Manager. After further review, some changes may be needed in this report, but the Divisions Operation Manager will work with Regional Managers to track this information on a monthly basis.
 - Objective 2.B.1 (consistent meeting structure) was removed from the CFSP after discussion in this group. It was determined that this continues to be an area that the OCS will work on, but it is not a priority at this time, as it will not support improved outcomes for children as quickly as other strategies. The following is a summary of the meetings:
- Monthly CQI meetings were scheduled and included ongoing discussion of data related to outcomes, goals, and objectives for the CFSP, CFSP, and APSR. These meetings occur on the 3rd Monday of the month. Participants include the Regional Protective Services Manager IIs, Travis Erickson, Kim Guay, KariLee Pietz, and Bernita Hamilton. These meetings will continue on a monthly basis. Below is an example of the CQI team process:
 - In the May meeting, the discussion focused on permanency efforts in Alaska. The team reviewed QA data about timely permanency, discussed how each region is addressing permanency for children, and made plans for further discussion on permanency specialist's role and responsibility. The team discussed a need for permanency values training for OCS employees. Because of this, a meeting was scheduled with the Casey Family Programs on May 24th to discuss assistance with training on permanency. OCS and Casey Family Programs will partner in the coming year to provide relevant training on permanency for OCS staff and partners.
 - OCS Policy committee reviews all policy changes at the OCS, and has opportunity to make recommendations to change the OCS CPS Policy manual. The policy changes and updates are sent to all committee members, which includes AAG representatives and Tribal partners, prior to the twice monthly meetings. The policy committee was restructured in June 2015 to include representatives with an interest in the drafting of updated policies. Additionally, members were selected by their supervisors to include staff from each region and allowing for a wide demographic of specialties, including Tribal representatives.

A separate policy workgroup was also created to identify changes needed to the formatting and distribution of the CPS Manual. Recommendations were made after soliciting staff input, to consider an electronic manual which would allow for:

- consistency in drafting changes,
- ensure information is up to date,
- reduce the time it takes to implement changes,
- decrease the overall size of the manual,
- improve the search features staff can use; and reorganize the manual into 3 sections for intake/initial assessment, family services and administration.

Based on the workgroup's recommendation, the policy committee is working to reduce repetition and combine policy and procedure sections. Beginning in July 2016 all policy updates will be distributed electronically reducing the risk of "out of date" information being used and to create efficiency in updating sections of the manual. The Policy Committee will continue in the coming year.

- Executive Steering Committee is part of the ongoing process of engagement with internal stakeholders (state office and regional management) and identified partners (Tribal representatives, SLC, and CWA). The purpose of the Executive Steering Committee (ESC) is to oversee implementation and facilitate and manage change in the OCS practice model by providing leadership to the Continuous Quality Improvement process. The committee is charged with promoting an integrated approach to child safety, permanency and well-being. ESC meets monthly and this group provides input and feedback on initiatives and projects identified as part of the CFSP. ESC is an opportunity for managers and stakeholders to discuss initiatives and projects intended to improve outcomes for children and to provide feedback regarding the strategies identified to address the needs. ESC will continue in the coming year.

- OCS Managers Core Services Review meeting was held in Juneau March 1 & 2 with OCS senior leadership, which included regional managers, state office managers, and the CWA. In this meeting, the team discussed OCS Core Services. This team reviewed the current OCS Practice Model and was in agreement that this continues to meet the needs of the agency and assists our staff and partners in understanding the way OCS does business. Monthly meetings will be scheduled June through August to further this work and develop and implement strategies to assist the agency on focusing energy on the Core Services. Core Services are the activities that must be done timely and well to accomplish child safety, permanency and well-being, they include:
 - Screening
 - Initiation
 - Assessment
 - Case Planning
 - Caseworker Visits with Child
 - Caseworker Visits with Parent
 - Placement
 - Family Contact

- A presentation and discussion on the federal CFSP was provided at the 2015 CINA Conference in Anchorage. This convening was attended by Department of Law attorneys, public defenders, CASA volunteers, Guardian ad Litem staff, court staff, and other partners in child welfare. The presentation provided an overview of the CFSP, APSR, and CFSR process, current priorities and goals, and provided participants with copies of the CFSP and information about how to share input or feedback.

- Monthly consultation and collaboration calls were held with the Children’s Bureau (CB) Region Ten Alaska lead. During these calls the strengths and needs of the 2016 APSR were discussed in detail. The initial submission was revised and resubmitted in September 2016; this version was accepted. Monthly calls focused on the requirements of the CFSP and APSR, as well as the Statewide Assessment and CFSR. OCS received feedback on how to improve the APSR in the coming year, including more detailed information on the ongoing meaningful and collaborative efforts with partners. CB staff encouraged OCS to review and analyze the data to provide additional information for discussion with stakeholders and document how their feedback impacted changes to the APSR. In the March and May calls with Region Ten, new areas to include in the APSR were discussed. An example of the discussion was regarding the Human Trafficking reporting requirements and the efforts OCS has made to comply with the requirements, and recommendations for documenting these efforts.

Throughout the past year, OCS has been involved with other collaborative efforts that will improve outcomes and services to children and families. The partnership with key stakeholders in Alaska is imperative to improving services and outcomes for the children and families served by OCS. Through ongoing collaboration, the department is able to better utilize resources, community partner agencies are able to identify needs and services of clients, and the OCS is able to be a part of new projects that will affect the work with children and families we work with. At statewide and regional levels, partnership is a key to the OCS’ success in the past year and will continue to move OCS towards achieving the outcomes of safety, permanency, and well-being of children and youth. In the coming year, OCS will continue to develop the efforts listed above and will continue to partner with external stakeholders.

The following internal and external stakeholder groups have an essential role in implementation of Alaska’s CFSP goals and objectives:

Alaska Citizen Review Panel

2015 Update: Alaska’s Citizen Review Panel (CRP) evaluates OCS compliance with federal and state laws, examines policies and procedures for consistent statewide implementation. Additionally, the CRP conducts public outreach and gathers public comment on current OCS procedures and practices involving children and family services. Each year, the CRP prepares a public annual report containing a summary of its activities and recommendations for the improvement of child protection services in the state. OCS works closely with the CRP and the Director participates in regular communication with the CRP.

2016 Update: Alaska’s Citizen Review Panel (CRP) evaluates OCS compliance with federal and state laws, examines policies and procedures for consistent statewide implementation, conducts public outreach, and gathers public comment on current

OCS procedures and practices involving children and family services. The OCS and the CRP present jointly to the Alaska Legislature regarding the state of child welfare services. Each year, the CRP prepares a public annual report containing a summary of its activities and recommendations for the improvement of child protection services in the state. OCS works closely with the CRP and the OCS Director is in regular communication with the CRP. Many of the goals identified in this year's CRP report are already identified as areas of need by OCS, and have been included in the CFSP plan for improvement. See Appendix A for the 2015 CRP report and agency response to the report.

The 2015 report recommended six areas for OCS to consider. The areas identified are areas that OCS has already committed to as part of our work in the CFSP and with our Core Services. The CRP report and OCS' response are included as appendices to this document, but below is a summary of the recommendations and response:

1. OCS continues to implement the Panel's 2013-2014 recommendation on intake policy. *OCS' response: OCS is actively working towards implementing the recommended changes to intake policy. Intake changes are incorporated into the CFSP Plan for Improvement item 1.A.1.*
2. OCS constitutes an internal taskforce to specifically focus on in-home service model, and operationalizing the CFSP Plan for Improvement item 2.A.2. *OCS' response: OCS is exploring outsourcing this program and services to providers statewide.*
3. OCS should address the root cause of the IA backlog. *OCS' response: OCS has an internal committee developing a pilot project to improve timeliness and safety decision making. Timely, accurate initial assessments are incorporated into the CFSP Plan for Improvement as item 1.A.3.*
4. Improve efforts to recruit and retain resource families across the state. *OCS' response: OCS continues to work to recruit resource families in a variety of methods, with a goal to complete early relative and family friend identification. Work specific to these areas are incorporated into the CFSP Plan for Improvement items 1.C.2 and 2.C.1.*
5. Improve the survey instruments and reporting of results on various surveys that OCS QA unit conducts to assess important components of OCS operations. *OCS' response: OCS is partnering with the CRP on modification and improvements of the survey instrument.*
6. Adopt a method to identify, measure, and assess various components of workload of frontline workers. *OCS' response: OCS is exploring additional ways to do this through collaboration with the National Child Welfare Workforce Institute and other efforts.*

Alaska Housing Finance Corporation (AHFC)

2015 Update: This collaborative work was not included in the APSR submitted in June 2015.

2016 Update: AHFC and OCS work closely to implement youth housing options. More information regarding this collaboration is provided in Sections 4 and 12 of this report.

Alaska State Legislature

2015 Update: This collaborative work was not included in the APSR submitted in June 2015.

2016 Update: The legislature provides ongoing support and commitment to OCS. In the past year OCS has received support through funding for programs to improve outcomes and services to children and families. This spring, the legislature passed HB 200 (Adoption of Child in State Custody) and HB 27 (Child Protection and Opportunity Act). OCS is currently analyzing these to identify necessary changes to policy and practice.

Casey Programs

2015 Update: The OCS is participating in a program with Casey Family Programs in an effort to strengthen state and Tribal collaboration in the recruitment and retention of native foster homes. Regionally-based workgroups were established to include OCS staff representatives of various functions of child protection management, licensing managers, licensing supervisors, ICWA case reviewers, child protection front line workers, and adoption staff. Tribal partners, Division of Juvenile Justice (DJJ), Alaska Center for Resource Families and foster parents were also involved in the workgroups. The Tribal partners participating in the work groups represent area Tribes such as Aleutian-Pribilof Indian Association, Central Council of Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska, Kenaitze Indian Tribe, Chickaloon Village Tribal Council, Tanana Chiefs Conference, Nome Eskimo Community, and Bristol Bay Native Corporation. The workgroups have developed plans to increase the number of native foster homes and developed strategies around support and retention of the homes. The work groups meet regularly and joint participation in the strategies identified between the state and Tribal partners are occurring. A progress update and training is scheduled for October 2015 with all of the workgroups and Casey Family Programs. Casey

Family Programs support OCS in our work to improve services. Casey Family Program staff was present at the Tribal-State Collaboration Group meeting in May and had an opportunity to provide input on the CFSP and APSR.

2016 Update: OCS is fortunate to have a strong partnership with Casey Family Programs. Casey Family Programs provides significant technical and financial resources in Alaska, without which many positive partnerships and practice enhancements would not be possible.

Casey Family Programs sponsored staff to attend the National Indian Child Welfare Association (NICWA) Training Institute November 17-19 in Anchorage. The *ICWA Basics with Guidelines Update* and *Advanced ICWA* courses were highly attended by OCS staff and Tribal partners. This was an opportunity for attendees to learn more about the proposed Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) regulations that will guide the application of the Indian Child Welfare Act. This professional development opportunity allowed OCS staff to increase understanding of the new guidelines and proposed regulations.

Because Casey Family Programs (CFP) is ending technical support to the Knowing Who You Are (KWYA) curriculum, CFP sponsored a face-to-face meeting for the KWYA Alaska Steering Committee in December 2015. KWYA is a workshop that provides a framework for participants to identify and explore racial and ethnic identity and to understand how ones race and ethnicity impacts personal and professional interactions. A representative from CFP assisted in developing a sustainability plan and Casey Family Programs agreed to continue to support the KWYA Steering Committee through the transition. CFP sponsored a follow up face-to-face meeting April 13-15 so the committee could review make “Alaska specific” adaptations to the KWYA curriculum. KWYA will remain on the OCS Staff Development Plan as a required training to be completed within the first year of hire for new protective service specialists.

OCS managers met with Casey Family Programs on May 25th. CFP is working with the OCS on the need to enhance permanency values and leadership at OCS. In the coming year, OCS will be partnering with CFP to identify, review, and analyze data, provide technical assistance to staff and leadership, and support ongoing program development for sustainable efforts to improve permanency timelines and outcomes for children.

Casey Family Programs, in conjunction with First Alaskans’ Institute, have supported a statewide effort to develop a strategic plan titled “Transforming Child Welfare Outcomes for Alaska Native Children.” Meetings began in spring of 2015 with representatives from Alaska’s child welfare system including, Tribal Elders, Tribal leaders, Tribal judges, OCS managers and front-line workers, administrators, attorneys, and other DHSS division leaders. A draft plan was developed to address the following priorities:

1. Continuum of Culturally Specific Services and Support
2. Community Engagement
3. Respectful Government-to-Government Collaboration and Partnership
4. Embrace and Implement the Spirit of ICWA
5. Self-Governance
6. State Government Alignment

Casey Family Programs has continued to support the resource family support, development, and recruitment (SDR) efforts in Alaska. In October 2015, regional teams attended a two-day work session in New Mexico and presented their work plans and overall progress towards their regional goals/objectives. Team goals included developing talking points for rural recruitment opportunities, co-facilitating twice-monthly resource family orientations and fully licensing three new homes as dual-licensed foster homes. The regional teams include OCS staff representatives of various functions of child protection management, licensing managers, licensing supervisors, ICWA workers, child protection frontline workers, and adoption staff. Tribal partners, Division of Juvenile Justice (DJJ), Alaska Center for Resource Families and Alaskan foster parents. Highlights of the SDR work include the following:

- The Northern Region recruitment and retention team partnered with Tanana Chiefs Conference and Casey Family Programs to host a resource family recruitment event in December of 2015 to increase the number of rural interior resource families to be dually licensed between the Office of Children’s Services and Tanana Chiefs Conference; 4 families have been dually licensed. In April of 2016, the Alaska Center for Resource Families, the Office of Children’s Services, Tanana Chiefs and Casey Family Programs provided a 3-day training for interior rural Tribal and family and youth services workers with topics such as; supporting foster homes in your community, working collaboratively with OCS, accessing services within your community and self care for workers.

- The Western Region Recruitment and Retention Team efforts focused on increasing community awareness for the need for more resource families. Strategies to increase the number of foster homes included a recruitment table at the local cultural event, Cama'i Festival (April 1-3) and the purchase of tangible items such as hooded sweatshirts with a logo encouraging families to become licensed foster parents.
- The Southcentral Region identified goals to increase collaboration with ICWA workers, provide training on licensing, and general recruitment of resource families. The team accomplished this by holding face-to-face trainings with ICWA staff from Aleutian-Pribilof Island Association (APIA) and during the regional Tribal break -out session. The team also sent out recruitment and licensing boxes to each ICWA worker and held a teleconference training to go over the materials. Licensing staff meet with ICWA workers when they travel to rural communities, to talk about training needs and recruitment.
- The Anchorage Region focused primarily on supporting the families currently working with OCS and looking to them to identify other native families may be interested in becoming licensed. The team partnered with Tribal workers to visit each licensed and unlicensed home to talk with them about support and needs. In the fall, a celebration potluck was held for these families and asked them to bring a "plus one" that may be interested in learning about being a foster parent.
- Anchorage and Southcentral regions report an increase in collaboration and communication with Tribal partners and ICWA workers that supports strengthening resource families, identification of relative placements and collaboration between OCS and Tribes.

OCS partners with the Annie E. Casey Foundation to assist with training and technical assistance needs of the state. In the past year the OCS Director was able to participate in the *Measure of Leadership* conference because of the foundations support. In the coming year OCS will continue to partner with Annie E. Casey Foundation to improve leadership within OCS. In the coming year an OCS representative will attend the *Leading With Evidence: Connecting Child Welfare Practice with Research* convening; this is funded by the Annie E. Casey Foundation. OCS will also receive training and technical assistance regarding the current Team Decision-Making process.

Children's Justice Act Task Force (CJATF)

2015 Update: The Alaska CJATF meets quarterly, with 5 active committees meeting more frequently to work on projects and discuss current issues. The task force created two new committees this year: 1) the Needs Assessment Committee to examine ways to inform its future efforts through information gathering and evaluation of statewide data on child maltreatment and the child maltreatment response system and 2) the Information Sharing Committee was formed with a focus on determining what information sharing barriers may be affecting the collaborative work of child protection, law enforcement and others who are part of the multidisciplinary response to child abuse.

In November of 2014 the task force supported the Alaska Child Maltreatment Conference (CMC): Child Advocacy Center staff; law enforcement; social workers, mental health practitioners; pediatric forensic nurses and doctors; Assistant District Attorneys; and DOL attend the Alaska Child Maltreatment Conference. The Alaska CJATF Scholarship Program funds professionals to attend the CMC as well as other trainings to enhance their professional skills.

The task force is in the process of developing a video and an online training to educate the public and mandatory reporters in Alaska in the following areas:

- signs and symptoms of child abuse and neglect;
- short and long-term effects of child maltreatment;
- responding to signs of maltreatment; and
- resources for reporters, families and professionals who work with children and families at risk.

This project is a collaborative effort between OCS, the CJATF, the Alaska Division of Juvenile Justice, Senior and Disability Services and the Department of Health and Social Services. A priority for this new training is to provide detailed information and guidance on how to recognize and respond to child sexual exploitation.

2016 Update: The Alaska CJATF continues to meet quarterly, in addition to committee meetings and teleconferences which occurred between the in-person meetings. During the Winter Quarterly meeting (held January 28-29) the task force participated in a strategic planning process during which the mission of the task force and its activities were reviewed and considered by the membership. The CJATF work plan was revised and updated to reflect decisions made during the strategic

planning process, which was the first step in the process of conducting a 3-year evaluation of the Alaska task force and its work which will be completed by May 2017.

The task force continued its work to diversify its membership by ensuring representation from both rural and urban communities. This year, new members include: a Tribal judge from the rural village of Barrow; a CINA attorney; a police commander (who leads Alaska's only Internet Crimes against Children (ICAC) Unit); and a clinical psychologist. The diverse membership allows the task force to better represent the population of Alaska as it participates in the state's CFSR process. In addition the task force continues to look for ways to access additional input directly from rural Alaska and Tribal communities across the state in order to fulfill its mission of evaluating the state's system that responds to child abuse and providing recommendations, as well as taking action to improve it.

The Alaska CJATF Scholarship and Training Committee continued to provide training scholarships to child protection, law enforcement, mental health, child advocacy, and professionals from other disciplines who work to address child maltreatment from across the state. During this reporting period more than \$10,000 in scholarships were awarded which afforded recipients the opportunities to attend training in child forensic interviewing, trauma-informed care, interrogation methods, and forensic investigative approaches as well as attendance at child maltreatment conferences.

The CJATF completed its work on a multi-year project to produce an online training for mandatory reporters and the general public on how to recognize, respond to, and report child abuse. This training will be rolled out during the year and will include a small media campaign to encourage Alaska's to respond to child abuse. The training will be available online in multiple formats including one in which Alaska's mandatory reporters can receive a certificate for completing the training and passing the embedded quizzes. The training will be made available in portable formats for those in rural Alaska who do not have access to a reliable internet connection. This project was a collaborative effort between the Alaska CJA, the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services, the Division of Juvenile Justice and the Alaska Office of Children's Services.

In September of 2015 OCS provided the Alaska CJA Task Force a thorough presentation detailing Alaska's CFSP and the activities underway to achieve its objectives. Task Force members also read the most pertinent sections of Alaska's CFSP and were given access to the entire document online. The task force continues to discuss work regarding elements of the plan at the quarterly meetings. The CJATF provided stakeholder input during the 2008 CFSR.

Court Improvement Project (CIP)

2015 Update: CIP and OCS have continued to work closely in their efforts to achieve systemic improvements in child welfare in Alaska. The OCS Director is a key member of the statewide CIP committee, which meets 3-4 times per year. The CIP representative was included in discussion, assessment, and planning for the CFSP and APSR through meetings in January and May (as listed above). During SFY 15, CIP has collaborated with OCS on several critical projects, such as:

- The CINA Therapeutic Court (CTC) pilot began in Anchorage in July 2014 – this pilot program is based on a restructuring of the previous Family Care Court (FCC) therapeutic court, with the pilot utilizing a “parallel track” model. The CTC focuses only on substance abuse treatment progress and issues for parents, with all other CINA case-related matters being dealt with by a separate judge in the “regular” CINA track. OCS is represented on the CTC Steering Committee by the OCS Anchorage Region Protective Services Manager II.
- The CINA Core Curriculum workgroup held its second round pilot rollout in October. Three new, day-long CINA curriculum modules were presented to a group of 54 CINA stakeholders from around the state. The concurrent modules presented were: Family Well-Being; ICWA; and Services & Resources. The workgroup plans to present several additional modules at the 3-day statewide CINA Conference in Anchorage in October 2015.
- OCS Centralized Intake Project – OCS staff have provided updates to the CIP committee regarding progress in their Centralized Intake Project. The OCS Director and management staff has engaged in dialogue with CIP members about the project for input/feedback from CIP members.
- Review and implementation of updated BIA ICWA guidelines/regulations – CIP & OCS have cooperated in conducting an analysis and review of the impact of the new ICWA guidelines/regulations on the child welfare system in Alaska. This was a main agenda topic at the recent CIP committee meeting on June 5, 2015.

2016 Update: CIP and OCS have partnered to continue their efforts at systemic improvements for Alaska's children & families in need of aid. The CIP coordinator has participated in planning teleconferences for the CFSP and APSR, in order to provide input and feedback from the CIP and court system perspective. Additionally the CIP coordinator collaborated with

OCS by participating in the title IV-E review in November 2015. During SFY 16, in addition to ongoing, multi-year joint projects, CIP and OCS have worked closely on the following projects:

- A “Safe Babies Court”-type project in Ketchikan, based on the Zero to Three Safe Babies Court Teams national model. The project is focused on increasing awareness about the particular negative impacts of abuse/neglect on infants and toddlers, as well as improving outcomes for families in the child welfare with children in custody from zero to three years old. The project is a collaborative effort among OCS, the court system, and a community non-profit – with intensive judicial oversight being a key component of the project, including holding status hearings and/or family team meetings on a monthly basis. The project has been underway for just over a year and is already gaining statewide interest.
- In March 2016, the court system in Palmer hosted a 2-day Safe Babies Court training for CINA stakeholders, including key OCS staff, with a presentation by the director of the national project. Local Palmer CINA stakeholders, including OCS and the court system, are very interested in implementing a Safe Babies Court project in their jurisdiction.
- OCS and CIP are also working together to support a site visit to Bethel by staff from the National Council of Family & Juvenile Court Judges (NCJFCJ), to conduct an evaluation of implementation of ICWA in Bethel and the Western OCS region. During the 4-day site visit in June, the evaluation by the NCJFCJ staff will include: court file reviews; CINA court hearing observations; and CINA stakeholder focus group meetings. OCS and CIP staff will coordinate and provide assistance to the NCJFCJ staff during the site visit. CIP is providing funding for several Tribal representatives in the region to travel to Bethel to be able to participate in-person in the focus group meetings. NCJFCJ will provide a report of their ICWA evaluation findings, which will be shared with OCS management and CIP members.

Department of Health and Social Services Information Technology (IT) Governance Team

2015 Update: The vision of the DHSS to move towards an integrated enterprise of which the OCS SACWIS system, the Online Resources for Children in Alaska (ORCA) will be a part of the larger enterprise. The DHSS IT Governance Team consists of the DHSS high level leadership. This team is now making all IT infrastructure and funding decisions for DHSS as a whole, as the department moves forward with this level of integration. In the last year, this team had an integral role in the oversight of a project to replace of all OCS Live Scan fingerprint machines, and has approved the development and implementation of an OCS Incident Tracker which is due to go live on 7/1/2015.

2016 Update: The OCS continues to be represented at the DHSS IT Governance Team by the OCS Director and Deputy Director. Since 2015, several key projects went through IT Governance and were approved:

- Eckerd Kids: The Rapid Safety Feedback Program will provide predictive data analytics of high risk child welfare cases in order to prevent additional maltreatment and facilitate better outcomes.
- Chapin Hall: The Chapin Hall database will allow users to have live graphs and tools to demonstrate performance measures around child welfare and adoptions. By reviewing, comparing, and analyzing different data points, the projection tool will be created to better predict the impacts of practice changes and/or budget changes.
- National Electronic Interstate Compact Enterprise (NEICE): This project is replacing the current "snail mail" delivery of Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC) information with digital system.

Department of Law (DOL)

2015 Update: The Chief Assistant Attorney General was involved in the development of the Child and Family Services Self-Assessment, as well as ongoing development of the CFSP and the APSR. DOL and OCS have been working collaboratively on streamlining improvements to the OCS notifications systems, administrative review system, and compliance issues with ICWA cases. DOL continues to provide on-going training and staff development through the CWA to OCS workers and supervisors on best practice in court preparation and participation. DOL partners with OCS on foster home licensing to improve practice. DOL assists OCS with litigation regarding child protection and foster home licensing cases.

The DOL has always provided discovery to Tribes in CINA cases for a fee to the Tribes. Recently the DOL and OCS were able to negotiate a new system that relieves the Tribes from payment for discovery copies. The DOL participate in Tribal State Collaboration meetings and are part of the OCS Policy Committee. DOL representatives have been attending meetings to review and assess the progress related to the CFSP and plan for the coming year.

2016 Update: The Department of Law represents OCS in legal work at the field level. Additionally DOL works actively with OCS to enhance and support the work of the agency. Assistant Attorneys General (AAG) staff participates in committees at the OCS as part of the normal process to provide legal support and recommendations. These collaborative efforts include AAG participation in Tribal-State Collaboration and OCS Policy Committee. In the past year the DOL has participated in analysis and development of changes due to the BIA regulations and ongoing support for the Tribal IV-E Maintenance partnerships.

The DOL actively engages in new initiatives with OCS and is often present for trainings and strategic planning sessions. The Child Protection Chief AAG partners closely with OCS; this year she was a reviewer for the title IV-E review. DOL provides on-site training to new workers as part of the CWA Skills, Knowledge and Insight Leading to Success (SKILS) curriculum.

Division of Behavioral Health (DBH)

2016 Update: OCS partners with DBH to meet the needs of children and families in Alaska. DBH provides behavioral rehabilitative services to children/youth to remediate debilitating psycho-social, emotional and behavioral disorders. DBH and OCS Early Childhood Comprehensive Services staff has been working collaboratively to cross walk the Alaska Screening Tool to be adapted for use for young children. OCS works closely with DBH to access services and meet the needs of children with behavioral diagnoses and require residential care. OCS and DBH partner on the out of state placement committee. This group reviews all requests for children to be placed in residential treatment programs outside of Alaska.

Division of Health Care Services (HCS)

2016 Update: HCS collaborates with OCS for the completion of background checks for OCS staff and all resource families, including licensed foster care providers, through the Background Check Program (BCP). HCS provides licensing for residential child care facilities and assisted living homes, and through this work, collaborates with OCS regarding care and supervision needs for children in placement in these facilities. Additionally HCS collaborates with OCS with a contract to monitor and review psychotropic medication use for children in care through the Seattle Children's Hospital. This contract allows for a third-party medical review of psychotropic medication prescriptions as well as doctor to doctor consultations on medication treatment. HCS and OCS are working on joint data collection to insure that all children in care who are currently on prescription medications are tracked routinely for prescription monitoring, tracking and management to collect data related to use of medications.

In October 2015 OCS launched the Alaska Medicaid Coordinated Care Initiative (AMCCI) for children in foster care. This service is provided through MedExpert in which a MedExpert staff is available to work with OCS on the coordination of medical services and supports for children in foster care. Since October, MedExpert has provided consultation to OCS regarding 11 children in custody of the department.

Division of Juvenile Justice (DJJ)

2015 Update: The OCS partners with the Division of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) to improve outcomes and services to children and youth in Alaska. In the past year collaborative efforts have been utilized to address human trafficking and sexual exploitation and meet the requirements of Public Law 113-183. Additionally, the Department of Health and Social Services has received a grant to enhance and improve existing infrastructure and systems at DJJ, OCS, and the Alaska Court system to provide dual status Alaskan youth with the highest quality of integrated, efficient and effective services.

2016 Update: OCS, DJJ and the Alaska Court system continue to work towards piloting the "Dual Status Youth" initiative in Anchorage which targets DJJ youth who are also legally with OCS. A work plan has been drafted to address effective leadership, communication, data, training, resources and evaluation. Agencies are sharing positions to help ensure success. The goal is to start piloting in August, 2016.

The DJJ and the Trust Training Cooperative collaborated with OCS by providing their Gatekeeper Suicide Training to be adapted to include specific child protection needs. OCS and DJJ continue to look at innovative ways to share resources to improve outcomes for the children our agencies serve.

Division of Public Assistance (DPA)

2015 Update: The OCS partners with the Division of Public Assistance (DPA) on a variety of projects. In the past year enhanced efforts to improve coordination of services has been a focus for the two divisions. Collaborative efforts to

streamline and improve service delivery related to childcare funding and Medicaid coverage for youth exiting foster care have been priorities for OCS and DPA.

2016 Update: With the passage of the Affordable Care Act, Alaska Medicaid includes eligibility for coverage for former foster children up until the age of 26. Additionally, the Child Care Programs Office within DPA promotes capacity and accessibility of child care with special attention to infants, school age child care, and children with special needs. OCS works with DPA to assure that quality childcare is available and accessible to families that provide foster care services.

Division of Public Health (DPH)

2015 Update: Alaskan babies die every year from unsafe sleeping conditions; many of these deaths are preventable. For this reason, the OCS partners with the Division of Public Health (DPH) to increase awareness regarding safe sleep practices. OCS and DPH have partnered to provide education to Alaskan families through public service announcements, educational information, and posters from the Alaska Infant Safe Sleep Project.

2016 Update: The Division of Public Health, through the Title V Maternal and Child Health (MCH) Services block grant, provides direct health care services, enabling services, population-based services and infrastructure services. The Title V MCH priorities are: reduce substance abuse among families, including alcohol, tobacco and drugs; reduce the rate of child maltreatment; improve system of care for families with children and youth with special health care needs; increase access and preventative health care services to Alaskans and their families; increase healthy relationships; and increase evidence based screening for all MCH populations for behavioral and mental health problems.

OCS continues to work closely with the DPH on the Alaska Maternal and Infant Mortality Review and Child Death Review team. This work has provided OCS with new information and tools on “safe sleep” for infants. Additionally, OCS is evaluating a possible partnership with the DPH Bureau of Vital Statistics (BVS) to develop a process to cross reference child protection information with live birth information. Children born to parents who currently have other children in out-of-home care and those who have had prior termination of parental rights (TPR) or OCS facilitated relinquishment would be screened to determine if the household conditions meet criteria for an initial assessment.

Division of Senior and Disabilities Services (DSDS)

2016 Update: OCS partners with SDS to promote health, well-being, and safety for children and families with disabilities. The OCS and SDS work together on specific cases to ensure necessary services are provided. OCS has worked closely with SDS to improve understanding of the Medicaid Waiver program for children and families. In July 2015, through partnership with SDS, OCS developed a “waiver guide” as a quick reference for staff regarding services to this small population with unique service needs. OCS now has an online training with detailed information about waiver services. OCS also developed a policy specific to this population, to provide direction to staff who work with a child receiving a Medicaid Waiver.

OCS also partners with SDS on other collaborative efforts. This year OCS is working with SDS to transfer the Infant Learning Program from OCS to the oversight of SDS. The Infant Learning Program provides the Part C early intervention system continued to improve processes related to serving families of very young children. Relocation of Early Intervention/Infant Learning Program from OCS to the Division of Senior and Disabilities Services will build efficiencies, reduce administrative costs, and expand revenue streams. SDS and the Early Intervention/Infant Learning Program have many intersecting components, such as: Children 0-3 with Developmental Disabilities, Targeted Case Management and Medicaid billing.

Management for the two divisions is exploring options for a standardized, electronic mandated reporting system to meet the needs of children and adults in Alaska. At this time, it is only in exploration phase and there is no plan for implementation of a standardized reporting system.

Eckerd Kids

2015 Update: This collaborative work was not included in the APSR submitted in June 2015.

2016 Update: The OCS is working with Eckerd Kids in the Rapid Safety Feedback project. The project will enhance safety management of high risk cases of young children by identifying high risk cases involving children less than three years of age in the initial assessment phase of service. The cases are reviewed for safety management utilizing a standardized tool. Cases needing enhanced safety management will be reviewed with the Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) and Initial Assessment (IA) staff, and a plan for needed changes will be made. The staffing process follows a “coaching” model. The cases continue to be monitored to ensure the plan is implemented until the cases is moved to Family Services for continued

services or closed. The intent of the project is to reduce reports to three or less for high risk children under the age of three years. The CQI staff has received extensive training from the Eckerd staff and the overall project will be evaluated by Casey Family Programs. OCS began reviewing cases for this project May 15, 2016 and, as of June 20th, 15 cases have had a staffing.

Executive Steering Committee (ESC)

2015 Update: OCS facilitates the Executive Steering Committee (ESC). This group is made up of OCS managers from the field, regional, and state offices. The ESC also includes Tribal-State Collaboration Group (TSCG) and SLC Representatives. This group leads the program changes and implements strategies identified in the CFSP as needed to improve outcomes for OCS. This group focuses on areas identified in the CFSP and in the last year has been included in planning and development related to Strategy 1.A, Centralized Intake. This is an opportunity for OCS managers, TSCG representatives and SLC to have input on the discussion, assessment, and planning for the CFSP and APSR.

2016 Update: Monthly Executive Steering Committee (ESC) meetings give an opportunity to ongoing and meaningful collaboration with OCS internal and external stakeholders on priorities and strategies identified in the CFSP. This group includes regional Protective Services Managers (I and II), state office managers, CWA, Tribal partners, SLC, and Director's Executive Team (DET) members. This group is tasked with reviewing data, identifying & developing program changes, and implementing strategies identified. In the past year this group has provided input on numerous areas of work including the following OCS efforts: initial assessment workgroup, early identification of relatives, intake changes, administrative reviews, staff development and training needs, coaching program for supervisors, in-home services, drug testing, case worker visits with parents and children, and core services. Please see page 11 of this document for more details about ESC.

Facing Foster Care in Alaska (FFCA)

2015 Update: Alaska OCS has partnered with Facing Foster Care in Alaska (FFCA) on improving outcomes for older youth, who are either in care or have exited foster care. OCS continues to participate in quarterly leadership meetings between OCS and FFCA to discuss relevant concerns, issues and program improvements. These leadership meetings occur in conjunction with the quarterly FFCA-led youth retreats; this venue provides the opportunity for peer mentoring in life skills and exposure to available resources. The Independent Living Program staff continue to work side by side with Facing Foster Care in Alaska to train and recruit foster homes to specifically support older youth and provide joint trainings to OCS staff, community agencies, and to schools on the importance of supporting youth in transition. The FFCA representative was invited to participate in discussion, assessment, and planning for the CFSP and APSR through meetings in January and May (as listed above). Ms. Metivier participated in the January meeting.

2016 Update: In addition to the efforts noted in 2015, OCS have partnered on the following efforts in the past year:

- OCS staff met with FFCA youth at a retreat to work on the issue of placement disruptions for youth.
- OCS partnered with FFCA to obtain to develop the Foster Children's Rights brochure for Alaska.
- OCS and FFCA developed a webinar regarding the permanency goal of Another Permanent Planned Living Arrangement (APPLA) for youth. This webinar was provided to OCS staff on June 14, 2016.

Resource Family Advisory Board (RFAB)

2015 Update: The Resource Family Advisory Board (RFAB) currently has fourteen members made up of resource families, staff from the Alaska Center for Resource Families (ACRF), Tribal representatives, and OCS staff. In the past year, the ACRF received grant funding to manage and administer the RFAB. The RFAB meets by teleconference every month and has had two face to face meetings. The RFAB was given opportunity to review the CFSP and provide input the strategies and goals during their monthly meeting in their June 8th meeting.

The regular RFAB meetings have led to the development of specific initiatives upon which to focus. The Board is working on the following initiatives:

- Develop board members as mentors to other resource families.
- Starter Kits Project to assist resource families with emergency placements.
- Compile and share lists of resource/services available for resource families.
- Develop organizational by-laws for the RFAB.

2016 Update: The Resource Family Advisory Board (RFAB) is comprised of current and past foster, adoptive, and guardianship resource families, as well as OCS staff, Tribal partners, and community partners such as the ACRF. The RFAB vision is to “strengthen and improve support for resource families and OCS as we partner to care for Alaska's children”. During SFY 16 there were 13 members on the Board (6 resource families, three OCS staff, two Tribal representatives, and two staff from ACRF). The Board continues to meet telephonically one time per month and during this fiscal year the Board met face to face in October 2015 and March 2016. During FY 16, the Board continues to focus their efforts on supporting resource families via the following initiatives:

- Foster Parent Bill of Rights
- Foster Parent Feedback & Communication with OCS Management
- Education to Resource Families on Foster Home Investigations
- Starter Kits for resource families (backpack with essential items needed at time of emergency placement)
- Promote Regional Support Networks for Resource Families
- Support of the FosterWear Program

On May 9th OCS representative met with the RFAB to review the CFSP and discuss the upcoming APSR. In the meeting the CFSP was reviewed with attention to the strategies related to resource families. OCS has identified resource family assessment and support as strategy 1.C in the CFSP and supports the work of the RFAB as one component of support to families. The team was supportive of strategies identified in the CFSP Plan for Improvement, including improving background checks, supporting relative caregivers, and early identification of relatives. The group discussed situations they have been involved with that relative identification did not happen quickly, and expressed concerns about the delays in the identification of relatives by OCS. The link to the APSR and CFSP were provided to this group for review, no comments or feedback were received from the RFAB members.

Supervisory Leadership Council (SLC)

2015 Update: The SLC began in the fall of 2009 when a committee of supervisors was selected to meet and begin working on a plan to improve the substance and consistency of supervision statewide. In spring of 2014, the SLC met and a decision was made to revise the Strategic Plan to align more closely with OCS' CFSP.

A new vision was created: “Supervisors work cohesively to advocate, influence and support the OCS Priorities.” The new plan identified four main areas:

1. Safe Children & Strong Families;
2. Quality Workforce;
3. Tribal Relationships; and
4. Community Partnerships.

Within these areas, the group identified 3 areas to work on this year:

1. addressing the high rate of repeat maltreatment,
2. standardization of in-home cases, and
3. trauma stewardship.

2016 Update: The SLC has had changes in membership in the past year, and with that, have spent time reviewing the charter and orientating new members to the purpose and goals of the group. OCS management participates regularly to discuss agency goals and direction, as well as to gather feedback and input from SLC members regarding agency goals and objectives and updates on SLC projects. SLC representatives participate in quarterly CFSP calls, OCS policy committee, and ESC.

In the coming year, the SLC plans to partner with OCS management and continue to focus on addressing the high rate of repeat maltreatment and improve the selection and retention of quality staff. SLC will be exploring how to share information and seek feedback from the larger pool of supervisors at OCS, and not just those actively participating on the SLC.

Tribal-State Collaboration Group (TSCG)

2015 Update: TSCG is comprised of Tribal child welfare leaders and ICWA workers, and OCS statewide leaders, regional managers and OCS ICWA Specialists. Over 100 Alaskan Tribes are represented at TSCG meetings. The TSCG meetings are one of the forums OCS uses to solicit feedback on the progress of goals and evaluate effectiveness of policy implementation.

Through November 2014, the TSCG met three times a year. Changes were made to the structure to encourage regional collaboration work. Beginning in 2015 the TSCG will meet annually, with Tribal State Advisory Team (TSAT) meetings occurring monthly, and regional TSCG meetings occurring more frequently. A detailed list of activities to enhance Tribal and state relations, reduce disproportionality and increase ICWA compliance are listed later in this report. TSCG representatives were invited to participate in discussion, assessment, and planning for the CFSP and APSR through meetings in January, April, and May. TSCG representatives participate in the OCS policy committee, which is responsible for developing and amending OCS policy and procedure in the CPS Manual. Tribal representation on this committee allows the Tribal partners to be involved with policy development and implementation on a consistent basis.

2016 Update: All OCS Regions have now held regional TSCG meetings in partnership with Tribes to address regional priorities and discuss ways to enhance relationships and improve practice. The TSCG met in Juneau Feb. 2-4, 2016. Representatives from Aleutian Pribilof Islands Association, Arctic Slope Native Association, Central Council of the Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska, Cook Inlet Tribal Council, Kawerak Inc., Kenaitze Indian Tribe, Ketchikan Indian Community, Kodiak Area Native Association, Native Village of Kotzebue, Aleut Community of St. Paul Island, Tanana Chiefs Conference, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Department of Law, Office of Public Advocacy, Alaska Court System, Casey Family Programs, ACF Region Ten, and the Office of Children's Services were in attendance. As part of this meeting, OCS had opportunity to present information about the CFSP and APSR, as well as information about Chafee Funds and Independent Living Services.

The OCS' implementation efforts including the development of new policy and practice strategies and statewide staff training related to the 2015 BIA's ICWA Implementation Guidelines and Proposed Regulation Changes were a focal point during the meeting. The BIA's expanded guidance regarding the criteria for expert witnesses was an area of particular interest and discussion. As a result, a work group was formed to identify strategies to recruit and train regional Tribal expert witnesses to be used during statewide CINA proceedings. A new TSCG work group was also created to address the waiver of sovereign immunity related to Tribal title IV-E Agreements. Information sharing and confidentiality agreements were also an agenda item. To date, 127 Tribes/Tribal Organizations have signed the *Tribal Agreement of Confidentiality* which allows OCS to provide information to the child's Tribe in the initial assessment/pre-filing phase. Key statewide Tribal data points were also examined. Of significance, the statewide racial disproportionality rate was 60.1% in 2014 and has decreased to 55.8% in 2015.

University of Alaska (UAA)

2015 Update: UAA was a recipient of a five-year grant from the National Child Welfare Workforce Institute (NCWWI), for use towards a University Partnership Program. Through partnership with the University of Alaska, OCS intends to increase child welfare practice effectiveness through workforce systems development, organizational interventions, and change leadership using data-driven capacity building, education, and professional development. The UAA CWA was invited to participate in discussion, assessment, and planning for the CFSP and APSR during meetings in January. CWA staff participates on the Executive Steering Committee and have participated in meetings to review and assess the progress related to the CFSP and plan for the coming year.

2016 Update: OCS continues to work closely with the CWA to develop and support OCS's workforce development efforts. Through this partnership the University and OCS strive to improve practice, increase capacity of staff, and support professional development at OCS. The CWA and OCS have received training from the National Child Welfare Workforce Institute and the Leadership Academy for Deans and Directors, and through this have developed a coaching program.

Anchorage Region (ARO)

The OCS Anchorage Region is the most populous of the five designated regions. The large and diverse population residing in Anchorage requires collaboration with many of the Tribes throughout the state. Many Tribes and associations have representatives located in Anchorage along with the regionally-based Tribes allowing for convening and workgroups to occur locally in the Anchorage area.

2015 Update: There are multiple collaborative efforts actively occurring in the OCS Anchorage service region:

- Greater Anchorage Area Partnership (GAAP). This group meets monthly and is comprised of community partners including: service providers, educators, military personnel, medical and therapeutic service representatives and Tribal partners. The purpose of the partnership is to provide a consistent forum for local child, youth, and family service providers and stakeholders to discuss issues, brainstorm solutions, and further strengthen services to improve outcomes for families in Anchorage.

- A quarterly “Fix It” meeting, which includes representatives from OCS, Office of Public Advocacy, Public Defender’s Office, and Attorney General’s Office, is scheduled to maintain open communication regarding practice changes at OCS. The Anchorage Regional Disproportionality Team includes local Tribal partners and community partners and meets monthly.
- There is a community partnership group that meets monthly regarding permanency and trauma informed care. The group consists of OCS and local mental health providers, and has developed a train the trainer curriculum on the 3-5-7 model which discusses transitions with children and grief and loss. Each agency in the group will use the training with their staff.
- The ARO management team meets twice a year with the Anchorage School District administration.
- The CINA Therapeutic Court Steering Committee consists of OCS, OPA, PD, AAG, a court judge, Division of Behavioral Health (DBH) and Cook Inlet Tribal Council (CITC).
- Fostering Hope Continuing Conversations meets monthly where the faith-based community works with the state on supporting families, recruitment of foster homes, and other events.
- The ARO Multiple Disciplinary Committee unit continues the collaboration related to the work of the Anchorage Child Advocacy Center, Alaska Cares. OCS and the Anchorage Police Department (APD) are collocated together; collectively, this unit works all “priority 1” protective services reports together.

2016 Update: The Anchorage Regional Office continues to prioritize partnership with community organizations. This is demonstrated by the Anchorage Leadership team members being assigned as the point of contact or community liaison to other agencies. Each quarter it is expected that the OCS staff have a meeting with their assigned agencies to improve partnership and maintain connections. Agencies with community liaisons include residential care facilities, medical facilities, mental health agencies, and others. In the past year, OCS participated in the following collaborative efforts to strength services and outcomes for children and families in the Anchorage area:

- Greater Anchorage Area Partnership (GAAP). This group meets quarterly and is comprised of community partners including: service providers, educators, military personnel, medical and therapeutic service representative and Tribal partners. The purpose of the partnership is to provide a consistent forum for local child, youth, and family service providers and stakeholders to be informed about the OCS services and data, discuss issues that arise, brainstorm solutions, and strengthen services to improve outcomes for children and families.
- Anchorage Leadership Team is partnering to improve staff retention and increase partnerships. All new Anchorage staff participated in a unique eight day training program designed to assist new staff in learning about community services and provide opportunities to meet with providers. Anchorage managers meet with new staff at the six month period to keep a “pulse” on the agency and improve staff retention. Anchorage is also partnering with local faith-based providers and has two chaplains in the OCS office on a weekly basis to allow staff an opportunity to seek support in a confidential method.
- Support Development and Recruitment Steering Committee meetings quarterly. Anchorage has several resource family groups extending efforts to recruit and retain foster and adoptive parents. The steering committee pulls together groups in OCS as well as partners, to collaborate efforts and be aware of efforts in the region. Resource Family Advisory Board, OCS licensing, Tribal partners, Foster Family-based Treatment Association, and other grantees and private providers are included in this meeting.
- Alaska Native Family Services Unit is a specialized unit of OCS to improve services and outcomes to Alaska Native Families. The unit partners closely with Tribal communities and ICWA workers. This group has monthly talking circle potlucks to bring Tribal and OCS partners together to improve working relationships and services to children.
- Anchorage supports close partnership with Tribal partners by providing a work space in the Anchorage office for a Tribal representatives. There are currently three Tribal partners with staff located in the ARO, they include: Kawerak, AVCP, and BBNA.
- Permanency for children is a focus of community partners who are collaborating with OCS to develop a Heart Gallery to assist in recruiting permanent homes for children in the care of OCS.

Northern Region (NRO)

Geographically, the OCS Northern Region is the largest of the five regions serving over 90 villages in an area over 325,000 square miles.

2015 Update: Because of the regional vastness, collaboration and workgroups are achieved in the main areas of Nome, Barrow, Kotzebue, and Fairbanks.

- OCS and Tanana Chiefs Conference provided a 3-day family services training with a wide variety of workshops: Self-Governance; Barrier Crimes 101; Mandate Reporter Training; Trauma-Informed Care, etc. There were over 100 ICWA workers from surrounding villages and OCS workers in attendance.
- The Nome and Kotzebue areas attended a 3-day Family Group Conferencing training with OCS staff and Kawerak, Inc. ICWA/Tribal Family Coordinators. Maniilaq Association serves the Kotzebue area; and Kawerak, Inc. serves the Nome area. Both organizations are in the second year of the Rural Child Welfare grant which provides caseworker visits, and assists with some case management.
- Casey Family Programs has provided the Northern Region and its community partners and Tribes with training and technical assistance to increase and improve recruitment and retention of ICWA preferred placements. There are 2 Northern Region recruitment teams: 1) Nome/Barrow, and 2) Interior Rural. The teams have identified their respective plans and will work throughout 2015, and report their findings in October 2015.
- The Family 2 Family Workgroup continues with its work in the focus areas of Building Community Partnerships; Team Decision-Making; Data; and Recruitment and Retention of Foster Families. OCS is partnering with the ACRF and convenes monthly meetings to work on the four focus areas.

2016 Update: The OCS Northern Region continues to work closely with community partners throughout the region. Many of the communities are isolated and do not have access to the services that are needed. Creativity and partnership are essential to success of the region. In the past year, OCS participated in the following collaborative efforts to strength services and outcomes for children and families in their communities:

- OCS and Tanana Chiefs Conference provided annual training in April 2016. The 2.5 days joint conference provided information about self-care, the foster care licensing and background check process, and highlighted the Huslia partnership.
- Huslia is a small community with a population of less than 300 people. To improve services to children and families, the Tribal Family Services Worker and the OCS worker have improved their working relationship by developing authentic partnership. Together they meet with families when an initial assessment or active family services case is open with OCS. They have also set up regularly scheduled “Town Hall” meetings to provide information and answer questions from the community.
- OCS staff works closely with the ACRF and Tribal partners to enhance the recruitment and retention of resource families in the region. Others are also involved with these efforts including the faith-based community, DPH, the local school districts, foster parents, and CASAs.
- Improving access to medical services and information has been a focus for NRO. The Regional Psychiatric Nurse now has access to the State of Alaska VacTrak (vaccination) database. He is able to use this information to ensure children are vaccinated timely. Additionally NRO has 2 identified substance abuse/mental health professionals who are able to contract to complete assessments for children and families as needed, and when other providers are unable to meet the need in a timely manner.

Southcentral Region (SCRO)

The OCS Southcentral Region is a large area that reaches from Valdez on the southern coast to Unalaska on the Aleutian Island chain, and includes the Matanuska-Susitna Valley; an area of Southcentral Alaska and includes the communities of Palmer and Wasilla.

2015 Update: Regional leadership participates in Multi-Disciplinary Team meetings, the Mat-Su Health Foundation Community Scan group and Mat-Su Area Partnership Meetings and. monthly meetings occur with Tribal partners. SCRO was the first region to facilitate Regional TSCG meetings; those meetings occurred in Wasilla and Gakona. Additionally, adoption and foster care staff partner with the ACRF and other community partners to facilitate resource family appreciation and training opportunities.

2016 Update: The OCS Southcentral Region is unique in that they are growing very quickly, have communities that are small and remote, but also serve larger communities with access to many services. The field and regional staff work closely with community partners, including collaboration with Multi-Disciplinary Teams in communities with active Child Advocacy

Centers. In the past year, OCS participated in the following collaborative efforts to strength services and outcomes for children and families in their communities:

- The Wasilla Field Office partners with community members very closely. Cook Inlet Tribal Council and Akeela (substance abuse services) are co-located in the office to allow for easy partnership with OCS staff and “one-stop” services for families and children.
- Mat-Su Health Foundation is working closely with OCS and other community partners in Wasilla and Palmer to develop and implement a Safe Baby Court Team. This program will provide increased court oversight to CPS cases involving a child under the age of three years old.
- Mat-Su Health Foundation and the Mat-Su Rocks (Raising Our Children with Kindness) organization is also partnering with Head Start and OCS to provide grant funds to assist with facilitating family engagement and supervised contacts for children in custody with their parents. This is an innovative approach to provide supervised visits for families.
- OCS partners closely with Tribal partners in the SCRO region. SCRO facilitates monthly region wide meetings with Tribal partners. In May 2016 the 3rd regional TSCG meeting occurred in Kenai. This meeting included OCS, Tribal partners, and Region Ten staff. It provided collaborative learning related to mandated reporting, foster home licensing, a Kenai pilot project, and title IV-B and IV-E programs.

Southeast Region (SERO)

Southeast Alaska has a land area of 35,138 square miles and is comprised of a 600 mile long narrow strip of mainland coastline and hundreds of islands. The Southeast Region serves 17 cities or communities; however the majority of the population is concentrated in the city of Juneau. OCS partners with community and Tribal representatives in the communities served.

2015 Update: Southeast OCS managers and supervisors meet with Central Council Tlingit & Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska (T&H) Tribal Family & Youth Services staff on a quarterly basis to help facilitate communication and collaboration. Routinely, OCS, T&H, and AWARE (the local domestic violence service provider) provide new staff orientation to the new staffs of each agency in order to familiarize the staff on the responsibilities and services available and to build relationships and understanding of the respective agency missions. Additionally, regional leadership participates in Multi-Disciplinary Team meetings and provides ongoing training to school district staff on mandatory reporting requirements.

2016 Update: Partnerships with community and Tribal partners is a priority for the Southeast Region. Southeast OCS supervisors and unit staff meet with T&H Tribal Family & Youth Services staff on a monthly basis to help facilitate communication and collaboration, as well as discuss mutual cases. In the past year, OCS participated in the following collaborative efforts to strength services and outcomes for children and families in their communities:

- An Alaska Native foster home recruitment team was created with OCS and T&H staff and managers from both agencies. Juneau Youth Services, a local residential services agency, will begin attending that partnership in the coming months.
- Regional leadership partner with community agencies to provide training for staff. OCS, T&H, and AWARE (the local domestic violence service provider) provide orientation to the new staffs of each agency in order to familiarize the staff on the responsibilities and services available and to build relationships and understanding of the respective agency missions. OCS provides ongoing training to school district staff and law enforcement officials on mandatory reporting requirements.
- In Ketchikan the Family and Infant Team (FIT) is a baby court program designed to improve permanency for children. The courts, public defenders, assistant attorney generals, OCS staff, and other parties participated in the development and implementation of the program. Reunification and other permanency goals are being openly discussed by the courts and parents are given clear information about the expectations for case plan items.
- Early identification of relatives and support to caregivers is a focus for the region and for the Tribal and community partners. The region had one staff assigned to do in depth relative searches; they are working on a memorandum of Agreement with a local Tribe to increase access to relative information.
- The Emergency Relief Support program is being piloted in SERO. The pilot began March 1st and was created to support relatives and family friends who take emergency placement and care for children in OCS custody. This program provides financial and emotional support beginning at the time of placement in the home of unlicensed caregivers.

- OCS participates in the Multi-disciplinary Team, in Juneau. This team includes law enforcement, child advocacy center, attorneys, Tribal partners, DJJ, mental health providers, and domestic violence providers.

Western Region (WRO)

The OCS Western Region is located in the Southwest area of the State of Alaska. The regional population is approximately 8500 people, who are primarily Alaska Native. The largest community is Bethel, with a population of 6300. The Western Region covers 59,000 square miles, and includes 56 villages. Each village represents an individual Tribal council. Many of the Tribal governments have contracted with Association of Village Council Presidents (AVCP) to provide ICWA services, housing and other social services programs.

2015 Update: The OCS Western Region works closely with Tribal and community partners on the following collaborative efforts:

- In SFY 15, AVCP Bethel-based ICWA staff began collocating at the OCS facility to improve collaborative efforts and services to children and families.
- The Western Region actively partners with the Adult Probation and Parole Division, the Sex Offenders Treatment Program, Yukon-Kuskokwim Health Corporation, the DBH, DJJ, DPH, and local law enforcement agencies.
- OCS Western region is currently working on development of an memorandum of understanding (MOU) to enhance the Multi Disciplinary Team work in Bethel.
- OCS, Tribal partners, and resource families attended training and work sessions through Casey Family programs to support resource family recruitment.
- A resource family recruitment workgroup has been in place since February 2014 to identify and support families in the region. This workgroup includes OCS, Tribal partners, the DBH, and local health care services providers.

2016 Update: The OCS Western Region actively partners with community agencies to improve services and outcomes for children and families. OCS has regular collaboration efforts with the Probation and Parole Division, the Sex Offenders Treatment Program, Yukon-Kuskokwim Health Corporation, the DBH, DJJ, DPH, Tundra Women’s Coalition, Tribal partners, the child advocacy center, and local law enforcement agencies. In the past year OCS Western Region actively participated in the following collaborative efforts:

- In the past year, a multi-disciplinary team (MDT) was established in Western Region and an MOU is in place to allow for consultation and partnerships.
- Resource family recruitment efforts have been supported by the Casey Family Program. These efforts to identify and develop foster homes in the region have been done in partnership with Tribal partners.
- Western Region Support Development Recruitment (SDR) team has been in place since 2014 to recruit foster homes, develop emergency foster care options, and assess and explore other services options that will benefit children and families in rural communities. This team includes OCS staff, local Tribal partners, ACRF, AK Child and Family Services, DBH, and Yukon-Kuskokwim Health Corporation (YKHC).
- The Yuut Kellutestiit Core Group began meeting in 2103 grew out of Undoing Racism alumni that wanted to continue working to address institutional racism. This group received funding from the DBH and includes the following partners: The AVCP, Alaska Legal Services, CASAs, the PDs Office, local school districts, YKHC, OCS, Tundra Women’s Coalition, Yup’ik elders, and other community members.

Alaska Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems

2015 Update: The Alaska Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems (ECCS) Project’s primary purpose is to facilitate the building and implementation of statewide comprehensive systems of care that support family and community approaches to promoting positive early development and early school success for young children. This important project is driven by a multi-disciplinary, governor-appointed task force that meets three times per year. ECCS’ mission is to promote positive development and improved health outcomes for Alaska’s children prenatal to eight years by creating a culturally responsive, comprehensive and accessible service delivery system that links service providers, empowers families, and engages communities.

2016 Update: The ECCS project, in the last several years, has focused on the prevention of adverse childhood experiences, increasing the understanding and skills of our workforce regarding the impacts of trauma and early development, and

increasing trauma informed care. The advisory council to the ECCS is the Alaska Early Childhood Coordinating Council (AECCC) co-facilitated by the Department of Health and Social Services and the Department of Education and Early Development. The members of the AECCC include representatives across health and education sectors and representatives from both public and private stakeholder groups. The AECCC priorities include the ECCS project as part of the vision to integrate and align services, planning efforts resources, policy development, and funding as a well as strengthening connections between health, mental health, education and family support systems and public and private partners.

Strengthening Families Leadership Team

2015 Update: This team, which includes OCS representation, is made up of a variety of key decision makers in state and private programs and provides the leadership for the state Strengthening Families programs. The efforts are focused on embedding the “protective factors framework” in a variety of early childhood and family support services and systems. Through this team, early childhood programs statewide receive intensive training and coaching. Additionally, regular trainings were available to interested providers by the Child Care Resource and Referral Network agencies.

2016 Update: OCS continues to actively participate in the Strengthening Families Leadership Team. By embedding protective factors in the workforce, families, and communities there is redirection to a strength based approach to supporting families and addressing extra-familial interactions to promote healthy children and the well-being of families. Strengthening Families active outreach across Alaska communities’ supports leveraging community resources in order to build parent knowledge while providing resources on how to integrate new opportunities for families to thrive.

OCS is updating the case plan process with families to align with the Strengthening Families protective factors. In April 2016, a webinar was provided to OCS staff by members of this team, to lay a ground work of the Strengthening Families program. More training will be provided as OCS rolls out the case plan process changes in the coming year.

Early Childhood Mental Health Learning Network

2015 Update: OCS leadership facilitates the “Network” which is designed to develop/increase expertise in the existing workforce about early childhood mental health issues including trauma, diagnosis, and appropriate interventions, and create collaboration between a variety of service providers. Through grants to local agencies in Anchorage, Fairbanks, and Juneau the program provides consultation and/or professional development to mental health clinicians, family support workers, and early interventionists. The grantees also provide “reflective facilitation” groups to a cross-disciplinary group of professionals working with young children and their families. These groups have been especially helpful in support best practices in the field.

2016 Update: OCS leadership continues to facilitate the “Network”, whose primary goals include capacity of mental health professionals to promote social and emotional development and address mental health concerns, identification and intervention for young children with difficult behaviors and/or at risk of experiencing Severe Emotional Disturbance, and stabilization of childcare placement. Grant services continue to be available in Anchorage, Fairbanks, and Juneau to provide consultation and/or professional development to mental health clinicians, family support workers, and early interventionists.

Infant Learning Program

2015 Update: Child welfare and the Part C early intervention system (known in Alaska as the Infant Learning Program) continued to improve processes related to serving families of very young children including the development of regional protocols, outlining steps for collaboration, referral and ongoing planning. The two programs continue to work together to improve processes related to serving families of very young children including the development of regional protocols outlining steps for collaboration between child welfare and early intervention providers with regard to planning and intervention. There are currently 16 agencies providing Infant Learning Services in the State of Alaska; this service available statewide.

2016 Update: Infant Learning Programs continue to be available in Alaska as described in 2015. In the past year, a department decision was made to move the Infant Learning Program from OCS to the Division of Senior and Disabilities Services. In the coming year, OCS and SDS will partner on ways to improve data sharing and partnership to address CFSP Plan for Improvement

Head Start Programs

2015 Update: OCS provides data to Head Start programs statewide regarding the number of children that may be eligible for Head Start programs due to their foster care status. This data is helpful to Head Start in establishing their service needs and

capacity. Anchorage and Mat-Su Valley Head Start directors participate in the Anchorage-based, Early Childhood Protective Services Collaborative meetings. Most Head Start programs and OCS offices have established MOAs.

OCS facilitates an annual meeting with Head Start grantees and their mental health consultants following the Early Childhood Mental Health (ECMH) Institute. This meeting is focused on improving the services to young children and their families with difficult situations in Head Start programs. The Head Start programs are often in rural/remote communities and consultants are located in hubs. These consultants are often the only ones in their area doing this work through these efforts it is hoped to establish a system that will connect them to each other and provide best practice information.

2016 Update: OCS continues to partner with Head Start Programs to meet the needs of young children. A primary focus of the collaboration is to increase knowledge and skills of the providers to understand the mental health needs of children in the program. Mental Health consultants provide consultations to support Head Start sites. Head Start participates in reflective practice that are coordinated by mental health consultants that supports Head Start staff to deepen their knowledge of child and family development and learn new intervention strategies.

SECTION 2: UPDATE ON ASSESSMENT OF PERFORMANCE

Statewide assessment of performance considers data collected through the internal OCS case review system, the AFCARS/NCANDS data reported by OCS, and CFSR State Performance Workbook available on the ACF site. OCS is scheduled for a CFSR in 2017 and the goals and objectives identified in the CFSP are intended to address areas likely to require a plan improvement plan in the future.

All three data sources identify Repeat Maltreatment, Permanency Composite 1, and Placement Stability as areas needing improvement by OCS. OCS is committed to these three areas and has specific strategies included in the CFSP Plan for Improvement to address these areas. Specific strategies to address the identified areas of need include the following:

- OCS continues to be committed to centralizing and standardizing the intake process (See strategy 1.A) in Alaska; this is a key strategy in reducing repeat maltreatment.
- Through Strategy 1.B, Alaska intends to improve permanency outcomes for children; this includes timely and accurate case plans for families.
- Placement stability is addressed through strategies 1.C and 2.C. Through support to resource families and early identification of relatives, OCS expects to see improved placement stability.

CHILD AND FAMILY OUTCOMES THROUGH THE OCS CQI/QA UNIT

2015 Update: The OCS has continued a rigorous case review system. OCS has a CQI Unit (often called the QA team) with dedicated staff who maintain the ongoing case reviews for OCS. The agency has utilized the federal review instrument with 23 items and in March 2015, the QA team began using the revised instrument through the Online Management System (OMS). In CY 2014 there were 255 case reviews conducted. CY 2014 findings show gains were maintained in all 7 outcome areas over the findings of the CFSR 2008.

Each field office continues to be reviewed annually. A review of the case review findings for CY 2014 show results significantly below the federal standard of 95% achievement (see Table 2). Both Safety 1 and Safety 2 are areas for concern as well as Well Being 1. These areas are addressed through Field Office Program Improvement Plans.

As noted, in March 2015 the agency began use of the OMS. During the first quarter of CY 2015, there were 38 cases reviewed from two field offices (see Table 2). Although the number of cases reviewed is small which can result in significant “swings” in findings, there are concerns in several areas. Well Being 1 is an area significantly below the national standard. This area reflects the agency’s challenges in establishing the base activities needed for accomplishment of permanency goals.

These outcome areas indicating concern for the areas of Safety and Well Being 1 are of continuing concern for the agency; they will likely be reflected in the CFSR Round 3. In the coming year OCS will monitor this closely and consider revision of the CFSP goals and objectives to better align with the identified statewide data indicators.

2016 Update: The OCS has continued a rigorous case review system. OCS has a Continuous Quality Improvement Unit (QA team) with dedicated staff which maintains the ongoing case reviews. The agency utilizes the federal review instrument and in March 2015, the QA team began using the revised instrument through the Online Management System (OMS). In CY 2015 there were 277 case reviews conducted. CY 2014 findings show gains were maintained in 6 outcome areas over the findings of the CFSR 2008. There was a slight decrease in the outcome area of Well-Being 1.

Each field office is reviewed annually. A review of the case review findings for CY 2015 show results significantly below the federal standard of 95% achievement (see Table 2 & 3). Both Safety 1 and Safety 2 are areas for concern as well as Well Being 1. The agency has recently identified items 12-15 as “Core Service” areas to be focused on for improvement in all regions through the CQI process. Regions will begin developing strategies to increase attention to these areas and improve monitoring of the activities. These areas are addressed through Field Office Program Improvement Plans.

These outcome areas indicating concern for the areas of Safety and Well Being 1 are of continuing concern for the agency; it is anticipated they will be reflected in the CFSR Round 3. In the coming year OCS will monitor this closely and consider revision of the CFSP goals and objectives to better align with the identified statewide data indicators.

Because OCS began using the new OMS tool, it is difficult to compare the QA results from CY 14 with CY 15 because the items have changed. The tool has changed from 23 to 18 items, and the information used to determine if each item is a

strength or need has changed as well. In CY 15 relative placement and physical health needs of the child are two areas OCS shows a high level of compliance in.

OCS is in the process of completing the Alaska Statewide Assessment. OCS will be undergoing the CFSR in the coming year and anticipates a Program Improvement Plan will be needed for several items. The CFSP Plan for Improvement included in the Child and Family Services Plan addresses the areas of concern related to safety, permanency, and well-being. The PIP will likely incorporate the Plan for Improvement items identified through our internal data review, as well as new items recommended after completion of the CFSR.

**Table 2: Quality Assurance Reviews
January 2014 – December 2014 Calendar Year
Outcome and Items**

Item	CFSR 2008	Qtr1 Jan- March 2014	Qtr2 April- June 2014	Qtr3 July- Sept 2014	Qtr4 Oct- Dec 2014	State- Wide CY 2014
Outcome S1: Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect	47.1%	66%	51%	60%	42%	56%
S1 - Item 1: Timeliness of initiating investigations of reports of child maltreatment	56%	82%	55%	67%	58%	68%
S1 - Item 2: Repeat maltreatment	81%	76%	83%	93%	65%	77%
Outcome S2: Children are safely maintained in their homes whenever possible and appropriate	38.5%	78%	57%	46%	55%	63%
S2 - Item 3: Services to family to protect child(ren) in home and prevent removal	51%	86%	65%	47%	59%	69%
S2 - Item 4: Risk of harm to child(ren)	39%	84%	58%	50%	60%	67%
Outcome P1: Children have permanency and stability in their living situation.	15%	66%	46%	45%	55%	56%
P1 - Item 5: Foster care re-entries	91%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
P1 - Item 6: Stability of foster care placement	73%	76%	83%	91%	83%	81%
P1 - Item 7: Permanency goal for child	45%	90%	68%	82%	77%	80%
P1 - Item 8: Reunification, guardianship, or permanent placement with relatives	33%	79%	43%	43%	71%	66%
P1 - Item 9: Adoption	18%	65%	64%	54%	56%	61%
P1 - Item 10: Permanency goal or other planned permanent living arrangement	60%	100%	100%	no cases	100%	100%
Outcome P2: The continuity of family relationships and connection is preserved for children.	62.5%	90%	90%	91%	94%	91%
P2 - Item 11: Proximity of foster care placement	90%	98%	100%	100%	100%	99%
P2 - Item 12: Placement with siblings	91%	94%	94%	100%	100%	96%
P2 - Item 13: Visiting with parents and siblings in foster care	62%	85%	82%	78%	89%	85%
P2 - Item 14: Preserving connections	78%	98%	93%	100%	100%	97%
P2 - Item 15: Relative placement	83%	100%	98%	100%	98%	99%
P2 - Item 16: Relationship of child in care with parents	47%	83%	96%	75%	84%	86%
Outcome WB1: Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs.	23.1%	52%	39%	29%	33%	41%
WB1 - Item 17: Needs and services of child, parents, foster parents	32%	74%	64%	42%	53%	62%
WB1 - Item 18: Child and family involvement in case planning	37%	56%	41%	26%	30%	42%
WB1 - Item 19: Worker visits with child	26%	54%	50%	46%	38%	48%
WB1 - Item 20: Worker visits with parents	20%	30%	27%	19%	9%	22%
Outcome WB2: Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs	76.1%	96%	96%	88%	96%	95%
WB2 - Item 21: Educational needs of the child	76%	96%	96%	88%	98%	96%
Outcome WB3: Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs.	52.5%	91%	76%	58%	59%	75%
WB3 - Item 22: Physical health of the child	71%	99%	96%	85%	88%	94%
WB3 - Item 23: Mental health of the child	55%	90%	75%	57%	62%	75%

**Table 3: Quality Assurance Reviews
January 2015 - December 2015 Calendar Year
Outcome and Items**

Outcome/Item	Federal Standard	Qtr1 Jan- March 2015	Qtr2 April- June 2015	Qtr3 July- Sept 2015	Qtr4 Oct- Dec 2015
Outcome S1: Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect	95%	57%	67%	39%	63%
S1-Item 1: Timeliness of initiating investigations of reports of child maltreatment		57%	67%	39%	63%
Outcome S2: Children are safely maintained in their homes whenever possible and appropriate	95%	61%	53%	28%	38%
S2-Item 2: Services to Family to Protect Child (ren) in the Home and Prevent Removal or Re-Entry Into Foster Care		64%	69%	46%	41%
S2-Item 3: Risk and Safety Assessment and Management		66%	57%	28%	39%
Outcome P1: Children have permanency and stability in their living situation.	95%	47%	48%	34%	38%
P1-Item 4: Stability of Foster Care Placement		84%	78%	72%	76%
P1-Item 5: Permanency Goal for Child		76%	82%	72%	68%
P1-Item 6: Achieving Reunification, Guardianship, Adoption, or Other Planned Permanent Living Arrangement		58%	65%	48%	49%
Outcome P2: The continuity of family relationships and connection is preserved for children.	95%	74%	72%	70%	62%
P2-Item 7: Placement With Siblings		100%	79%	75%	79%
P2-Item 8: Visiting With Parents and Siblings in Foster Care		67%	66%	58%	56%
P2-Item 9: Preserving Connections		89%	87%	92%	83%
P2-Item 10: Relative Placement		89%	86%	100%	95%
P2-Item 11: Relationship of Child in Care With Parents		50%	65%	62%	62%
Outcome WB1: Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs.	95%	39%	30%	12%	14%
W1-Item 12: Needs and Services of Child, Parents, and Foster Parents		61%	40%	19%	26%
W1-Item 13: Child and Family Involvement in Case Planning		46%	33%	14%	31%
W1-Item 14: Caseworker Visits With Child		55%	36%	10%	18%
W1-Item 15: Caseworker Visits With Parents		30%	14%	4%	6%
Outcome WB2: Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs	95%	94%	96%	84%	88%
WB2- Item 16: Educational Needs of the Child		94%	96%	84%	88%
Outcome WB3: Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs.	95%	54%	68%	52%	52%
W3-Item 17: Physical Health of the Child		93%	89%	91%	95%
W3-Item 18: Mental/Behavioral Health of the Child		51%	70%	44%	45%

AFCARS AND NCANDS DATA MEASURES

2015 Update: The chart below illustrates the goals for safety and permanency federal measures established by OCS. OCS continues to track and monitor these measures. Alaska continues to be well below the national standard in Absence of Maltreatment Recurrence, Permanency Composite 1 (Timeliness and Permanency of Reunification, and Permanency Composite 4 (Placement Stability).

Table 4: AFCARS and NCANDS

Data Measures	FFY06b07a	FFY 2011AB3	FFY 2012AB4	FFY 2013AB4	FFY 2014AB4	National Standard
Absence of Maltreatment Recurrence	90.7	91.8	87.8	87.1	86.1	94.6
Absence of Child Abuse and /or Neglect in Foster Care		99.49	99.08	99.01	99.61	99.68
Permanency Composite 1: Timeliness and Permanency of Reunification	122.4	103.7	102.9	115.2	110.8	122.6
Permanency Composite 2: Timeliness of Adoptions	81.1	141.6	140	144.2	160.8	106.4
Permanency Composite 3: Permanency for Children and Youth in Foster Care for Long Periods of Time	125.4	132.7	134.3	134.2	130.4	121.7
Permanency Composite 4: Placement Stability	73.1	86.1	87.6	90.5	93.7	101.5

2016 Update: The AFCARS submission was submitted in May 2016. OCS has not received the finalized data profiles for 2015. OCS is still operating using the data provided in Table 4. NCANDS information can be found at the following site: <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/cb/cm2014.pdf>. OCS demonstrates a strong performance in Permanency Composite 2 and 3. OCS was above the national standard in both areas. Continued high performance in this area may be related to the regional permanency and adoption specialists who focus on permanency goals and assist in timely permanency for children through their focus on adoption and guardianship. The areas of need identified in the 2015 update continue to be focus areas for OCS. The OCS Plan for Improvement located in Section 3 of this document provides specific strategies the state is engaging in to reduce repeat maltreatment and improve placement stability for children in care.

CFSR ROUND 3 STATEWIDE DATA INDICATORS

2015 Update: CFSR State Performance Workbook can be found at the following site: http://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/cb/cfsr_stateperformanceworkbook.pdf

The CFSR State Performance Workbook provides details regarding state performance on the CFSR 3 statewide data indicators and compares it to the national standards, and identifies areas the national standard is not being met, indicating a program improvement plan is needed. Areas identified for Alaska, that do not meet the national standard include:

1. Permanency in 12 months for children entering foster care: timely permanency is an identified goal in the OCS CFSP and is listed in the plan for improvement under strategy 1.B and 2.B.
2. Placement Stability: placement stability is an identified goal in the OCS CFSP and is listed in the plan for improvement under strategy 1.C.
3. Maltreatment in foster care: safety in foster care is an identified goal in the OCS CFSP and is listed in the plan for improvement under strateg1.C.

4. Recurrence of maltreatment: reducing maltreatment is an identified goal in OCS CFSP and is listed in the plan for improvement under strategies 1.A, 1.B, and 2.A.

The plan for improvement provided later in this document will highlight specific data and assessment or progress towards each of these identified areas of need.

2016 Update: OCS continues to utilize information provided in the CFSR State Performance Workbook and continues to address the four areas identified in 2015.

SYSTEMIC FACTORS

Statewide Information System

In the 2008 CFSR Alaska was found to be in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of statewide information system. OCS's statewide information system is the Online Resources for Children of Alaska (ORCA). ORCA is a fully functioning, compliant Statewide Automated Child Welfare System (SACWIS). ORCA effectively and accurately identifies 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.

2015 Update: Tribal and court stakeholders have reported no concerns with current ORCA functionality. There are no concerns regarding ORCA, the State of Alaska's SACWIS system.

There are a number of enhancements planned over the next year that will leverage ORCA data to automate processes that are currently manually completed by field staff. These enhancements include enhancements to ORCA User Experience; expansions to the functionality for automating additional letters and notices to providers and/or case participants; new ORCA Audit functionality, which allows tracking of user activity; and enhancements to assure compatibility with the State of Alaska new accounting system, IRIS. Additional projects include increasing the number of data reports that are available on demand, and improvements to the initial assessment maltreatment findings functionality. In the past year, the following efforts have been made to enhance or improve ORCA:

- Collaborative efforts with the AK Court System, DJJ and Robert F. Kennedy National Resource Center for Juvenile Justice on a long term action plan to enhance services for youth who are or have been involved in both the child welfare and juvenile justice systems.
- The Search, Assignment, Eligibility, Request for Funds, Permanent Fund Application, Out-of-Home Placement, and Maintain case modules were modified to enhance usability and decrease user clicks.
- All financials batches were converted from COBOL to Java.
- A CPS Involvement summary tab was added to assist intake workers with researching details of a family's history of PSRs and Investigations
- A decision tree tool was added to Initial Assessments (investigation) in the interest of standardizing Findings results.

2016 Update: ORCA continues to be functioning as required statewide. The ORCA team, including the OCS Research Unit, continuously solicits input from stakeholders via stakeholder surveys and interviews. The input received is used to enhance and improve the ORCA system and reporting to better suit stakeholder needs. User Input Surveys consistently show that users are interested in having a user-friendly and modern system. A number of enhancements deployed in CY 2015 were major time savers for users:

- Streamlined the process for creating adoption cases so that frontline caseworkers are no longer responsible for the work.
- Significant Search enhancements reduce the amount of clicks needed to find information and complete work.
- CPS History for a family is automatically derived and summarized in a centralized location.
- Reduced the system limitations on intake view in preparation for a statewide centralized intake workforce.
- Automated Initial Assessment (Investigation) notification letters to alleged perpetrators, parents, Tribes and Tribal representatives.
- Streamlined the process for requesting an Eligibility Technician assignee so that frontline caseworkers are no longer responsible for the task.

- Some enhancements deployed in 2015 allow OCS to report data more accurately:
- Added a decision tree for Initial Assessment Findings.
- Out of Home Placement changes make documentation of an ICWA child and placement preference more intuitive.

The OCS ORCA team collaborates with multiple entities to ensure that the state is able to effectively and accurately identify the status, demographic characteristics, location, and goals for the placement of every child who is (or within the immediately preceding 12 months, has been) in foster care. ORCA is enhanced and improved regularly to better serve the children of Alaska. For example, the ORCA team worked with our interface partners on several initiatives in 2015:

- Modified the Non/Emergency petition to assist Department of Law with matching records.
- Converted the interface with the state's accounting system, AKSAS, to an interface with the new accounting system, Integrated Resource Information System (IRIS).
- Changed Permanent Fund Dividend page and batch functionality to accommodate 2015 Application Year Change Requests.

In the coming year, ORCA has 2 major projects planned with our interface partners. The ORCA team will be working with Division of Public Assistance while they transition from its Eligibility Information System (EIS) to the Alaska Resource for Integrated Eligibility Services (ARIES). In the fall, ORCA will begin working with the Department of Administration on phase II to eliminate the use of the IRIS accounting code crosswalk.

In addition, OCS currently has data sharing agreements with:

- Both the Anchorage and Fairbanks North Star School Districts for determining youth who may qualify for head start, transportation, and school lunch program funding.
- Department of Public Health for analysis of maltreatment, risk, and protection factors.
- Chapin Hall for predictive projections for budgeting.
- Eckerd Kids Rapid Safety Feedback Program provides an analysis of high risk cases in order to prevent additional maltreatment and facilitate better outcomes.
- Division of Health Care Services for monitoring psychotropic medications administered to children in custody.

Case Review System

Written Case Plan

In the 2008 CFSR, case planning was identified as an area in need of improvement. The state provides a process that ensures that each child has a written case plan, to be developed jointly with the child's parent(s), that includes the required provisions.

2015 Update: Alaska has demonstrated minimal progress in this area. Although there is a process in place, case planning continues to be an area of need for OCS. SACWIS data shows that 57% of cases with a child out of the home for 60 days or more have a current case plan (ORCA 6.15.2015). This number does not include details about when children and parents are included in case planning process. Internal QA data shows that children and family are included in case planning less than 40% of the time. This data can be found earlier in this report (see QA Review data). This is addressed in the current CFSP plan for improvement in objective 1.B.1. OCS has established a timeline of June 2017 for completion of the objective and demonstration of improvements in the case plan process. Case planning is an area of need identified by the courts and other partners and will require internal and external stakeholder involvement to develop and implement improvements.

2016 Update: Alaska has experienced decreased in compliance for cases reviewed in the QA Reviews in CY 2015 (See Tables 2 and 3). Although there is a process in place, case planning continues to be an area of need for OCS. The QA data shows that children and family are included in case planning less than a third of the time. That means that in less than 1/3 of the foster care cases reviewed, case plans were developed jointly with parents and children as required. This data can be found in Tables 2 and 3. Case planning is addressed in the current CFSP Plan for Improvement in objective 1.B.1. OCS has established a timeline of June 2017 for completion of the objective and demonstration of improvements in the case plan process.

Case planning is an area of need identified by the courts and other partners and will require internal and external stakeholder involvement to develop and implement improvements. Because of the importance of this item OCS has been working with the Child Welfare Academy to implement a practice change. After receiving feedback from staff and stakeholders, and after

reviewing and analyzing data, OCS realized that the Family Services Assessment (FSA) model implement a few years ago was not effective and OCS was not achieving the desired outcomes. The FSA process was found to be burdensome and time consuming, and the model has been revamped. One of the practice changes OCS has implemented is the use of protective factors from the Strengthening Families model instead of using protective capacities language.

OCS is currently piloting a change to case planning. OCS is currently piloting to change both the case planning process and the actual form. The new system will include carbon copy forms that can be completed in the field with parents and Tribal partners, so that a hard copy of the case plan can be immediately provided to the parent. The forms will later be scanned into ORCA to ensure these efforts are documented. In addition, OCS has created carbon copy “to do” lists to be use during monthly contacts with parents. The “to do” list can be given to the parent at the end of the monthly visit to help clarify expectations and provide a reminder of appointments.

Periodic Reviews (Administrative Reviews)

The state provides a process for the periodic review of the status of each child that includes the required provisions no less frequently than once every 6 months, either by a court or by administrative review. This was found to be a strength in the 2008 CFSR. Administrative reviews are conducted by OCS staff at least every six months. The reviews look at federal requirements as well as reviewing the involvement of all parties in the development of the case plan. A system is in place to notify caregivers of the administrative reviews this is successful due to administrative support to draft and send notices.

2015 Update: Due to the number of meetings and staff issues, OCS is looking at changes to the current review system. This is addressed in CFSP Plan for Improvement objective 2.B.2. Administrative reviews are considered an area of strength for OCS. The table below documents State Fiscal Year 2015, and shows OCS average 90% of our cases have timely reviews.

2016 Update: OCS continues to provide a process for administrative reviews as required. OCS has implemented a change in the administrative reviews this year. As of June1, 2016, all reviews are facilitated by the OCS QA unit in Anchorage. This change has brought consistency to the review process. This is addressed in CFSP Plan for Improvement objective 2.B.2. Table 5 provides SFY 2015 administrative review data. A review of the OCS data below shows that 90% of cases have periodic reviews that occur in a timely manner. OCS administrative reviews contain the required title IV-E provisions.

Table 5: Administrative Reviews

Period	Current	Overdue	Review Population	Percent Current
Jan-15	2,107	259	2,366	89.10%
Feb-15	2,120	279	2,399	88.40%
Mar-15	2,184	276	2,460	88.80%
Apr-15	2,193	296	2,489	88.10%
May-15	2,177	337	2,514	86.60%
Jun-15	2,264	339	2,603	87.00%
Jul-15	2,327	319	2,646	87.90%
Aug-15	2,397	285	2,682	89.40%
Sep-15	2,486	244	2,730	91.10%
Oct-15	2,529	234	2,763	91.50%
Nov-15	2,554	219	2,773	92.10%
Dec-15	2,629	149	2,778	94.60%
Jan-16	2,726	110	2,836	96.10%
Feb-16	2,737	89	2,826	96.90%
Mar-16	2,780	106	2,886	96.30%

Source: SOA Online Resources for Children in Alaska (ORCA)

Permanency Hearings

This area was rated as an area of strength for OCS in the 2008 CFSR. The state provides a process that ensures that each child in foster care under the supervision of the state has a permanency hearing in a qualified court or administrative body that includes the required provisions no later than 12 months from the date the child entered foster care and no less frequently than every 12 months thereafter.

2015 Update: OCS does not have data to document agency performance in this area. The QA case review system does not collect data on permanency hearings. Although this is AFCARS data, OCS has been undergoing a change in reports and collection to better meet the needs, and at this time is unable to provide data related to timeliness of permanency hearings. This element will be reviewed as part of the title IV-E requirements in our scheduled title IV-E audit scheduled for November 2015. OCS intends to provide AFCARS and title IV-E audit data about this in the next submission of the APSR.

2016 Update: In the past year, OCS has partnered with the CIP and other court staff to identify available data. The Children's Bureau conducted a secondary review of the Alaska title IV-E foster care program in November 2015. The Children's Bureau determined that Alaska was in substantial compliance with federal title IV-E eligibility requirements.

The Alaska Court system provided permanency data for Child in Need of Aid (CINA) cases closed in federal fiscal year 2015 (based on the date the petition was filed with the court). The statewide average for the 1st permanency hearing being held or continued in court was 351 days, 683 cases were included in this data (see Table 6). A review of court data shows that for children who were in foster care the average time between permanency hearings was less than 247 days. The following statewide data provides information regarding subsequent permanency hearings held or continued:

Table 6: Permanency Hearings

Time between Permanency Hearings	Average # Days	Median # Days
1st and 2nd hearing	209	213
2nd and 3rd hearing	241	310
3rd and 4th hearing	220	251
4th and 5th hearing	219	205
5th and 6th hearing	154	71
6th and 7th hearing	255	329
7th and 8th hearing	168	80
8th and 9th hearing	243	348
9th and 10th hearing	282	357
10th and 11th hearing	223	336
11th and 12th hearing	195	196

Source: State of Alaska Court System

Filing for Termination of Parental Rights

2015 Update: The state provides a process for filing for termination of parental rights (TPR) proceedings in accordance with required provisions; however, in the 2008 CFSR this was found to be an area needing improvement. This continues to be an area of need for OCS. The QA case review system does not collect data on filing of termination of parental rights. Although this is AFCARS data, OCS has been undergoing a change in reports and collection to better meet the needs, and at this time is unable to provide this. OCS intends to provide AFCARS about this in the next submission of the APSR.

2016 Update: This continues to be an area needing improvement for Alaska. OCS policy states that the primary worker will file a petition to terminate parental rights within 60 days of changing to the primary goal of adoption, unless the parents will be consenting to adoption. In the past year, OCS has partnered with the CIP and other court staff to identify available data. The Alaska Court system was able to provide data from CINA cases closed in federal fiscal year 2015 (based on the date the petition was filed with the court).

State of Alaska Court System data shows that the average length of time to filing the termination of parental rights (TPR) petition is 485 days; this does not meet the 15 out of 22 month timeframe requirement. The court data does not identify cases in which compelling reasons have been found, which could provide information about the accuracy of this data. ORCA does not have data regarding compelling reason findings. A review of court data shows that TPR petitions were filed in accordance with required provisions in most cases. Appendix B provides a chart of the court system report.

Notice of Hearing and Reviews to Caregivers

This was rated an area needing improvement during the 2008 CFSR.

2015 Update: The state is responsible to provide a process for foster parents, pre-adoptive parents, and relative caregivers of children in foster care to be notified of, and have a right to be heard in, any review or hearing held with respect to the child. This continues to be identified as an area of need for OCS. The responsibility for notifying caregivers of court hearings is assigned to CPS caseworkers; due to heavy caseloads and competing priorities it is not consistently achieved.

2016 Update: OCS CPS Policy 6.6.3 provides guidance on notice of court hearings and administrative reviews; this policy has been updated in February 2015. The policy is designed to ensure that notification of court hearings, court case

conferences, Office of Children's Services (OCS) administrative reviews, and removals from home are provided to all individuals entitled to receive notice. This policy states that within 30 days of removing a child from the parent(s), the state must exercise due diligence to identify and provide notice to all adult grandparents, to all parents of a sibling of the child, where such parent has custody of such sibling, and to other adult relatives of the child subject to exceptions due to family or domestic violence. The notices are not generated or documented in ORCA so there is no current way to track compliance with this item.

The Department of Law (DOL) provides an initial notice to grandparents so they are aware of the upcoming court hearing. OCS provides notice to foster parents of all administrative reviews for children with a goal of APPLA. Notice for other reviews and court hearings are provided by OCS caseworker staff, and there is not a consistent method for noticing the relatives and foster parents. There is currently not a documentation method that would allow OCS to collect information regarding notification of all hearings and reviews. DOL has proposed a court rule change that would make it easier to notice foster parents for permanency hearing, but it has not passed yet. Although OCS has not developed a strategy to address this item for the Plan for Improvement, OCS management is reviewing this information and it is expected that a strategy will be identified and implemented in the coming year.

Quality Assurance System

QA Case Reviews

This was rated as an area needing improvement in the 2008 CFSR. OCS believes this has been improved since that time through development of a strong case review system and the development of the CQI committee. The state is operating an identifiable quality assurance system that is in place in the jurisdictions where the services included in the CFSP are provided, evaluates the quality of services, identifies strengths and needs of the service delivery system, provides relevant reports, and evaluates implemented program improvement measures.

The system mimics the federal CFSR process. Each field office (24) is reviewed at least annually, with the largest metropolitan field office reviewed twice yearly. The review includes case files of children served by the agency under the title IV-B and IV-E plans and interviewing parties in the cases.

Cases are selected through a random selection of cases of children by field office. The review attempts to review fifty percent of the sample for out-of-home cases and fifty per cent for in-home cases. When there is not a sufficient number of in-home cases the number of cases reviewed is augmented by out of home cases. A sample of 12 cases is drawn for all field offices except the largest metropolitan area in which 26 cases are drawn. The sampling is conducted two to three months in advance of the review. Both the electronic and paper records are reviewed. The sample is sent to the field office with a due date for a mail in of the paper records.

The review uses the CFSR instrument. OCS began using the federal Online Management System in March 2015. The review encompasses a careful review of safety, permanency, and well being using the 18 item instrument. Phone interviews are conducted with a parent, Tribal representative, foster parent, Guardian Ad Litem, and the assigned caseworker. Other collateral parties such as case providers may be interviewed as case review needs indicate. These interviews are used as part of the information gathering on a case and are documented in the evaluation process. Areas remaining to be resolved are the challenges in reaching parents; phone numbers change frequently. Also, the agency has opted not to reach children by phone out of concern for younger children and for further trauma when there is not a relationship with the reviewer. These two areas remain to be resolved.

Second level QA is conducted on cases by the QA Unit Supervisor. When all cases have been reviewed, the data reports are run by the research analyst and presentations of data are prepared. The review team meets for debriefing and preparation of the written report. The report provides both quantitative findings and comments on the findings by the reviewers. The report is finalized and is forwarded to the management team to include the Director, Deputy Director, Operations Manager, Program Manager, and Regional Managers. A video or phone debriefing is then scheduled with the field office in which all staff participates. The findings are provided along with recommendations for change. Regions are then required to respond to the findings through the field office program improvement process.

2015 Update: Alaska maintains a rigorous system of ongoing case reviews, as noted above.

2016 Update: The OCS QA Case Review System is a high functioning component of OCS' work. No changes have been made in the Case Review system in the past year. OCS provides a state case review system that summarizes findings of case reviews and identifies areas of strength and need statewide as well as in each field office. More information is provided at the beginning of Section 2 of this report.

CQI Committee

2015 Update: The OCS has established a Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) Committee. This group meets monthly and includes: the Division Operations Manager; the Child Welfare Administrator; Social Services Program Administrator; the Continuous Quality Improvement Manager; and the five Regional Protective Services Manager IIs.

This group has reviewed federal guidance regarding the CQI requirements. A CQI manual was developed to guide the group in their work. The agency has further refined its system by taking steps to enhance the communication process. This provides for exchange of issues identified through ongoing case reviews, specialized reviews, and use of other SACWIS data. When issues are identified, there is an immediate opportunity to collaborate and engage in problem solving. Changes planned and then implemented are able to be monitored through the committee. The CQI committee is also linked to the Executive Steering Committee (ESC) which has a broader management membership and Tribal partner representation. The ESC may utilize subgroups to develop revised policy and procedures and to engage in program development in response to issues identified through the CQI process.

In spring of 2015, OCS held two successful Data Summit events, involving internal and external (Tribal) stakeholders. The mission of the Data Summits was to enhance the OCS CQI system through providing stakeholder access to OCS data in a user-friendly, digestible way, building a bridge between fieldwork and data to impact practice and improve quality of service to children and families, and to increase managers' capacity to perform analysis of data on their own. As a result of the events, OCS management gained better understanding of stakeholder data needs and began working to develop reports and a data dashboard to allow access to OCS data in a user-friendly way.

2016 Update: The OCS Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) Committee continues to meet monthly and includes: the Division Operations Manager; the Child Welfare Administrator; Social Services Program Administrator; the Continuous Quality Improvement Manager; and the five Regional Protective Services Manager IIs. Due to discussions in these meetings, and review of data, the Core Services Meeting in March 2016 was organized. During this meeting and the series of meetings to follow in summer 2016, OCS is reviewing the core services and identifying ways to improve outcomes and track data.

Staff and Provider Training

The 2008 CFSR found this to be an area needing improvement because the initial training that was provided to staff was not sufficient to prepare them to carry out their responsibilities. Due to the state not requiring workers or supervisors to receive ongoing training as a part of their job requirements OCS has made changes in the training system and expects to demonstrate improvements in this area.

Initial Training

2015 Update: The state is operating a staff development and training program providing initial training that includes the basic skills and knowledge required of all staff who deliver services pursuant to the CFSP. OCS and the CWA collaborate to provide training to OCS staff. SKILS training is classroom based training and continues to be the initial training provided to front line staff. New line workers are provided with webinar and teleconference opportunities following attendance at SKILS, as well as field training they complete and review with their supervisor. The staff development plan outlines specific training requirements. Additionally CWA provides training opportunities for OCS supervisors and Social Services Associates, to assist them in development of their unique roles in the agency.

2016 Update: Through partnership with the Child Welfare Academy, OCS continues to provide staff development and training to meet the needs of new staff. Since the last CFSR in 2008, the CWA has made significant changes to a caseworker's initial training. OCS provides an intensive on-boarding training (SKILS) that requires two to three weeks of classroom training which is supported by pre-SKILS online training and post-SKILS "Transfer of Learning" calls following completion of the SKILS classroom modules

SKILS training is classroom based training and continues to be the initial training provided to front line staff. The staff development plan outlines specific training requirements (see Appendix C). New addition to case worker training includes; Pre-SKILS training that requires workers to take introductory online modules as a prerequisite to the classroom training. Once

in the classroom, the training focuses on skill building through practice. When workers complete the SKILS classroom training and return to their offices, workers participate in weekly transfer of learning calls with CWA staff. The transfer of learning calls are in place to assist the worker to transfer classroom knowledge and skills to their field practice. New field workers are also provided with webinar and teleconference opportunities following attendance at SKILS, as well as field training they complete and review with their supervisor.

The CWA provides core training for new OCS supervisors and social services associates to assist them in the development of their unique roles in the agency. Supervisors first attend core training aimed at helping them to transition to becoming a supervisor and developing leadership skills. After core training has been completed, supervisors participate in a new program called Coaching Supervisors to Best Practice (CSBP). CSBP is a 22-week program that focuses on supervising the OCS' Practice Model through readings, assignments and weekly coaching. The program has proved to be very successful at helping to build practice model expertise and competence in critical thinking and decision making. Supervisors have expressed satisfaction with the program and seasoned supervisors are now requesting to be a part of the program.

CWA provides Social Services Associate (SSA) training 1-2 times per calendar year as needed depending on the need. SSA 140 is for workers who have been hired as SSAs statewide. The training is an introduction to the OCS Practice Model and includes pertinent topics to enhance working with children and families. Throughout the training, there is a focus on the ways SSAs support casework.

The CWA has tried different methods of measurement and evaluation, but continues to struggle with finding the right evaluation method to provide the needed data. CWA has stated they will be working with the CRP chair, who has expertise in evaluation, to establish a more informed measurement tool.

Ongoing Training

2015 Update: The state is operating a staff development and training program that provides ongoing training for staff that addresses the skills and knowledge needed to carry out their duties with regard to the services included in the CFSP. Throughout the year learning opportunities are available for staff to enhance their knowledge of existing policy and practice and to provide training on policy or practice changes. There have been changes made to the training plan to better meet the training needs of staff. OCS has not yet established a required number of continuing education hours, however mandatory trainings are provided to all staff throughout the year, as well as other (non-mandatory) training opportunities. In the past year, mandatory trainings were provided regarding: title IV-E eligibility, emergency adoption regulations, relative placements and denials, and assessment of future risk of abuse/neglect (FRAN).

2016 Update: OCS continues to provide ongoing training options for staff to address their needs. Trainings and learning opportunities are available in a variety of formats, including classroom, on-site sessions, webinars, e-learning, and micro-learning. The CWA works with the OCS managers to identify training needs, and then provides onsite training. CWA provides bi-annual reports regarding the number of workers and partners who attend training. January 2015 – August 2015 316 workers attended training. July 2015 – December 2015 209 workers attended training. CWA offers webinars on topics specific to child welfare. The webinars are recorded and archived for staff not able to attend the live session. A list of trainings and webinars is provided in Appendix C.

The CWA has an “app” OCS staff can download and use to help them in the field with field guides and resource information. The CWA also maintains a website that keeps a list of online training modules to help keep staff educated on topics related to their work. Lastly, the CWA provides onsite regional training and technical assistance as requested by field staff on issues related to best practice.

OCS has developed “micro-learning” videos as a training tool specific to background checks. The video series includes three videos, each less than 90 seconds in length. The videos provided brief and concise information about the training topic. Staff responded favorably to the training opportunity and OCS is exploring expanding this learning tool and utilizing it for other subjects.

The state provides ongoing training to meet both the needs of new and long term employees, as well as to all levels to staff from support staff to management. OCS state office staff received training on the OCS Practice Model in May. This learning opportunity provides state office staff with increased knowledge and understanding of current field work. Please see the attachments for more information about courses and learning opportunities provided in the past year. The current training plan is attached in Appendix C.

Foster Parent Training

The 2008 CFSR final report rated this item as an area in need of improvement because it was determined that foster parents were not receiving sufficient training to carry out their responsibilities. The state provides training for current or prospective foster parents, adoptive parents, and the staff of state-licensed or -approved facilities that care for children receiving foster care or adoption assistance under title IV-E, and the training addresses the skills and knowledge base needed to carry out their duties with regard to foster and adopted children. Resource Families are able to access a wide array of trainings in a variety of formats.

2015 Update: OCS provides a grant to the ACRF for provide this service. ACRF provides comprehensive training and continuous support services for all current and prospective resource families. Resource families include licensed foster families, and “kinship” or unlicensed relative caregiver families who are responsible for the day-to-day care of children who must reside outside their parent’s home due to abuse or neglect. Resource family training and support services provide education and support resource families, and consists of basic training (CORE) for new and returning resource families and specialized, ongoing trainings for current, continuing resource parents. Trainings are provided in a variety of formats and may be available by face-to-face, self-study, small groups, and teleconferences. ACRF training course are provided at no cost to the resource family. Licensed foster homes are required to complete annual training hours to maintain their license.

2016 Update: Through the collaboration with the ACRF, Alaska provides a comprehensive provider training system available to current or prospective foster parents, adoptive parents, and the staff of state-licensed or approved facilities that care for children receiving foster care or adoption assistance under title IV-E. The training system is available in a variety of formats and there are topics specific to issues and needs of children in custody. Licensed foster homes are required to complete annual training hours to maintain their license. ACRF includes licensed foster care providers and unlicensed relative caregivers in training opportunities. Table 7 provides a list of onsite training events and distant delivery training offered by ACRF, July 1, 2015 through March 31, 2016. During, July 1, 2015 through March 31, 2016, 1,642 individuals attended an onsite training event and 5,575 self- study hardcopy courses were mailed out or submitted online.

Table 7: ACRF Trainings

Onsite Training Events - Course Title:
Adopting Through OCS
Adopting Through OCS: Rural Teleconference
Adoption 101
Adoption 101/Motivations Combo
Alaska's Foster Youth Bill of Rights: Rural Teleconference
Building Families through Adoption
Caregivers Supporting Children with Sensory Processing Disorders at Home and School: Rural Teleconference
Connecting while Correcting
Core Training for Relative Placements
Core Training for Resource Families
Disclosure in Adoption: Rural Teleconference
FASD 101
FASD and Early Childhood Interventions: Rural Teleconference
FASD and School Aged Children and Youth: Rural Teleconference
First Steps to Adoption-Building Families Through Adoption On-line Orientation
Foster Kids in School: The Importance of Education and Homework: Rural Teleconference
Foster Pa-Loo-Zah: Who moved My Cheese
Grief and Loss Support Group-Statewide Teleconference
How Parenting Standards Have Evolved: Rural Teleconference
Interior Rural Family Retention/Recruitment Event/Community Café
Knowing Who you Are
Let's Talk ICWA Series-ICWA Basics
Let's Talk ICWA: Communication between Tribes and Resource Families
Let's Talk ICWA: Series-BIA Card
Let's Talk ICWA: When is a Child Eligible/What Makes a Family an ICWA Preference Placement
Meet the Resource Family Advisory Board: Rural Teleconference
Motivations for Adopting
Parent and Child Attachment Styles: Rural Teleconference
Preparing and Transitioning Children into Permanency: The 3-5-7 Model
Resource Family Orientation
Resource Family Orientation: Rural Teleconference
Sensory Processing and FASD: Rural Teleconference
Tax Issues Related to Foster Care and Adoption: Rural Teleconference
Telephonic Foster Parent Grief and Loss Support Group
The Reasonable and Prudent Parent Standard: Rural Teleconference
Understanding Birth Parents: Rural; Teleconference
Understanding Family Systems: Rural Teleconference
Understanding CPS/OCS: Rural Teleconference
What Are Sensory Processing Disorders?: Rural Teleconference
Distance Delivery Training - Course Title:
Core Training for Resource Families Workbook (mailed out)
Core Training for Relative Caregivers Workbook (mailed out)
Training Tracks Training: (mailed to every home)
Individual Requested Topics other than Core Workbook (Self-Study mailed out)
Core Training for Resource Families Web-Based (Submitted)
Online Self-Study (Submitted for credit)-Varied Topics
Resource Family Orientation (Submitted online and self-study)

The ACRF conducted a 2015 satisfaction survey. There were 232 respondents (197 Resource Families with 37 in the process of becoming foster or adoptive and another 93 identifying as OCS, DJJ, adoption professional or community professional. The most used ACRF services include calling the local offices, using the website for materials, checking the calendar, checking

for training documentation or current training record, attending core training or orientation, receiving foster parenting support or information, or requesting information from an ACRF staff person. Over 80% of the respondents have used ACRF services two or more times; 35% have used ACRF services over five times in the past twelve months. Email, Training Tracks, and the web site seem to be the most popular ways that people find out about ACRF's services and training events. Overall, ACRF's staff and services received positive feedback. The overall themes of suggestions for improvements reflect some common threads:

1. A desire for more intensive and advanced training to keep up with the increasingly challenging behaviors of children coming into care.
2. The need for more training and creative ways to reach out to rural Alaska with training, support and culturally relevant trainings.

Through the collaboration with the ACRF, Alaska provides a comprehensive provider training system. The system is available in a variety of formats and there are topics specific to issues and needs of children in custody.

Services Array and Resource Development

Array of Services

Alaska did not achieve substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Service Array during the CFSR in 2008.

2015 Update: The state provides an array of services that assess the strengths and needs of children and families and determine other service needs, address the needs of families as well as the individual children in order to create a safe home environment, enable children to remain safely with their parents when reasonable, and help children in foster and adoptive placements achieve permanency. The state works to ensure that these services are accessible in all jurisdictions covered in the CFSP, although the vast geographic makeup of the State of Alaska may impede access. Areas of need continue to be identified in Alaska, specific to mental health and substance abuse services. The agency has demonstrated improvements in its provision of services provided through the independent living program for older youth. OCS is currently working to develop an easy to use list related to the services available through OCS contracts and grants, the agency providing the service, and the location of available services.

2016 Update: As referenced in last year's update, OCS has completed and published an online list of the services available through OCS grants, the agency providing the service, and the location of the available services. Work is underway to expand access to information for what services are offered in Alaska communities by both OCS and other Divisions.

The OCS Service Array manages funding and resources aimed at providing a variety of services through grants and/or contracts in the following areas:

- Child Advocacy Centers (CAC)s and the associated Multi-Disciplinary Teams (MDT);
- Family Support Services - primary and secondary prevention and support;
- Family Preservation Services – reducing the need for out-of-home care;
- Family Contact Services – promoting the return of children home following an out-of-home placement;
- Emergency Shelter Services – supporting the needs of youth in transition;
- Mentorship Services – identifying and fostering supportive relationships for youth;
- Independent Living Services – assisting youth in their transition to independence;
- Education and Training Voucher Program – post-secondary education support services for youth;
- Adoption and Legal Guardianship Incentive Award; and
- Adoption and Guardianship Assistance.

Individualizing Services

The service array (see services described in the later referenced “array of services”) can be individualized to meet the unique needs of children and families served by the agency. This item was rated as an area needing improvement in the 2008 CFSR final report.

2015 Update: OCS uses flexible funding to establish grants and contracts to meet the needs of children and families in Alaska. OCS is able to authorize funding for specific services needed to meet the needs of children through the life of the case, such as child care, clothing, activities, and more.

Much work has been done in recent years to increase the agency's ability to measure the quality and effectiveness of services; however, this also continues to be a growth area. Developing strong, meaningful collaborations will be critical in achieving conformity in these rating criteria. The agency will continue its many ongoing efforts to address this item. OCS has collaborated with the DPA and DSIDS to improve efficiencies in service development to children and families in need. Rural Child Welfare Grants are provided to offer culturally relevant services to Alaska Native children and families.

2016 Update: The service array can be individualized to meet the unique needs of children and families served by the agency. Strong community partnerships, especially those with Tribes, and stakeholder input concerning the array of service needs are important to OCS achieving necessary outcomes for children and families in Alaska. Services Array conducts a variety of ongoing needs assessments ranging from informal conversations with OCS offices around the state, stakeholder surveys, and grantee meetings. Information is collected about emergent needs and needs specific to communities, regions and/or special populations. Services Array is able to individualize services by seeking approval for funding for new contracts for needed services, increasing funding to current grantees based on need, and by collaborating with other divisions, non-profit agencies and Tribes for service delivery.

In the last year, OCS has contracted with a non-profit agency in Cordova, where there is no OCS office located, to assist in providing services to families who are involved with OCS. Services Array also implemented a transportation contract for Southcentral Region in order to assist with their increased needs for transportation services for clients to have access to resources and services to comply with their case plans and for parent/child contact. Work has been underway in the last year on a provider agreement for drug testing services to both reduce administrative burden and to improve general service provision to families experiencing substance abuse issues. A project with the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation was implemented to connect transition-aged youth currently or previously in OCS custody who experience a disability, and are in high school at the time of application, with Pre-Employment Transition Services (PETS). Through this work a career conference for youth will be planned in the coming year.

Agency Responsiveness to the Community

Alaska did not achieve substantial conformity for this systemic factor during the 2008 CFSR. Alaska is highly invested in consulting and partnering with stakeholders, and acknowledges the importance of such consultation and collaboration. Collaborative work is central to developing, implementing improving services to support the safety, permanency, and well-being for children and families.

2015 Update: The CFSP and enclosed plan for improvement incorporates strategies identified by stakeholders and partners.

2016 Update: Alaska continues to work closely with Tribal and community partners. Throughout this report there are examples of how OCS engages in ongoing consultation and receives feedback from partners in regards to the goals, objectives, and annual updates to the CFSP. OCS is responsive to the community examples of how feedback and partnership occurs, and how feedback has been used in the past year to improve systems is provided in Section 1 of this report and in the Plan for Improvement located in Section 3. In the coming year OCS Services Array unit will complete a needs assessment.

State Engagement and Consultation with Stakeholders Pursuant to CFSP and APSR

This item was rated as an area needing improvement during the 2008 CFSR because OCS did not have a process to consistently seek input from and engage stakeholders, including local child welfare agency managers and staff in the development of its goals and objectives for state child and family service programs.

The OCS engages with staff, Tribal and community partners in a cycle of continuous quality improvement to successfully implement the provisions of Alaska's CFSP and develop the related APSR. Meaningful engagement with internal and external stakeholders occurs throughout our continuous improvement cycle, which includes identifying a need, defining the problem, assessing the problem, planning strategies for intervention, implementing the interventions, and monitoring the results.

Alaska's 2015-2019 CFSP was developed with input and recommendations provided by key statewide external stakeholder groups during regularly scheduled monthly or annual meetings. These groups include: TSCG, CIP, Alaska CRP, FFCA, OCS grantees, RFAB, CJATF, Early Childhood Protective Services Committee, the ESC, the SLC, and the Health Oversight

Committee. The concerns and feedback from these groups directly influence the development and implementation of CFSP goals and objectives. For example, earlier interventions with families, better collaboration with community providers, quality case plans, stronger assessment of resource families, increased placement with relatives/ stronger supports for relative caregivers, retention of caseworkers and smaller caseloads for caseworkers were repeatedly identified by overlapping stakeholders as being essential to achieve in order to enhance the state's child welfare system.

Consequently, all of these concepts are incorporated into Alaska's 2015-2019 Plan for Improvement. Additionally, statewide surveys of stakeholder groups, facilitated by the OCS Quality Assurance Unit, enable OCS to obtain detailed information with which to gauge the effectiveness of the state's child and family services programs and identify areas for improvement. In 2013, OCS staff, Alaska Tribes, resource families and reunified parents were all surveyed. A central theme that emerged from the information gathered from these surveys is the importance of the relationship that the OCS caseworker develops with foster parents, Tribal staff and birth parents; and that it is the quality of this relationship for which the "success" of a case is dependent. Meanwhile, staff surveys and exit interviews with case workers who have resigned from the agency, repeatedly cite heavy caseload burdens as a major reason for why they are unable to achieve meaningful field work activities. This information was used in development of the CFSP.

2015 Update: In implementing the provisions of the CFSP and developing related APSRs, the state has engaged in ongoing consultation with Tribal representatives, consumers, service providers, foster care providers, the juvenile court, and other public and private child- and family-serving agencies, and includes the major concerns of these representatives in the goals, objectives, and annual updates of the CFSP. OCS continues to consistently meet and consult with key statewide external stakeholder groups during regularly scheduled meetings and teleconferences. These groups include: TSCG, CIP, Alaska CRP, FFCA, OCS grantees, Foster Parent Advisory Board, CJATF, Early Childhood Protective Services Committee, the Staff Advisory Board, the ESC, and other departmental partners such as DJJ, DPA, and DSDS. Section 1 of this report provides additional information about these partnerships and ongoing opportunities for engagement regarding the CFSP and APSR.

2016 Update: With the identification of this as an area of need, OCS worked with internal partners to develop supportive and engaging opportunities to receive staff input regarding programs, goals, and strategies. In 2009 the ESC was developed, in 2010 the SLC was developed, and in 2012 the Staff Advisory Board was established. OCS also made active efforts to solidify and develop partnerships with external stakeholders, examples of this include ongoing partnership with the TSCG and FFCA and the 2010 development of the RFAB.

In addition to the examples listed above who participated in development of the CFSP, OCS routinely engages with and solicits feedback and ideas from numerous and diverse statewide partners as a means of reviewing and assessing the identified priorities and strategies to improve outcomes and services to children and families. Stakeholder input is gathered throughout the year during ongoing program or population specific workgroups and committee meetings at state and local levels. These include but are not limited to: TSCG, CIP, Alaska CRP, FFCA, OCS grantees, RFAB and CJATF, the ESC, the SLC, the Health Oversight Committee, DBH, DPA, DJJ, DSDS, and other local and statewide partners.

The OCS' shares data on the OCS website so that staff and stakeholders are informed of the division's strengths, areas needing improvement, and progress. The CFSP and APSR is available on the state website for access by staff, partners, and the public. OCS recently updated the statistics and data on the website after receiving feedback that the information was not user friendly and was difficult to understand. OCS has received positive feedback about the updated data pages.

Taking into account the input received from stakeholders, the Division defined priorities and strategies as part of the Child and Family Services Plan 2015-2019 to improve safety, permanency, and well-being of children by addressing root problems. As part of the ongoing process, OCS identified the following priorities and strategies for the CFSP:

Priority #1: Assess and Address Risk and Need

Strategy 1.A: Standardize and enhance decisions at Intake and Initial Assessments

Strategy 1.B: Timely, Quality Case Plans & Permanency Goals

Strategy 1.C: Resource Family Assessment and Support

Priority #2: Timely & Safe Permanent Homes for Children/Youth

Strategy 2.A: In-Home Services/Resource Linkages/Parent Support

Strategy 2.B: Team Meeting Restructure

Strategy 2.C: Early Identification of Relatives

Priority #3: Continuous Quality Improvement
Strategy 3.A: Implementation of the OCS CQI Plan

OCS utilizes continuous engagement opportunities to seek feedback about the plan for improvement, through inclusion of internal and external stakeholders in quarterly teleconferences about the CFSP and APSR, inclusion on policy group and other committees and workgroups, and collaborative efforts with subject matter experts when issues arise. OCS will continue these efforts in the coming year.

Coordination of CFSP Services with Other Federal Programs

This was rated as an area of strength in the 2008 CFSR because OCS has collaborative efforts among federal and federally-funded assisted programs.

2015 Update: This continues to be an area of strength for the state, as demonstrated by ongoing collaboration and coordination with partners. The state's services under the CFSP are coordinated with services or benefits of other federal or federally assisted programs serving the same population. OCS continues to partner closely with the following agencies: the DBH for mental health and substance abuse services; DJJ; CACs; Alaska Children's Trust; CIP; DPA (TANF and child care services); Department of Revenue for Child Support; DSDS; Department of Public Safety; Social Security Administration; DOL; Department of Labor (Workforce Investment Act); and the DHSS Bureau of Vital Statistics. OCS has memoranda of agreements with the Department of Education; Department of Public Safety; Department of Revenue and numerous Tribes/Tribal entities that outline the agency collaborative efforts and responsibilities for children in the purview of the Alaska's child welfare system. Additionally, the DHSS Directors work cooperatively to resolve departmental issues that arise.

2016 Update: The OCS has a fully functioning statewide system to coordinate services under the CFSP with services or benefits provided by other federal or federally assisted programs serving the same population. The divisions in the DHSS have collaborated to identify partnerships and interdependencies, and then identified ways to reduce duplication and improve efficiencies. Through coordination with other federally-funded programs, the DHSS hopes to improve services and outcomes to children and families, while maximizing the funding opportunities. OCS relies on close relationships with a wide range of partners and interdependencies to improve the outcomes for Alaskan children and families. Specific examples of such partnerships include working with the following:

- Title XIX medical eligibility: OCS has partnered with other divisions to insure a seamless transition for former foster care youth in accessing Medicaid until age 26.
- Title IV-E eligibility: OCS has focused on meaningful process changes to better leverage federal dollars and services from other agencies.
- Division of Behavioral Health – Through collaboration efforts, DBH is able to leverage existing grants and services so that OCS clients can benefit. The DBH is working to enroll more Medicaid providers to meet the needs of children and families in Alaska. OCS also works closely with DBH on medical-necessity determinations for children in need of residential or psychiatric residential care.
- Division of Health Care Services and Department of Public Safety: OCS partners with these agencies to ensure timely and accurate background checks are received for OCS resource families. OCS has reimbursable billing agreements with both agencies to pay for background checks and fingerprints completed.
- Division of Public Assistance: OCS has partnered with DPA to leverage TANF federal dollars towards existing OCS services.
- Infant Learning Program: Child protective services partners with the Infant Learning Program for the early identification of young children with developmental, cognitive and physical delays, for early intervention.
- Social Security Administration: OCS successfully completed a Social Security Audit in August 2015.
- Tribal partners: OCS and Tribal partners have worked together on the Tribal title IV-E partnership since the late 1990s. The purpose of the Tribal title IV-E reimbursement program is to pass federal title IV-E funds to the Tribe/Tribal entities through the OCS to increase child welfare services to Tribal citizens. The program allows the OCS to make title IV-E foster care administration funds and title IV-E training funds available to the Tribe/Tribal Entity as a reimbursement for expenses incurred by Tribe/Tribal entity. OCS currently has agreements with 11 Tribes/Tribal entities and is actively seeking new partners across the state. In addition, OCS is currently in the initial implementation phase with two Tribal title IV-E maintenance partners.

As the title IV-B/title IV-E agency, the OCS shares information with the following partners through approved memorandum of agreement (MOA) to: access services for children or families, verify income and resources for parents to determine eligibility, verify eligibility for services, monitor health care services, locate potential resources, and provide legal documentation for children by obtaining their birth certificates. MOAs assist in collaboration efforts with Department of Revenue (Permanent Fund Dividend), Department of Education, and Bureau of Vital Statistics. In the coming year, OCS will continue to coordinate services with these agencies to create improvements and efficiencies in service delivery for Alaskans.

Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention

Standards Applied Equally

This item was rated as strength during the 2008 CFSR Alaska claims title IV-E funds only for children placed in fully licensed foster homes. The standards are applied to all licensed or approved foster family homes or child care institutions receiving title IV-B or IV-E funds.

2015 Update: A title IV-E audit is scheduled in November 2015 and will provide additional information about the compliance with IV-E funding.

2016 Update: The Children's Bureau, Administration for Children and Families conducted a secondary review of the Alaska title IV-E foster care program during the week of November 16, 2015, in accordance with federal provisions as part 45, section 1356.71 of the code of Federal Regulations. The Children's Bureau determined that Alaska was in substantial compliance with federal eligibility requirements and the next federal title IV-E review will be a primary review held within three years.

Requirements for Criminal Background Checks

The 2008 CFSR final report identified this item as an area of strength because criminal background checks are completed on all foster, adoptive, and relative placement homes. The state complies with federal requirements for criminal background clearances as related to licensing or approving foster care and adoptive placements and has provisions for addressing the safety of foster care and adoptive placements for children.

2015 Update: In SFY15 new fingerprint equipment was installed and changes to the State of Alaska Background Check Program system have assisted OCS in continuing to demonstrate compliance in this area. Background checks are completed consistently for licensed, unlicensed, and adoptive resource families and fingerprint results are received timely.

2016 Update: The state remains in compliance with federal requirements for criminal background clearance related to licensing or approving foster care and adoptive placements. Fingerprint-based criminal background clearance checks are completed on all foster parents, unlicensed relative and pre-adoptive or adoptive homes through the Division of Health Care Services (HCS), Background Check Program (BCP). A fingerprint-based background check conducted by the BCP consists of two parts. The first is a name-based search requiring review of at least ten registries available to the department. The second consist of a review of fingerprint-based criminal state and FBI history results. The combined review of both name-based and fingerprint based searches are required prior to an individual receiving an "eligible" determination.

The New Alaska Background Check System (NABCS) is the DHSS program for the processing of criminal history check for individuals in contact with Alaska's vulnerable populations receiving services in licensed and/or certified entities. NABCS became accessible to OCS in November 2015; since then OCS has seen improvements in the timeliness of background check information. In the past, the average time from submitting fingerprints to the receipt of the results were between three to six months. Now, with NABCS and new OCS Live Scan machines, the average time for fingerprint results from submitting fingerprints to the receipt is six days.

Alaska state statutes and regulations allow for a variance of barrier crimes or conditions through a departmental barrier crimes variance committee. In Alaska, the barrier crimes and conditions are more restrictive than the title IV-E requirements. Alaska has a process to allow variances for barrier crimes or conditions to be approved when the barring issue does not pose a safety threat to children in custody.

Diligent Recruitment of Foster and Adoptive Homes

The 2008 CFSR final report identified this item as an area in need of improvement.

2015 Update: Statewide and regional recruitment and retention plans are used by OCS to prepare and plan for the diligent recruitment needed to meet the needs of Alaskan children and families. OCS utilizes a variety of child specific recruitment techniques such as Wendy's Wonderful Kids and 3 adoption exchanges. Additionally, OCS participates in ongoing community collaboration and individual recruitment to meet the needs in all areas of the state.

The ongoing issue related to the disproportionate rate of Alaska Native children in care is a challenge for the agency, but with that OCS has chosen to focus on early identification of relatives. A pilot project was completed in the OCS Western Region to enhance and support relative requests for placement. This specific item is addressed in the CFSP objective 2.C.1. In the past year OCS utilized a variety of methods to recruit foster and adoptive homes. There has also been a workgroup to work on recruitment in OCS Western Region. The workgroup has focused on identification of an emergency shelter home, and is a collaborative effort with community and Tribal partners. Here are a few highlighted activities from the past year:

- OCS has utilized Facebook to advertise the need for resource families
- OCS purchased an ad in Alaska Nursing Today to recruit for homes to serve children with complex medical needs.
- Recruitment events in medical care facilities to recruit for homes to serve children with complex medical needs.
- Recruitment booth at the Alaska State High School Basketball Tournament
- A variety of local events including presentation at service organization meetings and booths at community events.
- Retention events such as National Adoption Day celebrations and foster parent appreciation gatherings.

2016 Update: OCS has a process in place to ensure the diligent recruitment of foster and adoptive families who reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of children for whom foster and adoptive homes are needed. On 5/16/16, there were 1,631 Native children in out-of-home placement, and 298 licensed foster care homes that may be considered an ICWA placement preference. These numbers indicate the disproportionality between the number of Native children in out-of-home placement and the number of foster homes that may be considered an ICWA preference placement. OCS strives for children to be placed in the highest possible ICWA placement preference and for this reason, continues to actively work to recruit homes that may be identified as an ICWA placement preference. OCS partners closely with Tribes across the state to recruit and retain foster homes.

Statewide and regional recruitment and retention plans are used by OCS to prepare and plan for the diligent recruitment to meet the needs of Alaskan children. Each region develops a regional recruitment and retention plan to identify needs in their communities. Regional teams are comprised of OCS staff (licensing specialists, protective services specialists, ICWA specialists and permanency planning specialists), community and Tribal partners and resource families. The regional teams meet quarterly to review overall effectiveness of the plans. Goals and objectives are established by the regional teams to support the existing resource families (licensed, unlicensed, adoptive and guardianship), and to also recruit new families. Each region has identified a need for an increase in foster homes for children with complex medical needs, large sibling groups, teens, and foster homes that may be considered an ICWA preference placement. The SFY 17 regional recruitment and retentions plans will indicate baseline data and the increased outcome for each region for the above target populations.

Below are highlights of the recruitment work in the past year, which demonstrate the OCS commitment to diligent recruitment of resource families.

- [“One Child”](#) and [Alaska Native Foster Homes](#)” television commercials were run as 30 second advertisements with the Alaska Broadcaster Association for 3 months. The commercials featured former foster children and the Director of the Office of Children’s Services. Open hyperlink to view commercials.
- The Western Region SDR team continued to meet during SFY 16 to address the need for therapeutic foster care, emergency shelter care, and on-going support for existing resource families (licensed, unlicensed, guardianship and adoptive). WRO recruitment and retention efforts include:
 - During this FY, two emergency shelter care homes were licensed for the Western Region;
 - advertisements were run at the local movie theater located in Bethel during December 2016;
 - the Western Region workgroup in partnership with ACRF and Alaska Child and Family (AK C&F) provided onsite training for resource families in May 2016. The event was held in conjunction with May foster parent appreciation month;

- WRO SDR team, AK C&F and YKHC are working together to strengthen partnership with Tribal and private health care providers. AK C&F continues to provide support with Kalskag schools, and is reaching out to Upper Kuskokwim Schools to begin increased partnership; and
 - Beginning in April 2016, the WRO licensing unit began providing outreach to the unlicensed relative resource families located in the Western Region. A work plan was developed by the OCS licensing manager, WRO protective services manager and the WRO licensing supervisor.
- In April, Anchorage licensing staff worked with a writer from “The Alaska Nurse” magazine. The article focused on the need for foster parents to provide services for children with complex medical conditions, teens, sibling groups, and Alaska Native children.
 - The Fostering Hope Coalition continued to meet in SFY 16 and identified a goal target of finding adoptive parents for legally free children. As part of this initiative, Beacon Hill in partnership with OCS and ACRF has been working on re-commissioning the Heart Gallery and revamping the adoption exchange.
 - During FY 16, the OCS has out to local movie theaters to inquire about possible “screen time” for short advertisements on the need for resource families throughout the state. Juneau and Ketchikan movie theaters have agreed to air the PSA for foster care recruitment as part of the previews beginning in May 2016.
 - In April, OCS staff collaborated with Tribal partners and the local child placement agency to host a recruitment event in Juneau. The event was held at a local salmon hatchery. Alaska’s First Lady was present to support and encourage foster parents (this is one of several events she has attended to support the need for foster parents in Alaska).

State Use of Cross-Jurisdictional Resources for Permanent Placements

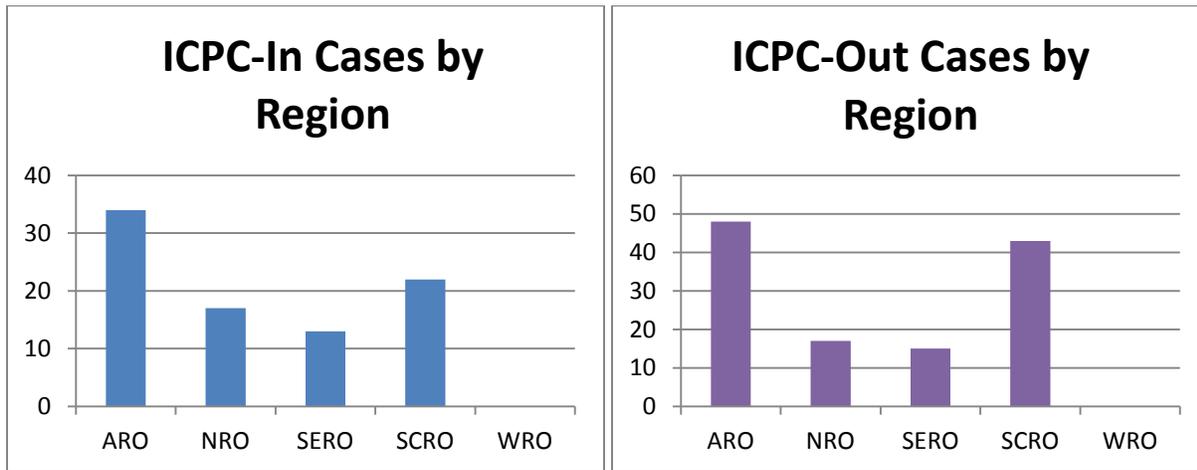
The 2008 CFSR reported this as a strength Alaska has in place a process for the effective use of cross-jurisdictional resources to facilitate timely adoptive or permanent placements for waiting children.

2015 Update: OCS continues to manage the Alaska Adoption Exchange and contracts with the Northwest Adoption Exchange to list children on the Northwest Adoption Exchange and the AdoptUSKids exchanges. Wendy’s Wonderful Kids (WWK) continues to be utilized in Alaska. OCS works closely with the Catholic Social Services WWK recruiter in Anchorage. The PARKA (Preparation of Adoption Readiness for Kids in Alaska) program is funded by a contract with the ACRF and continues to be utilized to recruit, train, and assist with matching children with potential adoptive families.

2016 Update: OCS continues to manage the Alaska Adoption Exchange and contracts with the Northwest Adoption Exchange to list children on the Northwest Adoption Exchange and the AdoptUSKids exchanges. In the last year, OCS has begun to work with an additional adoption exchange site called “A Family for Every Child” for photo listings.

Catholic Social Services’ WWK program continues to be utilized in the Anchorage and Southcentral regions. WWK works to facilitate diligent child specific recruitment for legally free children who do not have an identified permanent home. OCS works closely with the WWK recruiter in Anchorage to make referrals and to work on finding connections and potential placement resources for the child. The PARKA program is funded by a contract with the ACRF and continues to be utilized to provide intensive training, preparation, matching and support to families who are motivated to adopt special needs children from foster care. This program has gained increased recognition in Alaska and has become a source of recruitment for foster families interested in adoption. Recently, a strong partnership has developed between WWK and the PARKA program to enhance matching of special needs children who are legally free with families who have received intensive training and preparation to adopt.

The State of Alaska is a member of the Interstate Compact for the Placement of Children and is bound by the Compact’s regulations. Alaska Statute and OCS policy supports the ICPC regulations. ICPC cases are divided into ICPC-out cases, in which children in the custody of Alaska OCS may be sent to other states, and ICPC-in cases, in which children from other states may be placed in Alaska to live with parents, relatives, or other foster care providers. On March 31, 2016, there were 223 Alaska children involved in 158 ICPC-Out cases, and 136 children in 86 ICPC-In cases.



Source: ICPC database and ORCA (3/31/2016)

ICPC regulations provide for 60 days to complete non-expedited home studies. It allows for an extension up to 75 days in cases where circumstances beyond the control of the agency do not allow for all necessary information to be gathered within the 60 day window. Below is data indicating the percentage of ICPC home studies completed within 60 days. Data used for this determination is from the OCS ORCA database, specifically from the ICPC record for each home study request. These studies include parent, relative, relative foster care, non-relative foster care, and adoption study requests.

Table 8: Completion time for ICPC-in home studies by calendar year:

Year	Completed in 60 Days	Percentage in 60 Days	Completed in 90 Days	Percentage in 90 Days	Incomplete	Total
2012	28	33.7%	42	50.6%	2	85
2013	36	33.6%	63	58.9%	0	107
2014	37	27.4%	60	60.6%	0	99
2015	30	45.4%	45	68.2%	12	78

Source: State of Alaska (SOA) Online Resources for Children in Alaska (ORCA) Report (3/31/2016)

Table 9: Completion time for ICPC-out home studies by calendar year:

Year	Completed in 60 Days	Percentage in 60 Days	Completed in 90 Days	Percentage in 90 Days	Incomplete	Total
2012	39	29.1%	58	50.7%	3	137
2013	71	41.8%	104	61.2%	4	174
2014	60	41.7%	93	64.6%	4	148
2015	50	44.2%	74	65.5%	33	146

Source: State of Alaska (SOA) Online Resources for Children in Alaska (ORCA) Report (3/31/2016)

Based on all home studies received from another state in calendar year 2015, 45.4% were completed within 60 days of the request and 68.2% were completed within 90 days of the request. Based on all home studies completed by the State of Alaska for another requesting state in calendar year 2015, 44.2% were completed in 60 days and 65.5% were completed within 90 days of the request.

SECTION 3: UPDATE TO THE PLAN FOR IMPROVEMENT AND PROGRESS MADE TO IMPROVE OUTCOMES

2015 Update: Beginning in January 2015, OCS facilitated meetings to gather additional feedback and input regarding the recently approved CFSP Plan for Improvement. Stakeholders who engaged in these opportunities included OCS managers and supervisor, Tribal partners, and representatives from DOL, CIP, CWA, FFCA, and others. The priorities and strategies identified in the 2015-2019 CFSP will continue to be the focus of OCS. Collaborative meetings occurred in January, April, and March to allow internal and external partners an opportunity for input on the state assessment, updates needed to the CFSP, and development of the APSR. Data from the CQI/QA unit reviews, as well as federal reporting data from the SACWIS system have also been used to assess progress. There has not been a recent CFSR or title IV-E Foster Care Eligibility Review in Alaska in the past year; however, Alaska is scheduled for a review in November 2015. OCS does incorporate items anticipated to require a program improvement plan in the future.

There have been modifications and alignment of objectives, completion dates, and proposed outcomes based on stakeholder input. In the last year, OCS has focused on centralizing intake functions. This is a large undertaking given the number of communities in Alaska. It is the belief of OCS management that consistent screening decisions will significantly improve outcomes with children and families. Vacancies and staff turnover, coupled with caseloads that have grown significantly in the past year, are part of the reason some areas do not show progress. An additional focus for OCS in SFY15 has been to modify how maltreatment findings are made. In February 2015, OCS implemented a new statewide process; it is anticipated that OCS may see an increase in the rate of maltreatment due to this change.

The 2017 APSR will include a column to document feedback loops and collaborative efforts on each objective. There are several objectives in place to address identified areas needing improvement identified in the assessment of performance using QA and AFCARS data, as well as the state performance workbook. Specific objectives to address the repeat maltreatment, permanency outcomes, and placement stability are included in this plan for improvement.

2016 Update: OCS is making progress on developing and implementing the identified strategies and objectives. The data provided throughout this report continues to show that the identified priorities and strategies continue to be urgent for Alaska, if the agency is going to improve outcomes related to the CFSR standards. OCS has successfully completed priority #3 related to CQI; although the objectives have been successfully completed and the strategies have been implemented, these strategies will continue to be important methods to track, review, and analyze information related to the safety, permanency, and well-being.

As stated previously in this report, during 2016 OCS leadership identified specific core services. The core services are fundamental to all aspects of OCS work, as the focus on areas that will affect outcomes for children and families through the life of a case. The objectives and strategies in the Plan for Improvement provide focus on those areas. Data continues to support the priorities and strategies in the plan as methods to improve outcomes for children and families and to provide a more comprehensive, coordinated and effective child and family services continuum. OCS does not have a current Program Improvement Plan (PIP) in place for any programs; however it is anticipated that following the completion of the CFSR, a PIP will be required. OCS believes the items identified in the Plan for Improvement are representative of the issues that will be identified in the CFSR as areas of need. In the past year, no new goals or objectives have been added to the plan. The matrix located on the following pages has been updated to reflect modifications to timelines and updates regarding the state's progress on each item.

Child and Family Services Plan for Improvement

Priority #1: Assess and Address Risk and Need

1.A	Strategy: Standardize and enhance decisions at Intake and Initial Assessments			
Objectives	Measure of Progress and Timeline	Projected Outcomes	Updates /Comments	
1.A.1	<p>Refine and continue efforts to standardize and make safe intake screening decisions statewide.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standardized screening criteria policy finalized. • Develop and implement a CQI tool to measure the accuracy of the intake screening decisions by July 2016. • Screening decisions will be accurate in 70% of cases by 2017 and 90% of cases by 2019. • Centralize Intake statewide by January 2017 2019. 	<p>Reduce Repeat Maltreatment</p> <p>Initial Assessments will be completed in a timely manner.</p> <p>Accuracy of screening decisions will increase.</p>	<p>2015: Work group established and work plan developed to outline tasks and implementation in process. Based on feedback received from internal and external stakeholders, OCS has changed the timeline for completion of this objective. Community messaging, human resource work regarding position locations, and work space issues will need to be addressed in the coming year. **Projected outcomes have been changed. Repeat Maltreatment and timely completion of IAs will be measured through SACWIS data. The accuracy of screening decisions will be measured by the CQI tool being developed.</p> <p>2016: OCS continues to work towards centralizing intake functions; this means a unit of intake staff in one location with one manager overseeing this work. The Protective Services Manager I for this unit has been hired and is transitioning into the position. The Protective Services Specialist IV (supervisor) positions are expected to be relocated and in place by 07/2017. The implementation of this objective was been delayed due to the HR process and full implementation date has been changed to January 2019 after careful consideration of input from internal and external stakeholders. OCS is continuing discussions with Tribal and community partners regarding the centralized intake functions, to respond to questions and concerns regarding this strategy.</p>
1.A.2	<p>Ensure accurate risk assessments and impending danger assessments (IDAAs) are completed and the appropriate intervention/case decision is selected.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Case Review data monitoring (ongoing). • Case Review data indicates 75% achievement by June 20162017 and 90% by June 20172018. 	<p>Reduce Repeat Maltreatment</p>	<p>2015: FRAN and IDAA training completed. Coaching / Mentoring position in Anchorage began. Data from QA reviews utilize the old CFSR instrument. Of 255 cases reviewed in CY 14, 67% were in compliance for item 4 (safety and risk assessment).</p> <p>2016: A workgroup has been identified to work on this goal. QA data for CY15 shows that 45% of the cases assessed for Item 3 (Risk and Safety Assessment and Management) were found to be in compliance. This is an area of needed growth for</p>

				OCS. Dates to achieve this objective by have been changed.
1.A.3	Ensure Initial Assessments are completed in a timely and accurate manner.	ORCA and Case Review data monitoring will indicate timely completion and accurate assessments in 75% of cases by June 2017 2019.	Reduce Repeat Maltreatment	<p>2015: No progress on this objective, as centralized intake has been the primary focus this year. IA completion will be a target in the next two years, we a goal date of June 2017. OCS will report work on this goal with the 2017 APSR. In calendar year 2014, IA completion compliance rate, meaning the IA was completed within 45 days, was 17.7% statewide. In CY 2013, this was 20.9%.</p> <p>2016: In calendar year 2015, OCS completed 7,760 Initial Assessments (IA). The IA completion compliance rate (meaning the IA was completed within 45 days) was 15.6% statewide. In CY 2014, this was 17.7%. The timely completion of IAs has decreased 2%.</p> <p>Completion date of this goal was changed through discussion with the Director’s Executive Team. Work is occurring on this objective, through the Core Services focus driven by the OCS management team. Each month the Division Operations Manager reviews data related to this item with the regional managers.</p> <p>OCS is updating the Initial Assessment policy to include clear guidance regarding documentation requirements. OCS is implementing the “Rapid Response! System” for cases with children under the age of 3.</p>
1.B	Strategy: Timely, Quality Case Plans & Permanency Goals			
Objectives		Measure of Progress and Timeline	Projected Outcomes	Updates /Comments
1.B.1	Support implementation efforts already underway to ensure Family Service Assessments/Case Plans are completed in an individualized, timely and family-centered manner for all parents and children.	ORCA data will indicate that 95% of out of home cases have a current case plan. Case plans will be completed within 60 days of removal. Case Review data will indicate statewide achievement of 75% for Well-being Outcome 1, indicating that parents and children are involved in the process, and accurately have their needs assessed and addressed by June 2017.	Increase Timely Permanency	<p>2015: No work completed on this objective. OCS will report on this goal in the 2017 APSR. 6/15/15 data shows 57% of cases with a child out of the home for 60 days or more have a current case plan.</p> <p>*Measure of progress language has been changed for this objective.</p> <p>2016: A workgroup was established to review case plans and case worker visits. Pilot sites have been identified to utilize carbon copy case plans in the field, to engage parents in actively participating in case planning. On 4/26/16 ORCA data showed that 65.8% of cases with a child out of the home for 60+ days had a current case plan. This is an increase since last year and is positive for OCS to show growth in documentation of case plans. QA data</p>

				from CY 2015 shows a compliance rate of 29% statewide with item 13. Item 13 is related to the family and child engagement in case planning and measures qualitative and quantitative compliance.
1.B.2	Improve the timeliness to permanency for children under the age of five through development of programming to meet the child's specific needs.	90% of children under the age of five will be placed in a potentially permanent placement within 13 months of being in care.	Increase Timely Permanency	<p>2015: No work completed on this objective OCS will report on this goal in the 2017 APSR. 6/15/15 data shows 337 children under age 5 have been in OOH care 13 months or longer. Of these, 271 (80%) are in a potentially permanent placement. This is an area of need identified in Alaska; this will be an area of focus in the coming year. OCS is developing a plan to realign positions to increase focus on timely permanency. Additionally, OCS is reviewing the accuracy of data related to timeliness of documenting the pre-adoptive homes. At this time, no specific data is being provided, as we are reviewing the policy and make changes in the documentation expectations for this data element.</p> <p>2016: OCS permanency specialists and ICWA specialists are working on a permanency project to improve timeliness to permanency for children. In January 2016 the SCRO began focused efforts on improving timeliness to permanency.</p> <p>ORCA data on 4/26/16 shows 616 children under age 5 have been in OOH care 13 months or longer; this is a significant increase since last year. Of these children, 510 (82.8%) are in a potentially permanent placement. This is a slight increase since last year. OCS is developing strategies to address permanency needs for all children. More specific strategies are expected in the next year.</p>
1.B.3	Increase timeliness of reunification and other permanency goals through implementation of alternative planning, transition planning, timely permanency goal setting and changing.	Case Review data will indicate improvements in statewide timely achievement of permanency goals and OCS will achieve 85% for calendar year 2015, and 90% for calendar year 2016 for Item 7 (Permanency Goal for Child)	Increase Timely Permanency Reduce the number of children in foster/reduce caseloads	<p>2015: A permanency conference facilitated by Facing Foster Care in Alaska, in collaboration with the OCS Independent Living Program staff. This conference focused on needs for older youth. Data from QA reviews utilize the old CFSR instrument. Of 100 cases reviewed for this item in CY 14, 66% were in compliance for item 8 (timeliness of reunification/guardianship). Of 102 cases reviewed for this item in CY 14, 61% were in compliance for item 9 (timeliness of adoption). Of 17 cases reviewed in CY 14, 100% were in compliance for item 10 (APPLA). This is an area of need identified in Alaska; this will be an area of focus in the coming year. OCS is developing a plan to realign positions to increase focus on timely permanency.</p> <p>2016: OCS permanency specialists and ICWA specialists are working to improve timeliness to permanency for children. In January 2016 the SCRO began focused efforts on improving</p>

				<p>timeliness to permanency through use of data and regular meetings to track accountability for progress. This work has focused on children in trial home visits for more than 90 days and children in custody 24 months or longer in a placement with a relative.</p> <p>The IL Permanency Coordinator established a process to track goals monthly and RILS are held accountable for monthly case worker visits with youth. Since September of 2015, increased scrutiny of APPLA has resulted in the number of APPLA goals being reduced from 35 to 29. APPLA goals account for 10 percent of permanency goals for all youth, ages 16 to 19 in out of home placement.</p>
1.B.4	Increase the quality and frequency of case worker visits with parents and children to promote progress towards case plan goals.	Monthly visit rate for children will be at 95% and for parents at 50% by June 2017.	<p>Decrease removals to foster care</p> <p>Increase Reunification Rates</p> <p>Reduce Repeat Maltreatment</p>	<p>2015: No work completed on this objective; OCS will report on this goal in the 2017 APSR. See monthly case worker visit information provided elsewhere in this report.</p> <p>2016: This is an area of need for Alaska. In Calendar Year 2015, July had the highest percent of documented worker contacts with parents at 20%. Mothers have a higher rate of contact than fathers. In July OCS documented 24.8% Mothers received a monthly contact, compared to 15.7% of fathers.</p> <p>OCS ORCA data shows that case worker visits with children occur more regularly. FFY 2015 OCS ORCA data shows that the total number of visits made by OCS caseworkers on a monthly basis to children in foster care was 78 percent. This is a decrease from the previous year and OCS is not in compliance with the standard of 95 percent. OCS is required to have at least 50 percent of the monthly visits occur in the child's residence. In FFY 2015 OCS ORCA data shows that 66 percent of the monthly visits by OCS caseworkers to children in foster care occurred in the child's residence. This is a decrease from the previous year; however OCS continues to be in compliance with this requirement.</p> <p>A workgroup was established to review case plans and case worker visits. Pilot sites have been identified to utilize case worker visit tool to ensure compliance with quality standards. ORCA report is available for supervisors and managers to track case worker visits with children and parents.</p>
1.C	Strategy: Resource Family Assessment and Support			
Objectives		Measure of Progress and Timeline	Projected Outcomes	Updates /Comments

1.C.1	Improve timeliness, accuracy, and assessment of background check information for resource families (licensed and unlicensed).	Identify work group and develop an implementation work plan by October 2015 January 2016 .	Improve safety in foster care settings and increase placement stability.	<p>2015: Information gathering has occurred with Foster Care Licensing Managers. Workgroup to be established. *This objective has been changed due to identified barriers to implementing a comprehensive Resource Family Assessment process. Through thorough assessment and background checks OCS intends to improve safety in foster care. The issue of background checks and assessment has been identified as a focus by our Tribal and community partners through various meetings and discussions.</p> <p>2016: A workgroup was established and a work plan was developed. The date was extended for this strategy. OCS is working on a phased approach for implementation. This workgroup includes two Tribal partners.</p> <p>Phase 1 – Enhanced education for OCS staff and partners regarding background check requirements. Micro-learning videos and quick reference handout developed for training and use by the field staff related to background check basics.</p> <p>Phase 2 – Policy revision to enhance the partnership with Tribes to assess placement options.</p> <p>SERO pilot program provides additional support to unlicensed foster care. This program increased tracking of background check compliance for unlicensed providers.</p> <p>Title IV-E audit was completed in November 2015 and OCS was found to be compliant with IV-E standards, which include background check requirements.</p>
1.C.2	Support relative care givers to ensure placement stability by 6/30/2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore creating a “Resource Family Specialists” job class that would support both licensed and unlicensed caregivers. (Completed 2015) • Explore the development of flexible funding to allow for concrete supports in times of need, and other resources/services needed to stabilize the placement. 	Increase placement stability and number of relative placements	<p>2015: Community Care Licensing Specialist I (CCLS) position description (PD) updated. CCLS II and CCLS III PD’s will be updated. The Provider Payment Unit (PPU) Coordinator provided TA to 4 regional offices related to support and resources. PPU and Div. Public Assistance managers met to discuss support options for families. There are approximately 250 unlicensed relative caregivers in Alaska. Supporting these resource families will assist with increasing placement stability. This is an area of need identified in Alaska and will be an area of focus in the coming year. OCS is working to add additional positions to focus on resource family support and assessment.</p> <p>2016: OCS is working on the development of an Emergency Relief Support program for unlicensed relatives. This program is currently being piloted in</p>

				<p>the SERO. Unlicensed relatives receive a monthly stipend for the first 3 months to assist them in providing for children in custody, and provide incentive to become licensed for foster care. Additionally this program builds in additional support and contact with the foster family by the payment and licensing specialists to provide support and information.</p> <p>In WRO licensing is providing additional assistance to unlicensed foster parents immediately following placement, by initiating a support call to the family, assisting them in completing background checks, and providing information about licensure and public assistance programs.</p> <p>Effective March 1, 2016, OCS updated the <i>Right to Request Placement</i> notices and the corresponding policy. The notices are sent to all identified relatives at the time of initial placement, when we identify a new relative, or at the time of a goal change to adoption. OCS updated the notice to make them easier to read and understand.</p>
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1.C.3	Develop a system for consumer input of youth ages 12-21 to assess concerns about placement disruptions and quality of care.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In partnership with FFCA and RLS, develop a screening tool, policy and procedures related to placement disruptions by June 2015 September 2016. Fully implement the process by December 2015 2016. 	Increase placement stability	<p>2015: Minimal progress on this objective has been made. There have been collaborative discussions with youth and stakeholders, but the primary work will begin in Fall 2015. OCS will report on this goal in the 2017 APSR.</p> <p>2016: Staff changes delayed work on this objective. Dates were changed to allow OCS to seek youth feedback. OCS began collaboration on this effort in March 2016 with FFCA youth.</p>
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Priority #2: Timely & Safe Permanent Homes for Children/Youth

2.A	Strategy: In-Home Services/Resource Linkages/Parent Support			
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Objectives	Measure of Progress and Timeline	Projected Outcomes	Updates /Comments	
2.A.1	Develop and standardize a process for making and determining the right referrals are made to community services and families are assisted with	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase the participation/engagement of OCS referred clients in the Infant Learning Program (ILP) for children birth to age three with substantiated reports of harm by June 2019. Develop and implement a tracking method to 	<p>Enhance Community Partnerships</p> <p>Reduce Repeat Maltreatment</p>	<p>2015: No progress on this objective; OCS will report on this goal in the 2017 APSR. OCS is developing an easy to use list of services available in each community of the state. Barrier identified includes lack of feedback between CPS and ILP staff related to client referrals and follow through. Increased collaboration will be needed to impact this. *Timeline has been changed for this objective.</p> <p>2016: OCS services and needs assessment survey sent to CFSP stakeholder group in April. The results of the survey were reviewed and discussed in</p>

	initiating the service if needed, regardless of whether a case is opened or closed.	monitor referrals by June 2016 2017. • Demonstrate incremental increases in number of referrals made annually by 2019.		this meeting, as was current data and 2017 APSR. The survey inquired about unmet needs for children and families. More details are provided in Section 1 of this report.
2.A.2	Standardize and enhance OCS's statewide in-home services model.	New in-home services model will be fully implemented with fidelity by December 2017. CQI data will indicate that in-home cases are appropriately identified and services.	Decrease removals to foster care Increase Reunification Rates Reduce Repeat Maltreatment	2015: No progress on this objective. OCS will report on this goal in the 2017 APSR. OCS managers review in-home data on a regular basis. Other priority items such as administrative reviews and centralized intake have been the focus of OCS. 2016: This year's CRP report identified this as an area of concerns in Alaska. Since that report, OCS completed a comprehensive review of the current and past in-home models utilized in Alaska. OCS is exploring options to contract or grant services for in-home programs.
2.A.3	Establish a birth parent mentoring program to provide support to parents active in the OCS system.	Pre and post surveys of parents involved in the mentoring program for at least 90 days will indicate an improved understanding of the OCS system and increased confidence in their ability to self advocate and achieve case plan goals. Develop plan by January 2018. Implement by January 2019.	Increase Reunifications	2015: OCS continues to see the value of this as a way to engage parents. However, given other priorities, this objective is on hold until a later date. 2016: OCS is exploring options to contract or grant for birth parent mentoring program.
2.B	Strategy: Team Meeting Restructure			
Objectives		Measure of Progress and Timeline	Projected Outcomes	Updates /Comments
2.B.1	Develop an effective, consistent structure for client team meetings.	• Establish a work group with internal and external stakeholders to explore and identify needed changes and develop a work plan by December 2015. • Work plan will be fully implemented by June 2017.	Increase timely Permanency Enhance Community Partnerships	2015: This objective is on hold until 2.B.2 is completed. 2016: <u>This objective is removed from the AK CFSP.</u> This will be something OCS continues to work on to improve efficiency. It will not have a direct and measurable effect on the CFSR outcomes, and has been removed after consultation with OCS management.
2.B.2	Administrative Review process will be	• Establish a work group with internal and external stakeholders to explore	Increase timely Permanency	2015: OCS workgroup assessing the feasibility of court administered administrative reviews. A work plan has been developed. Additionally, OCS is

	restructured and enhanced	and identify needed changes and develop a work plan by June 30, 2015. • Work plan will be fully implemented by June 2017.	Enhance Community Partnerships	reviewing the current process and exploring re-aligning positions to streamline the process. 2016: The first phase of this project has been accomplished. A planning/implementation process has been carried out with OCS staff, AAG Manager, and Tribal partners. The agency has been granted three new positions who have been placed into the CQI/QA Unit as well as two clerks who are responsible for the administrative reviews. All five region's reviews will be conducted in the CQI unit effective June 1st. Work will continue on a planning process for coordinating court hearings with the review process.
2.C	Strategy: Early Identification of Relatives			
Objectives		Measure of Progress and Timeline	Projected Outcomes	Updates /Comments
2.C.1	Increase early identification of relatives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> By December 31, 2015 50% of children will have 2 relatives documented within 30 days of placement. By June 2016 2017 80% of children will have 3 or more relatives documented within 60 days of removal. 	Enhance Community Partnerships Increase Placement Stability	<p>2015: pilot project in Western Alaska was completed. This pilot supported relatives in requesting placement of children in custody, and held OCS accountable to document the requests and make a decision about the request in a timely manner. The relative request process was updated in policy 3.5.4 and statewide training complete in June 2015. 55% of children removed during CY14 for 30+ days had 2 or more relatives documented within 30 days. 45% of children removed during CY14 for 60+ days had 3 or more relatives documented within 60 days of removal.</p> <p>2016: 62.8% of children removed during CY15 for 30+ days had 2 or more relatives documented within 30 days. 47.5% of children removed during CY15 for 60+ days had 3 or more relatives documented within 60 days of removal.</p> <p>OCS is documenting improvements in both categories. Measurement #1 of 50% of children will have 2 relatives documented within 30 days was met last year and again this year. Measurement #2 with 80% of children having 3 or more relatives documented within 60 days has not been met. OCS is confident that we can achieve this measurement, for that reason the timeline for the measurement was extended to June 2017.</p> <p>OCS has increased training efforts related to the importance of early identification of relatives. ICWA Program Instruction was issued which provides additional guidance on this matter. This was a topic discussed in the January CFSP stakeholder meeting. This discussion led to</p>

				<p>additional discussions with AAG and Public Defender Office related to information the PDs are able to receive about identified relatives, placement requests and denials.</p> <p>On 3/1/16 the Anchorage office began an Early Identification of Relatives and Placement Support pilot project. The purpose of the project is to ensure all children have relative placement options at the time of intervention and to enhance the support and retention of relative placements to ensure all children maintain cultural continuity and family connections. Another goal of this project is to enhance Tribal partnerships and involvement if the child is Alaska Native/American Indian.</p> <p>Preliminary data shows an increase of the number of relatives documented and sent the Notice of Right to Request Placement letter timely. Calendar Year 2015 ORCA summary data showed ARO at 15.5% of children with at least 4 maternal relatives documented and 9.1% of children with at least 4 paternal relatives documented. In April 2016 (for children in custody 45 days) ORCA data shows ARO at 28.6% of children with at least 4 maternal relatives documented and 23.8% of children with at least 4 paternal relatives documented.</p>
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Priority #3: Continuous Quality Improvement

3. A Strategy: Implementation of the OCS CQI Plan				
Objectives		Measure of Progress and Timeline	Projected Outcomes	Updates /Comments
3.A.1	Finalize the CQI Policy and Procedure Manual and raise internal and external awareness regarding CQI.	Manual will be finalized by June 30, 2015.	Enhance Community Partnerships	<p>2015: CQI Manual finalized and is attached. *Timeline was been changed for this objective.</p> <p>2016: Objective is complete. See final attached CQI Manual</p>
3.A.2	Regional and statewide CQI teams will be fully implemented, including the institutionalization of a feedback loop between the regional, statewide	A system for documenting, sharing and storing meeting notes/decisions is implemented by December 31, 2015.	Enhance Community Partnerships	<p>2015: Internal statewide CQI team is fully implemented. This committee includes regional and statewide managers. *Timeline has been changed for this objective.</p> <p>2016: Statewide CQI team has been changed and now includes regional and state office managers. This change has improved communication between the regions and state office. The Division Operations Manager is part of CQI Team and the</p>

	and Director's Executive Team prior to the implementation of program changes. By June of 2016.			<p>Director's Executive Team (DET) and is responsible for sharing information between the two groups.</p> <p>The Executive Steering Committee is another avenue for developing and implementing changes to OCS practice. ESC includes members from state office and regional managers, Supervisory Leadership Council, Child Welfare Academy, and Tribal partners.</p> <p>March 2016 regional and state office managers gathered to review the OCS core services and identify areas of need. This team met with DET to discuss findings, concerns, etc. The core services identified by this group are currently part of the CFSP plan:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Screening 2. Initiation 3. Assessment 4. Case Planning 5. Caseworker Visits with Child 6. Caseworker Visits with Parent 7. Placement 8. Family Contact <p><u>This objective has been completed.</u> OCS will continue these efforts in the coming year.</p>
3.A.3	Standardized data dashboards/higher quality and user-friendly reports/data will be developed and available for managers, CQI teams, external stakeholders and Tribal partners.	Dashboard is available on-demand in ORCA by December 31, 2015.	Enhance Community Partnership	<p>2015: Meetings with OCS managers, Tribal partners, and community stakeholders occurred to identify the needs and requirements. The Research Unit is in process of developing improved reports for OCS, stakeholders, and the general public.</p> <p>*Timeline has been changed for this objective. To assist OCS in meeting requests from internal and external stakeholders regarding accessible data.</p> <p>2016: <u>This objective has been completed.</u> New statistics pages are available on the OCS website.</p>
3.A.4	Integration of title IV-E CQI with CPS CQI efforts will be initiated and enhanced through efforts to increase the visibility and significance of title IV-E compliance with child welfare field staff.	Staff training post-tests will demonstrate a statewide competency level of 90% or higher with respect to understanding key concepts about IV-E eligibility by June 2015 and annually.	Increase title IV-E compliance	<p>2015: Online training provided to all OCS staff. This training is now included in the staff development plan for new employees.</p> <p>2016: <u>This objective has been completed.</u> New employees receive training about title IV-E. The title IV-E audit was completed in November 2015, and an article was included in the December Frontline (internal newsletter) to provide additional information to staff about the audit.</p>

SECTION 4: UPDATE ON SERVICE DESCRIPTION (TITLE IV-B SUBPARTS 1 & 2)

SERVICES ARRAY

Services Array is the component of community-based services that OCS provides through professional services contracts or grants. The services are aimed at meeting the needs of children and families that come to the attention of the child protective services system, and to provide the necessary services and supports towards reunifying families. Funding from the federal title IV-B, 1 and 2, the Community-based Child Abuse Prevention (CBCAP), the Chafee Foster Care Independent and Education and Training Voucher (ETV) Program, the Children's Justice Act (CJA) Task Force Program and the Social Services Block Grant (SSBG) are blended with state funds to support federal and state goals of service delivery and promote ongoing efforts to improve outcomes for children, youth and families served through Alaska's child welfare system. Service providers are located across Alaska and are provided by Tribal and non-Tribal entities.

The services supported through the Service Array Section continually adapt to changes in field practice, and are coordinated through ongoing dialogue and engagement with management in the five OCS regions. Additionally, other OCS collaborative efforts on statewide and regional levels ensure that available services through other federally funded programs, community-based public and private providers for programs such as substance abuse, domestic violence, and behavioral health ensure that families served in the state child welfare services receive priority services that meet their specific needs to achieve case plan goals. Alaska's community-based services are an exercise in positive collaboration within communities. In order to aid children and families, OCS grantees must cultivate and utilize relationships with community resources from school districts, local non-profits and faith communities, as well as state agencies. These collaborations allow families to identify a safety net of resources to strengthen them, and protect children. Evidence of collaboration is required from grantees.

Alaska's community-based service providers demonstrate a high level of collaboration within their communities. This collaboration occurs across Alaska's populated cities and small villages, in order to meet the needs in this geographically diverse state. Community-based service providers work closely with community resources and partners such as school districts, local non-profits, Tribal agencies and representatives, faith communities, private businesses and other state agencies. These collaborations improve and increase the availability of necessary resources which help to strengthen families and protect children. Alaska continues to assess the needs of the children and families in the communities across Alaska, and to expand the service options available to meet the needs of children and families in the child welfare system.

2015 Update: Alaska continues to explore other service options to meet the needs of children and families in the child welfare system. OCS is currently working on outlining all available services through OCS funded grants and contracts, including the communities they are available in. Additionally we work closely with other DHSS divisions to identify areas of need or overlap. Due to the remoteness of Western Alaskan communities, OCS is working to increase available services in that region and we look forward to reporting on this in the coming year.

2016 Update: Service Array Programs continues to provide a wide variety of services for children and families including assessment, early intervention, family support, youth development, and adoption promotion. While each individual program serves a unique function, in combination, these services aim to ensure the safety, permanency and well-being of children, enhance the protective capacities of caregivers, and strengthen families. OCS provides community-based services through professional services contracts and grants. Service providers are located across Alaska and are provided by Tribal and non-Tribal entities.

In the last year, OCS has developed a web based resource listing of all of the OCS funded grants available in the state of Alaska and the communities they serve. Additionally in the last year, OCS staff were counseled in a targeted fashion regarding the availability of Service Array Programs funded by OCS.

In the coming year, OCS will be working on identifying the grants and contracts managed by other Departments which serve families in order to effectively increase utilization of these programs for OCS involved families. There will also be a focus on identifying community resources which provide services and activities designed to prevent child abuse and neglect and to strengthen families, so that we can share and highlight that information within our Department. Additionally we work closely with other Department of Health and Social Service Divisions to identify areas of need or overlap. Due to the remoteness of Western Alaskan communities, OCS continues to work towards increasing available services in the region.

STEPHANIE TUBBS JONES CHILD WELFARE SERVICES PROGRAM

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

2015 Update: The following chart provides a percentage breakdown of title IV-B, subpart 2 funds in the allowable categories. In FY 2016 OCS intends to spend these funds as shown in Table 10:

Table 10: Title IV-B, Subpart 2 Allocation for FY 2016

Service Type	Percent Allocated
Family Support	5%
Community Service Option 1 (FP)	25%
Community Service Option 2 (TLFR)	50%
Adoption Promotion	20%

The allocation of title IV-B, subpart 2 funding to family support was reduced to 5% in 2013 due to an increase in the Community Based Child Abuse Prevention (CBCAP) funding, coupled with low utilization of the program services. Information prior to 2013 has been difficult to locate and use in the report due to changes in reporting, the new accounting system, and staff turnover in our fiscal unit. To address the increased utilization of TLFR services, funding was shifted from the Family Support category to expand the resources available to support the ongoing growth in need and utilization of TLFR services. As the number of children in an out-of-home placement continues to increase, the need for increased TLFR services will continue. For this reason, OCS anticipates the funding percentages will remain consistent in the coming year. OCS has identified resource linkages and parent support as objectives in the plan for improvement.

OCS is collaborating to identify all services available through the agency and other divisions, along with the communities served by those services. After collection of information, an analysis will be completed to identify needs or gaps to assist in assessing new programs, services, and activities needed to meet the needs of children and families. Additionally the state has been working on service development in the Western Region, and is collaborating with community partners to improve available services in those communities. Initially, progress will be measure by documentation of establishing additional programs or expanding programs. Long term, progress will be measured by client participation and data changes, such as reduction in repeat maltreatment rates. OCS anticipates the funding percentages will remain consistent in the coming year.

2016 Update: OCS has continued with the efforts provided in last year’s APSR. OCS anticipates the funding percentages will remain consistent in the coming year. The estimated number of individuals and families to be served in the coming year is expected to remain the same or increase in all areas. OCS is working to increase staff and stakeholder knowledge of grant services in Alaska, and with increased information about available services, we expect service use to increase. Additionally, we are expecting to increase family contact services, which may equate to an increase in utilization of the TLFR services. The following chart provides a percentage breakdown of title IV-B, subpart 2 funds in the allowable categories, as OCS intends to utilize funds in FY 2017:

Table 11: Title IV-B, Subpart2 Allocation for FY 2017

Service Type	Percent Allocated
Family Support	5%
Community Service Option 1 (FP)	25%
Community Service Option 2 (TLFR)	50%
Adoption Promotion	20%

Family Support Services (FSS)

Family Support Services (FSS) are community-based primary prevention services designed to increase the strength and stability of families, to increase the parents' competence in their parenting skills, to afford children a safe, stable and supportive family environment, and otherwise to enhance child development (1993 OBRA Provisions, PL 10366). Families participating in FSS do not have an open child protection case.

The primary focus of this grant are children ages 0-12 years of age, with special consideration given to children ages birth to three years. Other targeted populations are families experiencing disability of a family member and/or homeless youth. The services are intended to promote parent engagement and parent leadership skills. Service providers facilitate family participation in free engagement activities such as literacy fairs, parenting nights, health fairs, and other positive family activities. These activities sometimes involve child care, parenting resources and links to other community resources.

The core services of FSS include: in home support; parent education and support; facilitated access to resources, transportation services and service coordination of access to or participation in early childhood services, medical services, educational or employment services. FSS works with families who need support for basic needs, skill acquisition and crisis stabilization. Referral sources include OCS case workers, other service agencies, such as schools or early education programs, medical services, community agencies, or parents may self-refer.

2015 Update: In FFY 2014, 213 families and 400 children were served by this program. FSS Grantees report robust use of services. During the past year, training and technical assistance included quarterly newsletters, quarterly teleconferences, monthly "check in calls", and central office response to technical assistance requests. With the integration of the Strengthening Families program, we have documented an increase in parent engagement and program participation.

2016 Update: In FFY 2015, 182 families and 366 children were served by this program. This fiscal year, FSS grantees report robust use of family support services by non-OCS families. FSS continues to use the Strengthening Families program. In 2015, engagement activities reached 151 additional families. This service is provided statewide. The funding allocation for this service category is expected to be less than 20%. The allocation of title IV-B, subpart 2 funding to family support was reduced to 5% in 2013 due to an increase in the Community Based Child Abuse Prevention (CBCAP) funding, coupled with low utilization of the program services.

Family Preservation Services

These services are designed to serve families and children living in Alaska who are at risk of out-of-home placement and/or children who are in out-of-home placement needing services to reunify with their families. Family Preservation services are provided to OCS involved families to prevent the removal of children to out of home settings or to support the reunification process when children are returned home from an out of home placement. These services are provided to families with an open child protection case.

2015 Update: In FFY 2014, 91 families and 182 children were served by this program.

2016 Update: In FFY 2015, 115 families and 240 children were served by this program. Grant funded family preservation grantees are available in four of the five OCS regions.

Time Limited Family Reunification (TLFR)

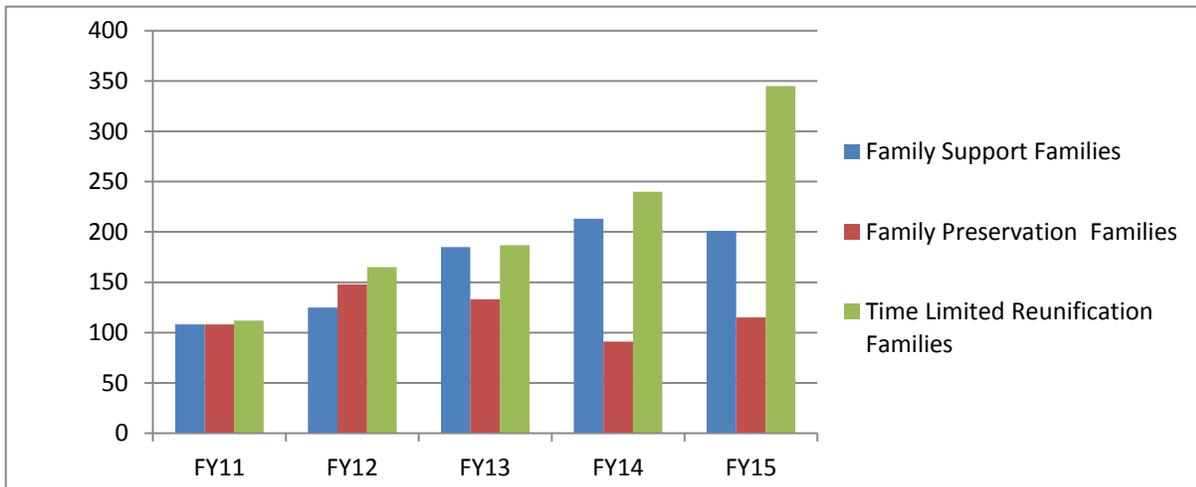
TLFR services provide ongoing family contact and transportation services for OCS-involved families in the agency, home or community settings; and facilitate the reunification of the child with their biological parent(s). TFLR also provides Family Contact Services Center (FCSC) services, designed to provide ongoing family contact and transportation services for OCS-involved families needing higher levels of supervision in the agency setting; and facilitate the reunification of the child with their biological parents(s).

2015 Update: In FFY 2014, 2014 families and 282 children were served by the family contact and transportation program. Services are delivered in the home whenever possible and focus on engaging the family with both community and natural supports to enhance protective capacities and promote a safe environment. In FFY 14, 76 families and 169 children were served by the FCSC program.

2016 Update: In FFY 2015, 133 families and 223 children were served by the family contact and transportation program. In FFY 2015, 212 families and 440 children were served by the FCSC program.

The allocation of title IV-B, subpart 2 funding to family support was reduced to 5% in 2013 due to an increase in the Community-based Child Abuse Prevention (CBCAP) funding. As the number of children in out-of-home placement continues to increase, the need for increased TLFRR services will continue. In the chart below, the green bar represents increase in the number of families served with both TLFRR and family contact.

Table 12: Title IV-B family services



Source: OCS Grantee Year-end Reports (submitted at the end of each state fiscal year)

All community based support services providers have integrated the Strengthening Families protective factors framework into their services. During SFY16, training and technical assistance to all grantee providers included:

- twice yearly newsletters,
- quarterly teleconferences evaluation, parent engagement activities, results based budgeting
- monthly “check in calls”
- program coordinator response to technical assistance requests
- grantees were encouraged to attend the child maltreatment conference and children’s mental health conference, and
- individual grantee authorization of training based on the needs of the community

Adoption Promotion and Support Services

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

ACRF provides a series of classes called “The Adoption Learning Path” geared toward preparing families to adopt special needs children from care. When the family completes the series of classes, they help the family generate a “family profile” which is shared with adoption case workers throughout the state. This process has assisted in matching children needing adoptive homes with families who understand the needs of children in care and are ready to care for them. Services are available throughout the State of Alaska by face to face contacts, self-study courses, and telephonic services.

In addition to these adoption support services, ACRF also provides intensive education and preparation, as well as matching support and post adoption support, to a limited number of families per year in the regions of Southcentral and Anchorage Alaska. This is an effort to match legally free children in care with trained adoptive families and to promote placement stability for these children who may have a high level of special needs.

2015 Update: During the past year, services were provided through the grantee from July 1, 2014 through March 31, 2015.

Training and support were available in the follow formats:

- Face to face classes – 245 offered
- Self-study course – 1460 available
- Telephonic or webinar classes - 47 offered

The following family specific support services to adoptive and guardianship families:

- Recruitment services provided to 9 families
- Case management services provided to 85 families
- Resource referrals provided to 32 families
- Support services provided to 205 families

2016 Update: OCS continues to offer adoption promotion and support services through the statewide grant with ACRF. The support through this grant is available regardless of how or from where a child was adopted. During the past year, training and support were available in the following formats:

- Face to face classes – 382 offered
- Self-study course – 1460 available
- Telephonic or webinar classes - 147 individuals attended

During the past year, family specific support services were delivered to adoptive and guardianship families:

- Recruitment & retention services provided to 15 families
- Case management services provided to 154 families
- Information and Resource referrals provided to 307 families
- Support services provided to 187 families

In the last five years of the program, 22 children were adopted by 11 families who graduated from the program and five additional children were adopted by families who received some of the training but did not graduate due to various reasons. Families in this program report that they received the support and encouragement from the program which they needed to work through the process of being matched with a legally free child and working through challenges or family adjustments post adoption.

THE INDEPENDENT LIVING PROGRAM (IL)

Chafee Foster Care Independence (CFCIP)

2015 Update: OCS serves all Alaska youth ages 16 years and older who are eligible for the program. OCS has 594 eligible youth and includes in custody and out of custody youth. OCS partners with other state and community agencies to deliver services to youth. Increased efforts have been made to collaborate with the Office of Public Advocacy (OPA), to educate court appointed Guardians ad Litem (GAL), and CASA volunteers to better coordinate services during transition. The IL Program hosted a focused discussion during the IL Program Retreat in September 2014 to glean important input from other community providers and encourage increased communication and coordination of effort. The hope is that continued discussion and collaboration will reduce duplication of services and encourage ease of access for youth engaged in multiple services.

Partnerships continued with grantee and contracted providers in SFY 2015, adding additional resources to increase mentorship and permanency efforts and career preparation and support resources. Additional formalized agreements will be established with the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) in SFY 2016 to provide additional career navigation support and encourage greater retention of youth in career preparation services and career focused training programs. The IL Program manages five grants, contracts and provider agreements. Site visits with all five providers were completed for the purpose of gathering information and offering technical assistance to promote further service outputs. The visits were focused on reviewing program achievements and gathering information about agency staff and their facilities. Technical assistance was provided to the following during site visits:

1. Covenant House Alaska – multiple visits conducted. Discussed with agency the continued flat funding in spite of the increase in number of youth served and the increased length of stay. Discussed added services and negotiated realistic costs to provide services. Plans to increase grant award and include training funds for Child Sex Trafficking;
2. Facing Foster Care in Alaska (FFCA) – quarterly OCS/FFCA Leadership meetings and FFCA facilitated retreats. Contractor to provide leadership skill-building and transition services to youth in care. Continued meetings with FFCA and OCS leadership to identify and work on common goals. Collaborative agenda development for retreats hosted by the contractor. Focus on permanency for older youth in 2016;
3. Big Brothers/Big Sisters – multiple visits conducted. Grantee provides Mentorship for IL services in multiple OCS service regions. Provided assistance, redirection and plan of correction in 2015, allowing flexibility with budgeting to work through challenges with meeting the program goals;
4. Alaska Housing Finance Corporation (AHFC) – multiple phone and in-person visits conducted. Worked to develop stronger communication protocol between referring OCS staff and AHFC staff in Anchorage and more frequent oversight and support for youth in Tenant-Based Rental Assistance (TBRA) housing; and
5. University of Alaska (UAA) CWA – multiple visits conducted. Reviewed program and discussed distribution of resources to youth enrolled in the program. Continued planning around outreach and the format for the annual educational conference.

2016 Update: OCS' IL program serves all Alaska youth ages 16 years and older who were in care on or after their 16th birthday up and up to age 21. There are currently 746 youth who are eligible for the program, including in custody and former custody youth. In March of 2016, the IL program met with youth during a youth retreat to collect input about youth placement disruptions and ideas for OCS to effectively address this issue.

1. Partnerships continue to grow and strengthen for youth in Alaska. OCS is focused on improving resources to increase mentorship and permanency efforts for youth as well as career preparation, educational support and other supportive resources. A formalized agreement with the DVR in SFY16 was established to provide additional career navigation support and encourage greater retention of youth in career preparation services and career focused training programs. This program is being expanded to deliver a yearly career conference to youth, to focus on exposure to some of the more lucrative job prospects in Alaska for young workers without plans to go to college. The IL Program manages two grants, one contract and three business agreements with organizations who deliver services to youth who are eligible for independent living services. Monthly or quarterly teleconferences take place with the grantees and service providers in order to maintain relationships, address challenges to service delivery and to work on increasing efficiency and effectiveness of the services. Technical assistance was provided to the following either in person or during regular teleconferences.
2. *Emergency Shelter Services.* This grant is currently awarded to Covenant House of Alaska, a non-profit organization. Quarterly telephonic meetings are held and one site visit was conducted in SFY16. In SFY16 an Independent Living Specialist position was established to co-locate at the facility to improve IL service delivery to homeless youth who may be eligible for services. The linkage created also serves to improve IL service delivery by creating networking opportunities for the IL staff co-located, since many other community agencies who provide services for youth, also co-locate. Covenant house has been delivering sex trafficking trainings to communities, including Kodiak, Fairbanks and Anchorage. These trainings will continue in the coming year as an effort to increase community and OCS worker awareness of sex trafficking issues. The next communities to receive the training will be Homer and Kenai. Covenant House is expanding its housing options with a transitional living program called “Rights of Passage”. OCS is looking at ways to partner with Covenant House for this new resource which may benefit eligible OCS youth who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.
3. *Development of Transition and Leadership Skills for Youth Participants of the OCS IL Program.* This contract is awarded to FFCA, a non-profit organization which serves as Alaska’s youth advisory board. OCS holds quarterly OCS/FFCA Leadership meetings and three times per year youth retreats which provide leadership skills training, mentorship and transition support. The quarterly collaborative meetings with FFCA and representatives of OCS’ leadership to include the agency director, assist with the identification of common goals. The collaborative meeting serves to assist youth in practicing advocacy skills as well as to show youth how their advocacy can result in support and responsiveness from the highest levels of leadership in the agency. The contractor provides leadership skill-building and transition services to youth during the youth leadership retreats. OCS Independent Living Specialists participate in the retreats to support youth, and they identify youth and arrange their participation in the events.
4. *Mentorship for Independent Living.* This is a grant awarded to Big Brothers/Big Sisters. Monthly grantee teleconferences occur to provide technical assistance regarding effective grant outcome reporting, increased outreach to the

community for mentor recruitment, increased youth referrals to the program and improved relationships between OCS and the non-profit agency. The grantee provides mentorship for independent living services in the OCS service regions of Anchorage and Southcentral (Mat-Su). An Independent Living Specialist from Anchorage is identified as the OCS liaison with the agency, in order to provide increased communication between the agencies. This liaison is now attending all of the monthly grantee meetings and will be expected to present information regarding the grant at regular OCS staff meetings.

OCS has a formal partnership for Tenant Based Rental Agreements (TBRA) for youth with the Alaska Housing Finance Corporation (AHFC). Monthly teleconferences occur to discuss individual youth who are housed with the program or who are in the process of becoming housed. The monthly meetings also serve to develop strong communication between referring OCS Independent Living staff and AHFC staff in Anchorage. Youth in TBRA housing require monthly home visits by OCS workers; therefore, frequent contact and collaboration with this program is needed to assist youth in being successful in obtaining and maintaining housing through this program.

DVR has partnered with OCS on a project to connect transition aged youth currently or previously in OCS custody with Pre-Employment Transition Services (PETS). The project connects transition aged youth currently or previously in OCS custody with opportunities to engage in hands on, career focused assessment and support services.

Education and Training Vouchers (ETV)

2015 Update: ETV services from the “2016 APSR” submitted in June 2015 are located in Sections 12 and 14 of this report.

2016 Update: The CWA manages the OCS’ ETV program. Quarterly telephonic meetings are held and one in person visit to discuss the program was held this year. Meetings focus on continued assessment of utilization of the program and distribution of available educational funding from ETV as well as other resources to maximize the funding allotted. OCS provides assistance in identifying eligible youth so that CWA can use University of Alaska systems to identify youth who may be eligible for ETV. CWA provides intensive outreach to and advocacy for eligible youth. Collaboration and planning for the annual educational conference for youth also occurs. Additional information about ETV is provided in Section 14 of this report.

OTHER SERVICES

Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention

OCS is designated as the State Lead for the Community based Child Abuse Prevention (CBCAP) program. In this role, the Program Coordinator serves as the lead on statewide prevention for the State of Alaska. This program coordinator also manages the CBCAP and title IV-B grant funded programs to ensure the integration of trauma informed practices and Strengthening Families framework into programs and parent engagement into the development and delivery of services. Each year, OCS funds the production and distribution of April Child Abuse Prevention Month pins and the annual Prevention Resource Guide.

Statewide prevention efforts and the establishment of a strong statewide child abuse prevention team will be the focus of the coming year. Participants will include educators, law enforcement, early childhood providers, mental health agencies, court representatives, DJJ, the Alaska Children’s Trust, and the state CBCAP lead and the ECCS Program Officer.

2015 Update: This year a continued focus was participation in the statewide prevention team, and the integration of trauma-informed practices throughout the programs. Several training opportunities were provided to grant funded programs in FY15:

- Training for all community in-home grantees included an abbreviated version of SKILS, which is the training provided to all new OCS workers;
- Training in offering services to disabled parents;
- Training in interface with GEMS, our new electronic grant management system was offered to all grantees at a two and a half -day training even held in Anchorage;
- Grantees were encouraged to attend the child maltreatment conference.

2016 Update: Currently, OCS funds primary prevention programs with CBCAP funds. Child abuse prevention team collaboration is needed to increase primary prevention efforts in areas of the state where there are currently no OCS grantees to deliver primary prevention, and to expand primary prevention services beyond what is currently offered by partnering with

other non-profit agencies, parent leaders, businesses, and state agencies who are also contributing to prevention work in Alaska's communities.

In 2016, CBCAP funding was utilized to contract statewide Community Cafes as part of parent and community involvement in systems planning and parent engagement in the delivery of services. The information gathered will provide foundational information to further develop the child abuse prevention work in Alaska. The results of the cafes will be compiled and shared in July of 2017. The goal of this project is to:

1. Partner with parents to identify and target the development of services that are responsive to the needs of families raising children in Alaska;
2. Increase the knowledge and resources dedicated to prevention and up-front services to parents aimed at preventing involvement in the OCS system and the need for out-of-home care;
3. Build strong linkages to services that increase the protective capacities of families along the continuum of care within the OCS Practice Model.
4. Garner community support and parental knowledge of the five (5) strengthening families' protective factors.
5. Implement the community café model to increase parent engagement in our OCS planning system and gain knowledge about the needs of families in communities and interaction with the various services delivery systems in their area.

The contractor will provide comprehensive feedback from each community café to the project director. The intent of the feedback should be to highlight the "harvest" from parent participants. Feedback will be directly integrated with the agency's ongoing efforts to gather information from multiple groups to help guide systems improvements and target family strengthening services needed by parents and families.

Funds were also used to update the Mandated Reporter Training, as reported earlier in this report. In the coming year prevention human sex trafficking will be incorporated into statewide child abuse prevention planning.

Rural Child Welfare Services

Because of the high number of Alaska Native/American Indian children involved in the OCS system, and because young Alaskan Native children are the population at greatest risk in Alaska, there is a critical need for OCS to provide culturally relevant services that are available to meet the needs of families in remote areas. In many of these areas, OCS must serve clients remotely and/or does not have a stable workforce to provide the close monitoring and support necessary to adequately meet the legal mandates needed to serve Alaskan Native families. The Rural Child Welfare grant program utilizes state general funds to fund service providers with a demonstrated understanding of the ICWA, and an existing infrastructure in remote/local settings to provide culturally relevant, intensive case management services. This program is designed to provide services to children and families living in rural Alaska who are at risk for out-of-home placement, and children who have been removed from their home setting. Grantees assist OCS in the development of safety plans and provide safety plan management. Grant services include:

- Safety plan management such as monthly visits with children and documentation of all contacts.
- Case plan support is provided and may include service coordination, coordination of family meetings for safety or case plan development, placement decisions or other case decisions.
- Resource family recruitment and relative searches
- Individualized, in-home parenting education and support
- Family contact (visitation) services or transportation services

2015 Update: In FFY14, 100 families were served by this program.

2016 Update: The challenges of service delivery to remote areas along with workforce retention issues continues to hinder OCS's ability to adequately serve families in rural Alaska. The Rural Child Welfare grant program provides culturally relevant interventions, safety plan support, and case worker visits to Alaskan Native families involved with OCS. In FY 2015, 218 rural families were served by this program; this is double the number of families served in FY 2014. On June 3, 2016, OCS received correspondence from Region Ten confirming that RCW grantee parent and child monthly visits can be considered

“caseworker visits” for the purpose of the CFSR, as long as the visits are well documented and used by the assigned social worker for use in case planning. OCS will be working with field staff and grantees to provide technical assistance in regards to the documentation required. In the coming year, reporting forms and evaluation measures for the program will be revised in order to more effectively track outcomes.

Western Region Support, Development, and Recruitment Workgroup

This collaborative effort began in 2014 with the focus on development of services in the OCS Western Region to allow children to remain in their home region. OCS partners with Western Region Tribal partners, YKHC, Alaska Child and Family, and the DBH to improve and increase the therapeutic foster care services available to children in custody. The focus is on development of services in the Western Region to allow children to remain in their home region. The workgroup has focused on foster care recruitment, emergency shelter home development, and exploration of more available services for children and youth with high needs.

2015 / 2016 Update: This group continues to meet regularly. An update was provided in the diligent recruitment information located in Section 2 of this report.

POPULATION AT GREATEST RISK OF MALTREATMENT

2015 Update: OCS has determined that Alaska Native children, age birth to five years, are the population at greatest risk of maltreatment. Alaska Native children ages birth to five years makes up 8.3% of the general population of children in Alaska. However, this population makes up 30.6% of the substantiated protective services reports and 31.1% of substantiated abuse and neglect allegations.

With the new process of determining maltreatment findings implemented in February 2015, we anticipate an increase in substantiated findings statewide, but expect an increase in the consistency of decision making. Through the CFSP priorities and strategies, OCS will be working on activities to target services to improving outcomes for this specific population. Table 13 provides 2014 maltreatment data related to Alaska Native children.

Table 13: 2014 Maltreatment Data

2014 Maltreatment Data				
Age Range	Child Race	% Alaska Children Under Age 18	% Substantiated Children	% Maltreated
Ages 0-5	Native	8.3%	31.1%	3.8%
Ages 0-5	Non-Native	26.6%	12.7%	0.5%
Ages 6-10	Native	6.4%	21.0%	3.4%
Ages 6-10	Non-Native	21.5%	9.5%	0.5%
Ages 11-15	Native	6.2%	13.9%	2.3%
Ages 11-15	Non-Native	20.6%	6.3%	0.3%
Ages 16-17	Native	2.4%	4.3%	1.9%
Ages 16-17	Non-Native	8.0%	1.1%	0.1%

Source: SOA Online Resources for Children in Alaska (ORCA) and SOA Department of Labor 2013 Population Estimate

2016 Update: OCS has determined that Alaska Native children, age birth to five years, are the population at greatest risk of maltreatment. Because of this, many efforts are being made to improve services and outcomes for Alaska Native children. Tribal partners and OCS have continued to commit to authentic partnership; efforts to reduce disproportionate outcomes are provided in detail in Section 6 of this document. Additionally, the DHSS Commissioner has initiated the Community of Hope Project (COHP). The DHSS Commissioner participated on the U.S. Attorney General’s Advisory Committee on *American Indian/Alaska Native Children Exposed to Violence: Ending Violence so Children can Thrive*. This committee developed recommendations for states, including a chapter specific to Alaska. One of the recommendations for Alaska was to create a task force to strategically address gaps or areas needing improvement within the state. In the past year, First Alaskan’s Institute facilitated a series of meetings with Tribal leaders, advocates, legal representatives, and child welfare representatives to discuss how we can change the future of Alaska’s child welfare system for the better. The DHSS 2016-2020 Strategic Plan, entitled “Transform Child Welfare Outcomes for Alaska Native Children”, identifies six priorities for the next five years. The six priorities include the following:

1. Continuum of Culturally Specific Services
2. Community Engagement
3. Respectful Government-to-Government Collaboration and Partnership
4. Embrace and Implement the Spirit of ICWA
5. Self-Governance
6. State Agency Alignment

Alaska Native children ages birth to five years makes up 9.6% of the general population of children in Alaska. However, in 2015 this population made up 31.0% of all children with a substantiated allegation of maltreatment, and 27.0% of all substantiated allegations of maltreatment. In preparation for the 2107 APSR, OCS reviewed the data provided in Table 13 and adjusted the wording to accurately reflect the information provided in the table. For that reason, Table 14 has different wording to clearly identify the data presented.

Table 14: 2015 Maltreatment Data

2015 Maltreatment Data				
Age Range	Child Race	% of All Alaska Children Age 0-17 (adds to 100%)	% of Total Children with a Substantiated Allegation	% of All Children in the Group Who Were Maltreated
Ages 0-5	Native	9.6%	31.0%	4.3%
Ages 0-5	Non-Native	24.6%	16.1%	0.9%
Ages 6-10	Native	7.6%	18.9%	3.3%
Ages 6-10	Non-Native	20.6%	10.6%	0.7%
Ages 11-15	Native	7.1%	11.9%	2.2%
Ages 11-15	Non-Native	19.9%	6.8%	0.4%
Ages 16-17	Native	2.7%	3.1%	1.5%
Ages 16-17	Non-Native	7.9%	1.5%	0.2%

Source: SOA Online Resources for Children in Alaska (ORCA) and SOA Department of Labor 2014 Population Estimate

SERVICES FOR CHILDREN UNDER THE AGE OF FIVE

A variety of services are available to provide support and services to children who are under five years of age. OCS has identified specific objectives in the CFSP Plan for Improvement to improve outcomes for this group of children. OCS has capitalized on opportunities to facilitate focus groups with OCS managers, Tribal partners, and DOL representatives to brainstorm ideas to enhance and support services for this population.

2015 Update: In the coming year, OCS will be developing a plan to increase participation and engagement in the Infant Learning Program by children in custody, age birth to three years. This will be done by increased communication between

OCS child protection and infant learning staff. Additionally, OCS is reviewing the accuracy of data related to timeliness of documenting the pre-adoptive homes. At this time, no specific data is being provided, as we are reviewing the policy and make changes in the documentation expectations for this data element. See Table 15 for more information.

In the last year, OCS management initiated two processes to improve monitoring of cases involving children under the age of five:

1. The “Hot for Permanency” project: statewide managers utilized data to identify children in care more than 24 months, then reviewed each case to assist in facilitating the actions needed to achieve permanency and to develop greater understanding of the systematic factors contributing to the delay in permanency; and
2. Regional management reviews information regarding high risk infants who have been the subject of a new protective services report and are living in a household which has had significant child welfare history. The managers monitor the report weekly to ensure timely and accurate assessment and service provision.

OCS has identified permanency for children under the age of five as a primary objective in the CFSP. Although limited progress has been made towards this goal, it is expected to be an area of focus in the coming year. In the coming year, OCS intends to include data and updates on progress, including strategies and barriers identified. OCS is currently exploring staff available to focus on permanency issues for children, through re-alignment of duties.

Although there are many services and activities happening through this program, the agency has not consistently had data to demonstrate the effect the services have had on child safety for children and families involved with child protection services. OCS has identified an area of need to include improved collaboration with our ECCS program (plan for improvement 2.A.1). It is anticipated that the next submission of this report will include data specific to the activities and outcomes of the services provided, specific to children involved in the child protection system. The following collaborative efforts were included in the 2015 update:

- Alaska Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems
- Strengthening Families Leadership Team
- Early Childhood Mental Health Conference

Table 15 includes data related to children under age five placed in potentially permanent placements:

Table 15: 2015 Permanent Placements

Count of Potentially Permanent Placements										
Months/Years in Care	< 1 month	1-2 months	3-6 months	7-12 months	13-18 months	19-24 months	24-36 months	36 – 48 months	48 + months	Grand Total
In Permanent Placement	5	24	78	128	69	60	55	9	1	429
Not in Permanent Placement	44	98	146	149	105	43	31	2	0	618
% in Permanent Placement	10.20%	19.67%	34.82%	46.21%	39.66%	58.25%	63.95%	81.82%	100%	40.97%
Grand Total	49	122	224	277	174	103	86	11	1	1047

Source: 9/11/15 State of Alaska Online Resources for Children in Alaska (ORCA) Report Perm. Status of OOH Children Under 5 (RR00138)

2016 Update: OCS is actively working to improve outcomes for children under the age of five; Table 16 provides updated data on potentially permanent placement. CS data shows an increase in children in care less than two months who are placed in a potentially permanent home. At this time we are unsure why that has increased or if it will result in more timely permanency, but it could be tied to updated case planning and permanency planning documentation requirements implemented in 2014. OCS is exploring why this change has occurred. Table 16 includes data related to children under age five placed in potentially permanent placements:

Table 16: 2016 Permanent Placements

<u>Count of Potentially Permanent Placements</u>										
Months/Years in Care	<1 mo.	1-2 mo.	3-6 mo.	7-12 mo.	13-18 mo.	19-24 mo.	24-36 mo.	36-48 mo.	48+ mo.	Total
In Perm. Placement	16	25	51	115	108	69	64	14	1	463
Not in Perm. Placement	38	60	132	152	116	68	36	3	0	605
Total	54	85	183	267	224	137	100	17	1	1,068
% in Permanent Placement	29.6%	29.4%	27.9%	43.1%	48.2%	50.4%	64.0%	82.4%	100.0%	43.4%

Source: 4/5/16 State of Alaska Online Resources for Children in Alaska (ORCA) Report Perm. Status of OOH Children Under 5 (RR00138)

Additional programs are in place to assist in improving outcomes for children under the age of five. Below are methods used in the last year to impact change:

Rapid Safety Feedback

OCS has collaborated with Eckerd Kids to implement the Rapid Safety Feedback project. This will enhance safety management of high risk cases of young children. In Alaska, the project will involve identification of high risk cases of children less than three years of age in the initial assessment phase of service. The cases will be reviewed for safety management utilizing a standardized tool. Cases needing enhanced safety management will be reviewed with the QA and IA staff, and a plan for needed changes will be made. The staffing process follows a “coaching” model. The cases continue to be monitored to ensure the plan is implemented until the cases are moved to Family Services or closed. The intent of the project is to reduce reports to three or less for high risk children under the age of three years. The CQI staff has received extensive training from the Eckerd Kids staff and the overall project will be evaluated by Casey Family.

Timely initiation, completion, and decision making

After reviewing data OCS managers are working on action steps to insure timely initiation, timely completion, and appropriate case decisions when a case involves an infant less than one year of age and factors in the case may predict that the child is a high risk infant. OCS is working with DPH to develop a report to identify protective service reports received for infants, and matching those cases with past removals from the family home, previous termination of parental rights for one or both parents, and previous reports of harm received for this child or siblings. Regional managers have received direction to review the cases and initiate face to face contact with the supervisor on the case each week until the initial assessment has been completed. Guidance was provided in January 2016 and a discussion and follow-up email were provided in May 2016.

Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems

The ECS unit had a change in staffing in the past year. Due to a vacancy in this position from September through December, OCS was unable to demonstrate progress on work planned for this year. OCS is pleased to have new staff in the position. Additionally, a department decision was made to move the Infant Learning Program (ILP) from OCS to the DSDS. In the coming year, OCS and SDS will partner on ways to improve data sharing and partnership to address CFSP Plan for Improvement strategy 2.A.1. It is anticipated that the next submission of this report will include data specific to the activities and outcomes of the services provided, specific to children involved in the child protection system who receive ILP services.

SERVICES FOR CHILDREN ADOPTED FROM OTHER COUNTRIES

2015 Update: Services for adoption support are provided through a grantee. The grant specifically states that support services are crucial to ensuring the continued success of families who have adopted through private or international adoptions. For this reason, the grantee is required to provide support services for all adoptive and guardianship families, regardless of the how the adoption was finalized, so that children do not enter the public foster care system from a failed private or international adoption.

2016 Update: Services continue as reported last year. The services provide information and referral, brief case management, crisis intervention, training and education to adoptive families in order to assist families in meeting their adopted children's needs and to keep their family strong.

SECTION 5: PROGRAM SUPPORT

TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Accomplishments and Planned Activities

2015 Update: Alaska did not receive training and technical assistance in the past year. OCS is scheduled for technical assistance in July 2015 to enhance knowledge and skills related to the CFSR and use of the Online Management System.

In the past year, the OCS provided technical assistance to many community partners that receive state and federal funds to help OCS achieve the CFSP goals. This technical assistance was provided in a variety of ways including teleconferences, emails, site visits and site reviews. The following programs received site visits and site reviews:

- Women in Safe Homes, Ketchikan
- Frontier Community Services, Soldotna
- Catholic Community Services, Juneau
- Sprouts, Homer
- Kawerak Child Advocacy Center, Nome
- Alaska Center for Children and Adults, Fairbanks
- Health Care Services Background Program
- DHSS Barrier Crimes Variance Committee
- Division of Senior and Disability Services
- Resource Family Advisory Board
- Alaska Center for Resource Families
- Central Council of Tlingit & Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska
- Bering Sea Women's Group
- Tundra Women's Coalition
- Kodiak Multi Disciplinary Team (KANA)
- Fairbanks Multi Disciplinary Team (RCPC)

2016 Update: In the past year OCS received the following training and technical assistance:

- OCS works closely with Region Ten and the Children's Bureau to prepare for the 2017 CFSR. OCS received technical assistance from Region Ten related to the APSR submission and recommended changes to the report. In July 2015 training and technical assistance was provided to assist OCS in utilizing the OMS. Children's Bureau staff met with OCS QA staff onsite in Anchorage to improve the knowledge and skills of the QA staff and managers who are using the new tool. This T/TA also assisted OCS in preparing for the CFSR in the coming year. OCS is working closely with federal partners to identify and schedule upcoming training and technical assistance for SFY2017. At this time, July phone consultation and October onsite trainings are tentatively set for CFSR preparation.
- OCS partnered with NICWA in November 2015 to provide training to OCS managers related to the BIA proposed regulations.
- OCS is partnering with Casey Family Programs to assist in providing training and technical assistance to OCS staff on permanency values and leadership skills in Fall 2016.
- FRIENDS NRC provided face-to-face orientation training to new CBCAP staff at OCS. FRIENDS is partnering with OCS to provide TA to help with the continued goals of meaningful evaluation, parent leadership, and quality improvement for the CBCAP funded programs. The CBCAP lead plans to benefit from technical assistance in the following areas in the coming year: Evaluation, Parent Leadership and Strategic Planning.

In the past year OCS provide training and technical assistance to partners and grantees in Alaska. Below are examples of the T/TA provided in the past year:

- OCS has a Training and Technical Assistance business agreement with the CWA; through this agreement, training and technical assistance services are provided to existing OCS funded grant/contract programs and partner agencies that provide support to non-OCS and OCS involved children, youth and families in collaboration with Service Array

programs. Training may include but is not limited to topics on child development; the OCS Practice Model; technical support in all aspects of service delivery to families, children and youth; education related to the effects and symptoms of child abuse; data collection and program evaluation; and technical support for programs seeking to expand service delivery and diversify funding. Training and instruction can be delivered through multiple venues and strategies, including in-person classroom instruction; webinars/seminars; written guidance; and/or the virtual classroom. All of the Child Advocacy Centers in Alaska were able to receive training and technical assistance from the CWA this year. This business agreement is expected to continue in the coming year.

- Service Array program managers provide one on one and group training and technical assistance to grantees. Teleconferences and video conferences are conducted on a regular basis with all grantees. In the coming year, online training will be the primary venue for the training to the family support, family preservation and time-limited family reunification grantees. Video conference is available to enhance grantee meetings and planning sessions.

OCS provided technical assistance to many community partners that receive state and federal funds to help OCS achieve the CFSP goals. This technical assistance was provided in a variety of ways including teleconferences, emails, site visits and site reviews. T/TA was provided to the following grantees, and will also be provided in the coming year:

- Alaska Center for Resource Families to include the Resource Family Advisory Board
- Independent living grantees including Covenant house and Big Brothers / Big Sisters
- CBCAP Family Support Programs
- Family Preservation and Time-limited Family Reunification Grantees
- Rural Child Welfare Grantee

The following programs received onsite visits and reviews:

- Copper River Child Advocacy Center
- Alaska Cares Child Advocacy Center
- Catholic Community Services
- Nome Eskimo Community

Capacity Building Center for States (CBCS)

2015 Update: This specific section title was not include in the “2016 APSR” submitted in June 2015.

2016 Update: OCS did not receive any onsite training or technical assistance from any of the Capacity Building Centers. OCS receives regular communication from the Capacity Building Center for States, including Monthly News Blasts, notice of upcoming webinars, and direct contact with CBCs when needed. OCS staff participated in the Region Ten call regarding Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act PL 113-183. OCS Independent Living staff has received support from the Capacity Building Center for States Chafee Program and ETV Coordinators by phone and webinars. In the coming year, OCS anticipates utilizing the CBCS in the same manner as in the past.

RESEARCH, EVALUATION, MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEMS, AND/OR QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEMS

2015 Update: In the SFY 15 the OCS Research Unit continued efforts to modernize OCS reports and reporting needs by converting from SAS to SQL. This was the second year of submissions for both AFCARS and NCANDS reports using the new SQL code. OCS is currently working with the federal partners in an AFCARS Assessment Review of the new code. The Research Unit is in the process of updating the monthly web reports; draft reports are ready for testing and OCS management feedback. Efforts continue with providing “real time” data to OCS workers in the form of on-demand report. Data summits were held to solicit input regarding data needs from both OCS Management and Tribal partners. In the past year, the Research Unit has published 34 new reports that are available to OCS staff on the Intranet to assist them with prioritizing workload and meeting state and federal standards. Additionally, the Research Unit has responded to over 175 data requests from internal and external customers including: OCS Management, Alaska State Legislature, other state agencies, the media, and other public and private users.

2016 Update: OCS continues to partner with CGI to improve ORCA, the OCS SACWIS system. ORCA updates are completed monthly to improve the information and reports available to staff, based on feedback received or problems identified. In the last year, the Research Unit has updated reports available and improved the public-facing statistics page on the OCS website.

OCS has a high functioning QA Unit. The QA system is described in more detail in Section 2 of this report. OCS management has worked to engage all level of staff to use data available to assist in the work of the agency. Weekly Regional Manager meetings focus on data related to safety, permanency, and well-being.

SECTION 6: CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION BETWEEN STATES AND TRIBES

GATHERING INPUT FROM TRIBES

2015 Update: OCS has policy in place to address the responsibility for child welfare services and inclusion of Tribal partners in initial assessments, case reviews, and case planning activities. Tribal representatives participate on the OCS policy development workgroup, the ESC, and have been included in planning to meet the requirements of Public Law 113-183. Input from Tribal partners was gathered in development of the CFSP and APSR. Documentation of involvement is provided earlier in this report.

OCS works closely with the Tribal State Advisory Team (TSAT) and Tribal State Collaboration Group (TSCG). The ongoing partnership with these groups has assisted OCS in identifying areas of need and developing plans to improve services in Alaska. Through regularly scheduled meetings, occurring three times a year, the TSCG has been a forum to discuss the state compliance with ICWA, services related to permanency planning for Tribal children, and independent living programs and services. Current efforts include support for Tribes receiving title IV-E administrative funds, ongoing collaboration to support the title IV-E maintenance with TCC and changes to enhance information sharing between the state and Tribal partners.

2016 Update: No changes have occurred in the way OCS gathers input from Tribes. OCS continues to work closely with Tribes in Alaska. Tribal representatives participate on the OCS policy development workgroup, the ESC, and have been included in planning to meet the requirements of Public Law 113-183. Input from Tribal partners was gathered in development of the CFSP and APSR efforts. More information about ongoing efforts are located in the matrix beginning on page 81.

The Tribal Partners that participate in TSAT are:

- Lou Johnson, BBNA
- Mary Johnson, TCC
- Francine Eddy Jones, CCTHITA
- Cheryl Offt, AVCP
- Lola Stepatin, NEC

The Tribal Partners that participate in TSCG are:

- Aleut Community of St. Paul Island
- Aleutian/Pribilof Islands Association (APIA)
- Arctic Slope Native Association (ASNA)
- Association of Village Council Presidents (AVCP)
- Bristol Bay Native Association (BBNA)
- Cheeshna Tribe
- Central Council Tlingit & Haida Indian Tribes (CCTHITA)
- Chickaloon
- Chugachmiut
- Copper River Native Association (CRNA)
- Cook Inlet Tribal Council (CITC)
- Kawerak, Inc.
- Kenaitze Indian Tribe
- Ketchikan Indian Corporation (KIC)
- Knik Tribe
- Kodiak Area Native Association (KANA)
- Kwigillingok
- Maniilaq Association
- Metlakatla Indian Community
- Native Village of Barrow
- Native Village of Kotzebue
- Nome Eskimo Community (NEC)
- Ninilchik Tribe
- Orutsararmuit Native Council (ONC)
- Sitka Tribe of Alaska (STA)
- Sun'aq Tribe of Kodiak
- Tanana Chiefs Conference (TCC)

ONGOING COORDINATION AND COLLABORATION WITH TRIBES

2015 Update: OCS will continue all collaborative efforts listed above. Additionally in the coming year quarterly teleconferences specific to the CFSP will be available to gather input and assistance from our Tribal partners. A detailed list of

activities to continue collaboration and coordination with Tribes regarding child welfare programs, enhance Tribal and state relations, reduce disproportionality and increase ICWA compliance is included in the matrix beginning on page 81.

The partnership with OCS and Alaska Tribes is essential to the safety, permanency, and well being of children and families. Additionally, on April 15, 2015 an emergency regulation was issued regarding petitions for adoption in ICWA cases. This regulation provides enhanced opportunities for relatives and Tribal members to adopt and reduces barriers in ICWA cases. OCS management is working diligently to get information and guidance to OCS staff and Tribes regarding this regulation change. The link to OCS' APSR will be sent to Tribal partners on July 1, 2015, after submission of the document.

2016 Update: OCS continues with its numerous collaborative efforts with Tribes. A detailed list of activities to continue collaboration and coordination with Tribes regarding child welfare programs, enhance Tribal and state relations, reduce disproportionality and increase ICWA compliance is included in the matrix beginning on page 81.

Additionally, Alaska Federation of Natives, First Alaskans Institute, Alaska DHSS/OCS, the Tribal-State Collaboration Group, and Casey Family Program continue to partner on several projects to improve the lives of children, identify pathways to move forward, and align efforts improve outcomes for our Native children and communities. In April a leadership summit, in conjunction with the 3rd Annual Honoring Our Children Day across Alaska, was held in Anchorage.

OCS and Tribal partners are working together to implement and assess the CFSP and APSR. Tribal partners are included in the quarterly CFSP conference calls, ESC, and policy committee to provide feedback and suggestions to assist in implementation of the plan.

States and Tribes are required to exchange copies of their Annual Progress and Services Report. OCS will provide the link to the 2017 APSR to Tribes in Alaska by email no later than 7/1/2016. Additionally, Tribal State Advisory Team members will continue to be invited to participate in quarterly CFSP focused conference calls.

UPDATE ON COLLABORATIVE WORK EFFORTS WITH TRIBES WHO PROVIDE CHILD WELFARE SERVICES

2015 Update: Information is provided below regarding updates related to Tribal services and collaboration with OCS. OCS is working closely with DOL and Tribal partners to improve information sharing with Tribes. OCS will explore the option of including a Tribal representative on general variance committees for licensed foster care providers, and looks forward to reporting more details on this proposed change next year.

2016 Update: OCS negotiated a Tribal title IV-E foster care maintenance pass through agreement with Central Council Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska in April 2016. OCS also has an agreement with Tanana Chiefs Conference for Tribal title IV-E foster care maintenance pass through. The agreements outline the roles and responsibility for services to families. OCS continues to work closely with DOL and Tribal partners to improve information sharing with Tribes. Over the last year, OCS was able to facilitate the inclusion of a Tribal representative from each region of the state to participate on the Regional General Variance Committee for foster care licensing. Additional information is provided on the following pages regarding updates related to OCS's Tribal partnerships. APPLA information is shared with Tribal partners; for more information please see Section 12 of this report.

MONITORING COMPLIANCE WITH ICWA

2015 Update: This specific section title was not include in the "2016 APSR" submitted in June 2015.

2016 Update: OCS continues to work closely with Tribal partners to monitor compliance with ICWA. OCS and Tribal partners have worked closely to develop the Tribal State Advisory Team Data Indicators (see Appendix M). This data is reviewed regularly to track compliance with ICWA. Additional examples of the efforts regarding this are described on the following pages.

Enhance Tribal and State Relations, Cultural Humility, Increase ICWA Compliance

Goal: Promote positive state and Tribal collaboration relations, build Tribal capacity, reduce disproportionality and increase ICWA compliance.

<u>Action Steps</u>	<u>Annual Update (includes date completed)</u>
4.A.1 Continue to meet with Tribal State Collaboration Group (TSCG) 3 times per year.	<p>2015: Meetings held February 4-6 2014; May 6-8 2014; Nov. 4-6 2014; and May 7 2015. The TSCG participated in an Undoing Racism workshop Feb. 3-5, 2015. In the past year, Tribal State Collaborations restructured to allow for regional TS meetings.</p> <p>2016: All State TSCG meeting was held in Juneau February 2-4, 2016. Regional Tribal State meetings are further discussed earlier this section, under the heading “Collaboration and Coordination”.</p>
4.A.2 OCS will engage in mutual updates on the CFSP with Tribal partners across the state.	<p>2015: The CFSP/APSR was discussed at the May 2015 Tribal State meeting. Opportunities to provide feedback were provided at May teleconferences.</p> <p>2016: Quarterly teleconferences specific to the CFSP were implemented to gather input and assistance from our Tribal partners. An opportunity to provide feedback was also provided at the 2016 February Tribal State meeting.</p>
4.A.3 OCS Leadership will support the development and sustainability of Regional Disproportionality Teams.	<p>2015: Regional TS meetings provide the opportunity for Regional Disproportionality Teams to become an ongoing workgroup, in which Tribes, OCS, and community partners will collaborate.</p> <p>2016: The Anchorage Region has an active Regional Disproportionality Team. The team meets monthly. Their vision and goals are as follows:</p> <p>The vision statement: Enhancing Tribal partnerships and Family Wellness: Engage, Educate, Empower.</p> <p>Team Goals:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Recruit new ICWA homes 2. Retain the current ICWA homes to take other native children. 3. Identify and implement strategies to support our ICWA homes. 4. Replicate the efforts the AK native family services unit throughout other units.
4.A.4 OCS will work with Tribes across the state to strengthen relationships, coordinate services and explore opportunities to engage in authentic partnerships.	<p>2015: OCS invites Tribal partners to trainings, provides Rural Child Welfare grants to 5 Tribal grantees, and has participated in the development of title IV-E maintenances agreements with two Tribal consortia’s.</p> <p>2016: No changes in the past year. OCS invites Tribal partners to trainings, provides Rural Child Welfare grants to 5 Tribal grantees, and has participated in the development of title IV-E maintenances agreements with two Tribal consortia’s.</p>

<p>4.A.5 Continue Tribal State Co-Chair meetings on a bi-monthly basis.</p>	<p>2015: TSCG Co-Chairs met twice a month until January 2015. This group is now the Tribal State Advisory Team (TSAT) which meets once a month. Face-to-face meetings were held in January and March 2015.</p> <p>2016: The TSAT meets by teleconference the second and fourth Thursday of each month. A face to face meeting was held December 10, 2015.</p>
<p>4.A.6 Explore and adopt new strategies for communicating and engaging with Tribes that are currently not attending TSCG.</p>	<p>2015: With the restructure of TSCG, the focus is for more Tribes to participate in regional TS meetings which will improve the communication regionally and statewide.</p> <p>2016: Over the last year regional TSCG meetings have occurred in Fairbanks, Nome, Juneau, Bethel, Anchorage, Gakona, and Kenai. Tribal and OCS representatives attended from surrounding villages and communities. OCS provided a “Let’s Talk ICWA” presentation at the annual BIA Providers Conference in Anchorage December 2015. A Tribal Survey was sent on February 26, 2016 to Tribal partners across the state; a list was provided to OCS from the BIA to ensure the most accurate contact information was used.</p>
<p>4.A.7 Increase number of Tribal title IV-E Agreements with Tribes/Tribal Organizations</p>	<p>2015: All IV-B Tribes were invited to the Tribal IV-E meeting to become familiar with the requirements. Technical assistance regarding Tribal title IV-E maintenance pass-through was offered to Ketchikan Indian Community and St. Paul Island for their pursuit of direct funding.</p> <p>2016: OCS is continually reaching out to Tribes/Tribal Entities across the state to increase partnerships and possible additional maintenance agreements. One new maintenance agreement was executed in March 2016. Inquiries from Metlakatla Indian Community, Native Village of Kotzebue, and Arctic Slope Native Association occurred during the last reporting period.</p>
<p>4.A.8 Continue to provide technical assistance and support to Tribes/Tribal Organizations who access title IV-E funding to provide child welfare related services to children that qualify under the Indian Child Welfare Act.</p>	<p>2015: Technical assistance was provided by telephone and email communication. In the past year, Aleutian Pribilof Islands Association received a site review. All Tribes were invited to a training summit in November 2014 and a meeting and training in May 2015.</p> <p>2016: Intensive technical assistance is underway with the Central Council Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska, Tribal Family and Youth Services in preparation and anticipation of their first transfer of jurisdiction cases to occur over the summer of 2016. Due to travel restrictions, technical assistance needs have been provided via telephone and email.</p> <p>In February of 2016, OCS presented information regarding options for AVCP to access and increase their Title IV-E funding to enhance their Tribal ICWA program capacity.</p>
<p>4.A.9 Work with Tribes to assess readiness, and develop the needed infrastructure necessary to expand and increase the number of title IV-E Maintenance Agreements.</p>	<p>2015: Over the past year, OCS received permission to expand the Tribal title IV-E maintenance pass-through agreement with additional Tribes: OCS currently in negotiations with Central Council Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska.</p>

	<p>2016: The CCTHITA of Alaska signed a Maintenance Agreement with the State of Alaska in March 2016. In April 2016, a presentation related to accessing title IV-E maintenance funds was provided to the Association of Village Council Presidents along with cost pool evaluation and discussion of ways to access additional administrative funding to further serve their children and families. In the upcoming year, OCS will also work with Kawerak to discuss the possibility of a maintenance agreement.</p>
<p>4.A.10 Provide information regarding how Tribes can access Chafee funding for Tribal youth in Tribal custody on an annual basis via various modalities. This will include consultation with Tribes regarding determining eligibility for benefits and services to ensure fair and equitable treatment for Indian youth under Chafee Foster Care.</p>	<p>2015: The Independent Living Program’s quarterly teleconference to discuss the Chafee Foster Care Independence Act Funding and the Education Training Voucher program specifically targeting to the Tribes of Alaska. The statewide Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) Coordinator and the Independent Living Program Coordinator sent out invitations via e-mail, fax, word of mouth, and by mail. A packet designed for youth in Tribal custody is available to Tribes requesting assistance with Chafee funding or the ETV program. The Independent Living Program has goals to include Tribes in the permanency summit for older youth in the leadership retreat planning sessions this coming year.</p> <p>2016: A Chafee program overview on the resources available for youth in Tribal custody was provided during the February 2016 TSCG meeting. In addition, quarterly teleconferences continue and the dates are listed on the OCS ICWA webpage along with all the forms required to access funding.</p>
<p>4.A.11 Develop policy and procedures to prioritize, standardize and streamline the referral process for OCS clients to receive Tribal in-home and case management services where available.</p>	<p>2015: OCS staff was trained on how to make referrals to Rural Child Welfare Services Program in their area.</p> <p>2016: Grant Meetings are scheduled for Juneau and July 2016 with RCW grantees and OCS representatives in order to work on improving partnership, facilitate referrals, discuss documentation issues and to generally improve services to Alaska Native families in rural areas.</p>
<p>4.A.12 Continue to promote cooperation and collaboration on case-related matters and sharing reciprocal information through full implementation of the Tribal Confidentiality Agreements.</p>	<p>2015: Department of Law and Alaska Legal Services developed “frequently asked questions” regarding information sharing. Training was provided during May’s TSCG meeting. OCS’ policy and matrix along with a 2 page consolidated FAQs are currently being developed.</p> <p>2016: The Information Sharing and Confidentiality Agreements were discussed during the Feb. 2016 TSCG meeting. To date, 127 Tribes/Tribal Organizations have signed the Tribal Agreement of Confidentiality which allows OCS to provide information to the child’s Tribe in the Initial Assessment/pre-filing phase. A list of the Tribes who have signed the agreement is on the OCS ICWA webpage.</p>
<p>4.A.13 Work with ORCA Project Manager to determine feasibility of providing Tribes access to AK OCS ORCA.</p>	<p>2015: ORCA reports and data are available to Tribes with a maintenance agreement.</p> <p>2016: No changes in the past year. ORCA reports and data continue to be available to Tribes with a maintenance agreement.</p>
<p>4.A.14 Conduct critical review of 20 year old Tribal State ICWA Agreement.</p>	<p>2015: Will be reviewed in the coming year.</p>

	<p>2016: This work has yet to begin and remains an important priority. TSAT will determine whether to keep this item in the plan or not.</p>
4.A.15 Develop ICWA Reference Guides for everyday use by state and Tribal workers.	<p>2015: Will be reviewed by Tribal State Advisory Team in the coming year to determine if action is needed.</p> <p>2016: OCS, in conjunction with the Child Welfare Academy, is working on a draft desk guide that would be provided at new worker training.</p>
4.A.16 Keep OCS ICWA webpage updated to allow easy access to all pertinent TSCG efforts and ICWA information.	<p>2015: New confidentiality agreements are posted when received. The web page will be updated in 2015.</p> <p>2016: Webpage is updated on a regular basis and includes dates of upcoming events such as TSCG meetings, ICWA trainings, KWYA workshops and Alaska Native cultural events. Also posted are forms pertaining to Tribal work in Alaska.</p>
4.A.17 Continue to seek Tribal participation in on-site QA reviews and other CQI related activities.	<p>2015: Two Tribal partners will participate in November 2015 title IV-E review. During OCS quality assurance reviews, if a Native child is identified; reviewers make efforts to contact and interview the Tribe.</p> <p>2016: No changes in the past year. Two Tribal representatives were present for the on-site title IV-E review in November. During OCS quality assurance reviews, if a Native child is identified; reviewers make efforts to contact and interview the Tribe.</p>
4.A.18 Conduct ongoing OCS ICWA team teleconferences, which includes the Tribes and others as needed.	<p>2015: OCS ICWA Specialists have monthly teleconferences. Topics over the last year included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Out-of-preference placement reviews, documentation, and providing Tribes with the placement preference level of their Tribal children in custody • Maintaining and updating Tribal providers, the list of Tribes and affiliated agencies in ORCA; • Preparing ICWA presentations and speaking at conferences • How to process placement and adoption requests and educate staff regarding relative searches; • Development and delivery of consistent ICWA training regionally, tracking, and co-facilitating with Tribal partners. <p>2016: The OCS ICWA Specialists continue to have monthly teleconferences which are primarily focused on many of the same items listed above.</p>
4.A.19 Ensure placement preference data for Native children entered in ORCA is accurate.	<p>2015: Over 95% of records have a placement preference. ORCA is being modified to ensure a higher level of accuracy in preferences.</p> <p>2016: ORCA was modified in 2015 to ensure that whenever a child enters a placement the system asks whether the child is Alaska Native or American Indian, thus populating the ICWA placement preferences. According to ORCA report RR000163, 4/19/2016, Native Placement Preference tab, only 8 records were missing documentation out of 1,572; therefore, 99.5% records have placement documented.</p>

<p>4.A.20 Increase placement preferences for Native children in out of home care.</p>	<p>2015: 41.7% of Native children are in relative placements. Over the last year efforts were made to address out-of-preference reviews in Administrative Reviews and Team Decision Making Meetings. The WRO pilot project has been expanded to all Tribes being able to notify OCS when a relative requests immediate placement of a child. In June 2015 staff received training on how to document and process placement requests.</p> <p>2016: Despite efforts to increase placement preferences for Alaska Native children, the percent remains under 42% for 2015. These percents are being evaluated at a regional level with focused efforts on recruitment and retention of Alaska Native homes is underway. Additionally, OCS is moving forward on development of a model to place children in state custody in Tribal licensed homes. In February of 2016, a pilot “Emergency Relief Support” program was initiated in the Southeast Region. This program provides up front time-limited funds to relatives and family friends. The number of ICWA foster homes for 2015 was 306. There was clarification regarding the difference between a Native foster home and ICWA foster home.</p>
<p>4.A.21 Increase number of licensed Native foster homes and implement a process for verifying that foster parents are Native.</p>	<p>2015: As of 12/31/14, OCS had 333 Native Foster Homes out of 1022. Regional recruitment and retention teams have a goal to recruit Alaska Native foster homes. OCS licensing unit has developed and implemented a consistent method to document and track Resource Families who may be an ICWA placement preference.</p> <p>2016: This item was combined with 4.A.20.</p>
<p>4.A.22 Provide on-going ORCA data as requested by Tribes.</p>	<p>2015: OCS ORCA team met with Tribal IV-E and title IV-B Tribes to discuss data needs. The OCS Research Unit will be making changes to the reports available on the state web page. Annually data is prepared for the TSAT to review disparate data for Native and Non-native children.</p> <p>2016: As of July 2015, OCS provides Tribe specific out of home placement data monthly (as requested). In addition, the OCS Research Team will work on updating the state web data to include disproportionality data.</p>
<p>4.A.23 Support ICWA related training including KWYA, through grants, title IV-E, and the Child Welfare Academy.</p>	<p>2015: Tribal title IV-E Partners meet in May 2014, Nov. 2014, and May 2015 for a two day training summit. Support is provided as needed, examples include caseworker visit and case planning training by CWA and TCC staff, and RCW grantee training co-facilitated by CWA and OCS. Knowing Who You Are workshops were offered 15 times in the past year, and training for new KWYA facilitator candidates also occurred. The Regional ICWA Specialists conduct ICWA trainings with Tribal partners. The Child Welfare Academy supports these trainings by sending invites out to participants and tracking attendance and feedback.</p> <p>2016: The Advanced ICWA training is being revised and will be rolled out May 2016. KWYA curriculum is also being revised and is anticipated to be complete by Fall 2016. There are approximately 12 workshops annually. Tribal title IV-E partners are working on updating the Tribal Licensing Standards,</p>

	<p>Procedures and Forms; this is anticipated to be complete by Fall of 2016 with a training held in October.</p>
<p>4.A.24 Ensure Tribes are notified of their right to intervene in state proceedings, or to seek transfer of the proceedings to the jurisdiction of the Tribe.</p>	<p>2015: Notification of a Tribe's rights is in the ICWA notice sent to the identified Tribes. According to data listed in 4.A.26, notices are being sent over 90% of the time</p> <p>2016: The Tribal State Advisory Team decided in December 2015 to add Tribal interventions to the data indicators consistently monitored by TSCG. The percent of Tribes that intervened on ICWA cases was 43% for 2015. In March 2016, Eligibility Technicians began entering intervention detail into ORCA the day the order of intervention is received. Regional ICWA Specialists are collaborating with Tribes regarding the importance of Tribes becoming legal parties in custody cases in hopes of increasing the number of Tribal interventions. The number of cases in which the Tribe assumed jurisdiction is also being tracked. The number of cases in 2015 which transfer of jurisdiction took place was 49. In March 2016, OCS issued an ICWA Program Instruction which included a section regarding transfer of jurisdiction, specifying that OCS supports transfers of jurisdiction to the Indian child's Tribe. A decision to take the position that there is good cause not to transfer jurisdiction will be made on a case by case basis after a consultation with the AAG and OCS Director.</p>
<p>4.A.25 Ensure/increase the notification of Indian parents and Tribes of state proceedings involving Indian children and their right to intervene.</p>	<p>2015: The initial plan to notify DOL is currently in place. OCS continues to maintain well over 90% compliance. The DOL continues to notify Indian parents and Tribes of State proceedings involving Indian children with a highly level of consistency.</p> <p>2016: No changes in the past year. Notification of a Tribe's rights is in the ICWA notice sent to the identified Tribes. According to data listed in 4.A.25, notices are being sent over 90% of the time.</p>
<p>4.A.26 Increase active efforts through the use of in-home services to prevent the breakup of the Indian family when parties seek to place a child in foster care.</p>	<p>2015: Several regions have In-Home Family Services units. Rural Child Welfare grantees also provide in-home services to families.</p> <p>2016: OCS uses in-home services to provide active efforts to prevent the breakup of the Indian family. Several regions have In-Home Family Services units. Rural Child Welfare grantees also provide in-home services to families. Currently there are 281 Native children receiving in-home services through OCS. Initial assessment workers may provide referrals when needed by the family prior to custody being assumed. The 2015 Tribal Survey asked the question "The Office of Children's Services makes active efforts to work with Alaska Native families" in which 46% of the respondents selected strongly agree/agree, 37% were undecided, and 17% strongly disagree/disagree.</p>
<p>4.A.27 Provide capacity building support to regional disproportionality teams to develop child protection teams in rural communities.</p>	<p>2015: OCS has been working with Association of Village Council Presidents to develop and implement a project in which Rural ICWA workers OCS by conducting monthly quality caseworker visits, this pilot project is still in the development phase.</p> <p>2016: TSAT will determine if this item will continue or be melded into the Strategic Plan efforts.</p>

SECTION 7: MONTHLY CASEWORKER VISIT FORMULA GRANT

USE OF THE MONTHLY CASE WORKER VISIT FORMULA GRANT

2015 Update: Alaska received a total of \$34,862 in title IV-B, subpart 2 funding for FFY 2014 to support monthly caseworker visits with children in foster care. The funds were used to pay the travel costs associated with monthly caseworker sites in remote locations in the Northern Region. OCS intends to continue to use funds in a similar way in the coming year.

OCS continues to be out of compliance with the overall target percentage goal for annual case worker visits with children. However, 83% is an increase from the previous year's data (2013 was 80%). The percent of children visited in their home, at 69%, exceeds the 50% federal standard. Managers and supervisors continue to have access to a weekly ORCA report which provides an up-to-date status, by worker, regarding how many visits have been made thus far in the month. Case worker visits with children continue to be a primary agency focus and we anticipate a continued progress towards making the target goal. The following chart documents the FFY 2014 case worker visit data:

2016 Update: Table 17 provides data related to monthly case worker visits with children. OCS continues to use MCWVF Grant to support monthly caseworker visits with children in foster care. The funds were used to pay the travel costs associated with monthly caseworker sites in remote locations in the Northern Region. OCS intends to continue to use these funds in a similar way in the coming year. States were required to report data on monthly case worker visits with children in foster care by 12/15/15. OCS submitted the following data on November 30, 2015:

STANDARD #1: The total number of visits made by caseworkers on a monthly basis to children in foster care during a fiscal year must not be less than 95 percent of the total number of such visits that would occur if each child were visited once every month while in care. FFY 2015 OCS ORCA data shows that the total number of visits made by OCS caseworkers on a monthly basis to children in foster care was 78 percent. This is a decrease from the previous year and OCS is not in compliance with the requirements.

STANDARD #2: At least 50 percent of the total number of monthly visits made by caseworkers to children in foster care during a fiscal year must occur in the child's residence. FFY 2015 OCS ORCA data shows that 66 percent of the monthly visits by OCS caseworkers to children in foster care occurred in the child's residence. This is a decrease from the previous year, however, OCS continues to be in compliance with this requirement.

Table 17: Caseworker Visits

<u>FY 2015 data</u>		
Region	% of visits made on a monthly basis by caseworkers to children in foster care	% of visits that occurred in the residence of the child
Anchorage	85%	70%
Northern	74%	64%
Southcentral	68%	65%
Southeast	82%	53%
Western	74%	57%
Statewide	78%	66%
<u>FY 2014 data</u>		
Region	% of visits made on a monthly basis by caseworkers to children in foster care	% of visits that occurred in the residence of the child
Anchorage	87%	68%
Northern	81%	65%
Southcentral	82%	75%
Southeast	91%	67%
Western	58%	57%
Statewide	83%	69%
<u>Change from FY2014 to FY2015</u>		
Region	% of visits made on a monthly basis by caseworkers to children in foster care	% of visits that occurred in the residence of the child
Anchorage	-2.3%	2.9%
Northern	-8.6%	-1.5%
Southcentral	-17.1%	-13.3%
Southeast	-9.9%	-20.9%
Western	27.6%	0.0%
Statewide	-6.0%	-4.3%

Source: State of Alaska Online Resources for Children in Alaska (ORCA) Report Monthly Caseworker Visits RR00124

ACTION STEPS TO ENSURE STANDARDS ARE MET

2015 Update: This specific section title was not include in the “2016 APSR” submitted in June 2015.

2016 Update: OCS management is reviewing the current practice and accountability for staff and managers related to this item. OCS is developing a plan to focus on core services, one of which is monthly case worker visits (MCV) with children. It is expected that a plan will be in place by September 30, 2016, and that a primary goal will be to increase compliance with MCV with children.

REASONS THE STATE’S PERFORMNCE HAS FALLEN SHORT AND STEPS TO COMPLIANCE

2015 Update: This specific section title was not include in the “2016 APSR” submitted in June 2015.

2016 Update: The State of Alaska received a letter dated March 10, 2016 informing us that we failed to meet the performance standards. Based on the state’s failure to meet the FFY 2015 MCV performance standard, Child Welfare Services program funding for FFY 2016 is reduced by 3% (from 75 % to 72%). OCS believes that the increasing case load and ongoing worker vacancy issues contributed to the decrease in compliance. OCS management is developing a plan to address this item and increase compliance in the coming year, as part of the core services work.

SECTION 8: ADOPTION AND LEGAL GUARDIANSHIP INCENTIVE PAYMENT

2015 Update: In FFY 2014, The State of Alaska received \$620,000 in Adoption and Legal Guardianship Incentive Payment. OCS has until 9/30/2017 to expend these funds. With the extended time frame allowed under Public Law 113-183, OCS does not anticipate challenges in utilizing these funds.

2016 Update: In FFY 2015, The State of Alaska received \$301,647 in Adoption and Legal Guardianship Incentive Payment. OCS has until 9/30/2018 to expend these funds. With the extended time frame allowed under Public Law 113-183, OCS does not anticipate challenges in utilizing these funds.

HOW ADOPTION & LEGAL GUARDIANSHIP INCENTIVE PAYMENTS WERE SPENT

2015 Update: Alaska OCS elects to use these funds to provide:

- Support grants that aid children in achieving permanency through timely completion of adoption and guardianship home studies.
- Support services to pre- and post-adoptive families, through the provision of adoption support services.

2016 Update: As in previous years, Alaska OCS elects to use these funds to provide:

- Support grants that aid children in achieving permanency through timely completion of adoption and guardianship home studies.
- Support services to pre and post-adoptive families, through the provision of adoption support services to include support for guardianship families.
- Adoption promotion activities including intensive education, preparation, matching and support for families who are motivated to adopt special needs children from foster care

HOW ADOPTION AND LEGAL GUARDIANSHIP INCENTIVE FUNDS WILL BE SPENT

2015 Update: This specific section title was not include in the “2016 APSR” submitted in June 2015.

2016 Update: There are no anticipated changes in how OCS utilizes the ALGI Funds in the coming year. OCS does not anticipate any difficulty in spending the funds in the allotted time frame.

SECTION 9: CHILD WELFARE DEMONSTRATION ACTIVITIES

Not applicable for Alaska

SECTION 10: QUALITY ASSURANCE

ASSESS THE STATE'S CURRENT QA/CQI SYSTEM

2015 Update: The Quality Assurance case review and CQI system at OCS are described in detail earlier. OCS has a strong QA system and case reviews are found to be accurate and align with data collected through SACWIS. The case reviews encompass a careful review of safety, permanency, and well being using the 18 item instrument. Each field office (24) is reviewed at least annually with the largest metropolitan field office reviewed twice yearly.

OCS has developed a CQI committee and desk manual to guide the committee in their work. This committee is in the development phase and will be working to identify how the data used will drive system change in the agency. The inclusion of regional and statewide managers, as well as commitment to monthly meetings is an improvement in Alaska's practice related to CQI.

2016 Update: OCS has not made changes to the QA/CQI system. OCS has a CQI committee and desk manual to guide the committee in their work. The inclusion of regional and statewide managers has supported a process that identifies issues that are impacting individual regions as well as a statewide perspective. Managers can engage in an immediate problem-solving process; the regional managers' participation allows for a direct link from the QA findings to needed program change.

TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE NEEDS

2015 Update: OCS has received training and technical assistance related to the OMS from the Children's Bureau and Region Ten. In preparation for the 2017 CFSR, it is anticipated that technical assistance will be needed from the Children's Bureau to assist in preparation for the upcoming review, use of the review instrument, and ongoing assessment of the OCS CQI process. Statewide and regional managers and staff receive information about the case reviews, and have field office improvement plans which address areas of need identified through the case review process.

2016 Update: OCS is working closely with Region 10 and the Children's Bureau to prepare for the 2017 CFSR. In July 2015 training and technical assistance was provided to assist OCS in utilizing the OMS, enhancing the knowledge and skills of QA staff and managers to use the new tool, and prepare for the coming year to plan for the CFSR. OCS is working closely with federal partners to identify and schedule upcoming training and technical assistance.

HOW QA/CQI DATA WAS USED TO UPDATE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

2015 Update: QA data supports the need for the identified strategies regarding repeat maltreatment, placement stability, and permanency planning. Please see the plan for improvement for more details.

2016 Update: The QA manager is a participant in OCS leadership, ESC, and other committees and workgroups to ensure that current data is used to determine needs and identify strategies. QA data is provided to managers on a regular basis to review and analyze. OCS Management utilizes the QA data to inform decisions on identifying the strengths and needs for each region and the state. CY15 QA review data was reviewed in monthly OCS leadership meetings specific to the CFSR, CFSP, and APSR. The data collected through the QA reviews continues to support the need to focus on Core Services. Caseworker visits with children and parents continue to be identified as key areas that OCS is weak in, but improvements would have a large impact on outcomes. The QA data is provided in Section 2 of this report.

ALASKA'S CURRENT CASE REVIEW INSTRUMENT

2015 Update: OCS will undergo a CFSR in July 2017. The OCS case review system uses the CFSR instrument. OCS began using the federal Online Management System (OMS) in March 2015.

2016 Update: The OCS case review system uses the CFSR instrument. OCS continues to use OMS. OCS received onsite training and technical assistance on the instrument from Children's Bureau in July 2015.

SECTION 11: CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION AND TREATMENT ACT REQUIREMENTS

ANNUAL CAPTA REPORT

Substantive Changes To State Laws Relating To Prevention Of Child Abuse And Neglect

2015 Update: There have been no changes in the state laws or regulations related to the prevention of child abuse and neglect that affect the state's eligibility for the CAPTA state grant.

2016 Update: There have been no changes in the state laws or regulations related to the prevention of child abuse and neglect that affect the state's eligibility for the CAPTA state grant.

Changes To The Approved CAPTA Plan In How State Proposes To Use Funds

2015 Update: There have been no significant changes in the states approved CAPTA plan related to how funds are used to support the program areas. In 2013 the Service Array Section entered into a collaborative with the DOL, CWA; the Department of Public Safety; local community law enforcement agencies; and the Alaska Children's Alliance to implement the ChildFirst Alaska Project. ChildFirst is a trademarked training program that was initially developed by the National Child Protection Training Center (NCPTC) in partnership with CornerHouse in Minneapolis, Minnesota. The adaptable curriculum that can be modified and utilized by states who are working to develop their own nationally certified training programs. ChildFirst Alaska was certified by the NCPTC in 2014.

Several years of preparatory work lead up to the roll-out of the first trainings on the new ChildFirst Alaska forensic interview training model. The trainings in year one resulted in the certification of nine (9) certified ChildFirst Alaska faculties, who provided ongoing training in Anchorage in 2013, expanding to Anchorage and Fairbanks in 2014 and will continue training in both areas in 2015.

2016 Update: There have been no significant changes in the states approved CAPTA plan related to how funds are used to support the program areas. OCS will be focusing on CAPTA in the coming year to review the current plan and identify any needed changes.

How CAPTA State Grant Funds Were Used

2015 Update: In the past year, CAPTA funding has been designated to support the implementation and ongoing delivery of the ChildFirst Alaska training for OCS staff, other department staff, and community partners involved in the response to child sexual and physical abuse. Funding was used to support the project in multiple areas:

- ChildFirst Alaska Project Coordination: contracts with the CWA and the Alaska Children's Alliance to support coordination efforts of the project and strategic planning by the ChildFirst Alaska Leadership Team activities;
- OCS and other department staff participation in ChildFirst training: direct funding for costs associated with OCS staff participation in the ChildFirst training. It is expected that all OCS staff receive training in forensic interviewing within the first 12 months of employment. Funding also supported participation of DOL and Department of Public Safety staff, as well as local law enforcement and other MDT member training; and
- Resource development of ChildFirst Materials: funding to support the development of a web portal and tools for staff implementing the ChildFirst Alaska training protocol.

It is expected that this new model of forensic interviewing will provide a common language and standard across the system and promote an increased rate of prosecution of offenders.

In FY 16, CAPTA funds will be used to support additional grants and contacted services in state. The services will provide direct support to children and families through the following programs:

- Resource Family Training – provides training and instruction to resource families caring for children in OCS custody;
- Emergency Shelter Services for Youth – shelter and transition services for youth in or out of OCS custody. Provides shelter, employment preparation, and counseling services;

- Family Support Services – primary preventative services to reduce risk to families and children by assisting with basic needs and resources and referral; and
- Visitation and Skill Building for OCS involved families – home visitation and parenting education for families with OCS involvement or identified as at risk. Services are isolated to the Cordova area, where OCS does not have a local office or worker in the community.

Providers of these and other OCS funded grantees, contractors and partners will also receive training and technical assistance supported by CAPTA funding.

2016 Update: During this reporting period CAPTA funds have supported multiple projects that improve the quality of child protective service investigations while reducing trauma to child victims. This has been done primarily through provision of training to child welfare professionals and their partners in best practices in areas such as: child forensic interviewing; multidisciplinary child protection teams; trauma informed care; and home visiting; as well as CAC development/maintenance. Below is a list of activities and projects funded by CAPTA during this reporting period:

- ChildFirst Alaska Project Coordination: As noted last year, OCS contracts with the CWA and the Alaska Children’s Alliance to support coordination efforts for the Childfirst Alaska Forensic Interview Training. Since this began in February 2013, 284 professionals in Alaska were trained, including: attorneys, OCS staff, law enforcement, and CAC staff.
- Development and maintenance of ChildFirst website. Funding to support the development and maintenance of a web portal and tools for staff implementing the ChildFirst Alaska training protocol. This site went live in April 2016.
- Training DOL attorneys in the Childfirst Alaska model. In order to ensure that the investment in forensic interview Training is fully utilized, it is essential that Alaska’s attorneys who are responsible for child maltreatment cases (both civil and criminal), be familiar with the state’s forensic interviewing model. One of the ultimate goals of teaching forensic interviewing, aside from reducing trauma to the victims, is to increase accountability for the perpetrators of abuse. This year CAPTA funds supported two additional attorneys to attend Childfirst Alaska training.
- Technical assistance and training to OCS grantees is delivered through a contract with the CWA. This project supported development and maintenance of a multidisciplinary training team to work with MDTs. It has also continued to support direct technical assistance for Alaska’s CACs and family support programs. This project funded a cross-disciplinary collaborative training event organized by OCS, the Alaska Children’s Alliance (ACA) and the CWA and was attended by all of Alaska’s CAC Program Managers which occurred in May 2016.
- OCS has been working collaboratively with multiple partners including the Children’s Justice Task Force, and the Alaska Division of Juvenile Justice to plan and produce training for mandatory reporter and the general public about how to recognize and respond to child abuse. This training is near completion and will be rolled out this summer. www.reportchildabuse.alaska.gov

In SFY 17 the efforts to support training in Childfirst Alaska will continue, as this is one of the state’s top training priorities which is expected to have a positive impact on the safety of children. Other training and technical Assistance provision to grantees and OCS partners is going to continue and OCS will continue to look for ways to optimize the use of funds spent on training for maximum benefit. The training on child maltreatment for reporters will be completed in FY16. Expected FY17 expenses related to this project will be for the production of the mandated reporter DVDs and for the public information campaign associated with the training.

Citizen Review Panel Annual Report And State Agency’s Response

2015 Update: A copy of Alaska CRP annual report 2014 and OCS’ response were included.

2016 Update: The CRP annual report is released on June 30th each year. OCS is required to respond to the report within six months of the report being released. The OCS response was released in December 2015. A copy of Alaska’s CRP annual report 2015 and OCS’ response to the report are located in Appendix A of this document. Please see Section 1 for a summary.

UPDATE ON SUBSTANCE-EXPOSED NEWBORNS

Policies and Procedures to Address the Needs of Infants Born or Affected

2015 Update: This specific section title was not include in the “2016 APSR” submitted in June 2015.

2016 Update: Alaska Statute 47.17.020 addresses infants exposed to drugs and requires that if a practitioner of the healing arts is involved in the delivery or care of an infant who the practitioner determines has been adversely affected by, or is withdrawing from exposure to, a controlled substance or alcohol shall immediately notify the nearest office of the department of the infant's condition. In this section, "controlled substance" has the meaning given in AS 11.71.900 but does not include a substance lawfully taken under a prescription from a health care provider who is authorized to prescribe the substance and "infant" means a child who is less than 12 months of age. OCS policy and procedures for intake and screening adequately address infants born or affected.

Development of a Plan of Safe Care for the Infant Born or Affected

2015 Update: This specific section title was not include in the "2016 APSR" submitted in June 2015.

2016 Update: AS 47.17.020 addresses infants who are exposed to drugs. This statute states "A practitioner of the healing arts involved in the delivery or care of an infant who the practitioner determines has been adversely affected by, or is withdrawing from exposure to, a controlled substance or alcohol shall immediately notify the nearest office of the department of the infant's condition." OCS is the agency that these reports are submitted to. OCS utilizes screening and assessment policies to adequately address substance exposed newborns.

If a Protective Services Report is received, OCS follows the policy, including safety and case planning requirements. If an infant is determined to be unsafe or at high risk OCS will take the necessary action to ensure the child's needs are met. A safe plan of care for a substance exposed child may include referrals to outside agencies, a safety plan, or taking custody of the child and developing a case plan. If OCS opens a case for services to the child and family, OCS provides ongoing monitoring of the case through monthly case worker visits. No training or technical assistance have been identified at this time.

Commentary on NCANDS Data

2015 Update: This specific section title was not include in the "2016 APSR" submitted in June 2015.

2016 Update: Alcohol and drug abuse by caregivers is a significant risk factor associated with reports of child abuse and neglect in Alaska. OCS is actively working on policy and practice standards related to drug testing with OCS clients, to provide guidance to staff on how to assess alcohol and drug use with families. The Child Maltreatment 2014 report provides NCANDS data and it states that, in Alaska, 17.2% of child victims of maltreatment have the risk factor of alcohol abuse by caregiver. OCS is exploring this issue and has identified ORCA (SACWIS) changes that are needed to accurately identify and track drug and alcohol use in open cases. Beginning in April 2016, the protective services reports allows OCS to document the drug type that is used by an individual, not just "drug abuse". In the coming year, OCS will be initiating required staff training through an online SAMSHA training specifically designed to provide information regarding drugs and alcohol for child welfare staff.

AMENDMENTS TO CAPTA MADE BY P.L. 114-22, THE JUSTICE FOR VICTIMS OF TRAFFICKING ACT OF 2015

2015 Update: (Please note, the 2016 APSR PI did not request an update, however, OCS provided information on the work surrounding P.L. 113-183) On September 29, 2014, the President signed into law P.L. 113-183. This law amended title IV-B and title IV-E plan requirements. OCS has complied with the requirements that were effective upon enactment; and is actively working on requirements due in the coming year, and expects to submit all necessary documentation on time.

The Title IV-E State Plan amendment was submitted January 20, 2015; the plan was approved by Administration of Children and Families (ACF). OCS complied with recommendations from ACYF-CB-IM-14-03 and ACYF-CB-PI-14-06, and submitted necessary documentation regarding:

1. Relative notification
2. Sibling definition
3. Successor guardians

The Title IV-E State Plan amendment will be submitted September 29, 2015. OCS is intending to comply with all recommendations from ACYF-CB-IM-14-03 and ACYF-CB-PI-14-06, and will submitted necessary documentation regarding our collaboration, policy development, and training related to:

- Section 101 – identifying, documenting, and determining services for children and youth at risk of sex trafficking

- Section 102 – reporting instances of sex trafficking
- Section 104 – locating and responding to children who run away from foster care
- Section 111 – supporting normalcy for children in foster care
- Section 112 – improving case review system and APPLA as a permanency option
- Section 113 – empowering youth ages 14 and older
- Section 114 – ensuring foster children have needed documentation when they exit care.

2016 Update: Alaska continues to work actively on the issue of human trafficking. There are many efforts occurring simultaneously to improve identification and services to victims and potential victims of sex trafficking. The State of Alaska Title IV-E State Plan amendment with the updates pertaining to P.L. 113-183 was submitted timely. OCS was asked to make additions and corrections to the amendment; the resubmission was timely and OCS is waiting for approval on the amendment. OCS continues to work on implementation of this law and will submit updates to the State Plan as required in September 2016. OCS met with the Children’s Bureau CBCAP Federal Project Officer and the CBCAP regional contact for Alaska on April 21st by telephone. This meeting was specific to the intersection between CBCAP Prevention funds and State efforts regarding sex trafficking.

Steps the State is Taking or Will Take to Address Amendments to CAPTA Relating to Sex Trafficking

The Office of Children’s Services has implemented policies and procedures for children who are in custody or have an open case plan to be screened when they have run away to determine if they are sex trafficking victims. OCS is implementing policies and procedures to have any protective services reports regarding sex trafficking to be screened and assessed to determine further steps the agency will take. OCS has an active workgroup to address the federal requirements related to human and sex trafficking. OCS participates in other community groups that include stakeholders from local and statewide agencies.

The policies and procedures are being developed in collaboration with state law enforcement, juvenile justice, and social services agencies such as runaway and homeless youth shelters to assist with training OCS staff on identifying, assessing whether a child is at risk or a victim of sex trafficking and providing services to these children. Trainings have been provided to staff in regards to sex trafficking provisions, as well as other training being developed to assist staff with identifying, assessing and providing services to children who are sex trafficking victims. Trainings on the prevention of sex trafficking have also been occurring in collaboration with partners listed above.

The Alaska CJATF has decided to focus on child trafficking, and particularly child sex trafficking, during its recent quarterly meetings. In 2016, Covenant House conducted a presentation on Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children, focusing on the problem in Alaska, and what is currently being done to address it. The presenter works directly with exploited youth at Covenant House in Anchorage Alaska, where they focus on outreach to homeless youth in the community and works to keep them safe from exploitation. Two federal attorneys who are directly responsible for prosecuting traffickers also presented before the task force at the winter meeting (December 2015) and spoke to task force members about the difficulties and challenges of their work as well as some of their successes. Task Force member receive regular updates related to the work of OCS to implement policies and changes within the child protection system in order to address P. L. 113-183.

In addition to the above mentioned presentations several task force members have been active on statewide task forces and roundtables that have been formed to address human trafficking. Those members regularly report to the rest of the task force on the activities of those groups to address this issue. In FY16 the Alaska CJATF also produced an online training to educate the public about child abuse and how to respond to and report child abuse. This training contains an entire segment devoted to child exploitation and sex trafficking, including information on the extent of child exploitation in Alaska, the signs for recognizing exploitation and how to respond if you see these signs.

Assessment of Changes the State Will Need in Law, Policy, or Procedure to Ensure Compliance

No changes are expected to be needed at this time.

Progress and Planned Activities Related to P.L. 114-22

OCS has provided information to staff related to human trafficking, however additional training will be required as policy is updated. OCS has updated protective service reports in ORCA to accurately document and capture information regarding children and youth who have been or may have been involved in sex or human trafficking. The ORCA update was completed in April 2016 and policy and procedure changes will be implemented by 9/30/16. The random moment time study is also

being revised to monitor staff time on cases of sex trafficking, this is slated to be effective July 1, 2016. The data will allow OCS to report the number of sex trafficking children in the NCANDS report. OCS has developed policies and procedures and is working on final edits before finalization of policies regarding how staff will screen, assess and provide services to children who are at risk or victims of sex trafficking.

In April 2016, OCS representatives participated in a teleconference with the CBCAP Federal Project Officer with the Children's Bureau regarding the intersection between CBCAP Prevention funds and State Efforts regarding Sex trafficking. OCS will continue to seek technical assistance as needed to assist in meeting requirements for amending the CAPTA state plan.

Alaska did not elect to extend the sex trafficking definition to those over 18 and up to 24.

Plan to Submit 5/29/17 CAPTA Plan with Additional Information Relating to Sex Trafficking

OCS intends to meet the federal timelines and requirements related to sex trafficking. OCS will submit a timely amendment to the title IV-E state plan to comply with requirements of P.L. 113-183. OCS will submit a timely update to the CAPTA plan by May 29, 2017 to address the requirements of P.L. 114-22.

SECTION 12: CHAFEE FOSTER CARE INDEPENDENCE PROGRAM (CFCIP)/EDUCATION & TRAINING VOUCHERS (ETV)

EIGHT PURPOSES OF CFCIP

CFCIP program has eight purposes. The OCS partners with other Tribal and community organizations to meet the requirements.

1. Help youth likely to remain in foster care until age 18 transition to self-sufficiency by providing services.

2015 Update: Engaging youth in exit planning will continue to be an area of focus for SFY 2016. The Independent Living Program Transition Plan has been updated to promote youth involvement and streamline the process of transitioning from custody. OCS continued collaboration with FFCA to host retreats for youth with leadership development and service delivery as the focus of each event. A statewide Permanency Summit will be organized through collaboration with FFCA and Casey Family Programs. The Summit will focus on permanency for older youth. The summit hopes to attract Tribal leaders, legal and community partners, foster parents, children's services workers, and youth to discuss permanency and the importance of identifying adult supports for youth as they transition from care.

2016 Update: In the past year the Independent Living Program Transition Plan has been updated to promote youth involvement and improve the process of transitioning from custody. The transition plan serves to focus on the desired and necessary services to promote the youth's self-sufficiency. The IL program collaborated with FFCA to host quarterly retreats for youth with leadership development and service delivery as the focus of each event. OCS independent living workers play a large role in the delivery and facilitation of services to IL youth. IL workers deliver services directly one-on-one with youth and in facilitated group training opportunities. They also request Chafee funding to help pay for the provision of independent living services and make referrals to services which are appropriate for the youth's plan for self-sufficiency. OCS is making stronger efforts to engage youth in exit planning and advocating for youth at team meetings regarding helping the youth make thoughtful and planned exit from foster care. This will continue to be an area of focus for SFY 2017. Additionally, OCS will continue to maintain strident standards for the use of Another Permanent Planned Living Arrangement (APPLA) as a permanency goal, and providing enhanced supports and services to youth with APPLA goals.

2. Help youth likely to remain in foster care until age 18 receive the education, training, and services necessary to obtain employment.

2015 Update: The contract with FFCA will continue, with three statewide youth leadership retreats planned in SFY 2016. See next question for more information about education and training.

2016 Update: The contract with FFCA will continue in SFY17, to provide three statewide youth leadership retreats throughout the year, and one Education Conference to be held in May 2016. Additionally, in September 2016, OCS will partner with Alaska's Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and hold a statewide Career Conference through the existing Pre-Employment Transition Services (PETS) program. This conference will provide youth with skill development essential to gaining employment and vocational training. Aside from the conference, PETS provides career preparation and support services to youth in transition.

3. Help youth likely to remain in foster care until age 18 prepare for and enter post-secondary training and educational institutions.

2015 Update: The CWA continues to administer the ETV program on the University of Alaska Anchorage campus. Due to the increase of case management and academic support available through this partnership, the program is seeing increased retention and higher academic achievement by the youth served. Financial support was made available to allow youth to maintain residence on campus during the scheduled breaks and summer months in effort to promote stability in their living situation. Oversight and review will include documenting efforts for educational achievements, an area that has not been documented consistently. Training and capacity building in the area of career preparation and post-secondary education will continue in SFY 2016, with a focus on trades and apprenticeship programs and university and other post-secondary education programs available to youth across the state. These areas of focus were identified by youth in 2015 as the priority service areas

to focus on for youth in transition. Career preparation and support services will be developed. This Program will focus on developing services with the State of Alaska Department of Labor Division of Vocational Rehabilitation program, to provide career preparation and support services to youth in transition. The PETS Program will be online to provide career exploration and preparation services and offer navigation support to youth enrolled in the program.

2016 Update: The program is expecting its highest graduation year with eleven college graduates (two in December and nine in May). Financial support was made available to allow youth to maintain residence on campus during the scheduled breaks and summer months in effort to promote stability in their living situation. Oversight and review will include documenting efforts for educational achievements, an area that has not been documented consistently. Training and capacity building in the area of career preparation and post-secondary education will continue in SFY 2017, with a focus on trades and apprenticeship programs and university and other post-secondary education programs available to youth across the state.

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

2015 Update: Mentorship provides services to urban and rural youth statewide. A specialized program was developed to enhance permanency efforts to all youth by matching youth to mentors as well as searching for relatives, past foster parents and those that supported the youth as coaches, teachers, and leaders. These individuals will be brought in to support and develop a plan for permanency for each youth served by the program. This program was developed in SFY 2015 and will be solicited through a Request for Proposals in SFY 2016. This grant program will increase the focus of IL Services on permanency and inform OCS management on best practice to integrate in to the work with older youth.

2016 Update: A statewide Permanency Summit was organized through collaboration with FFCA and Casey Family Programs. The summit focused on permanency for older youth and included participation by Tribal leaders, legal and community partners, foster parents, children's services workers, and youth to discuss permanency and the importance of identifying adult supports for youth as they transition from care. An outcome of the summit was the facilitation of a two-day workshop presented by Kevin Campbell of Family Finding, founder of the Center for Family Finding and Youth Connectedness and developer of the Family Finding model- (<http://www.familyfinding.org>). In November, 2015, Mr. Campbell worked with foster youth in custody and out of custody during a youth retreat, teaching them to explore and map their support networks and make individualized plans to expand these networks outside of formal social services.

Regional Independent Living Staff work closely with youth to identify important people in their lives and help them make permanent connections with these people. They help advocate for adoption, including adult adoption, continually working on a youth's family tree and reach out to extended family members through social media. In addition, OCS funds a grant for Mentorship for Independent Living services, currently awarded to Big Brothers Big Sisters of Alaska in the Anchorage and Southcentral Regions, to which the Specialists make youth referrals.

5. Provide financial, housing, counseling, employment, education, and other appropriate support and services to former foster care recipient 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 and then making the transition to adulthood.

2015 Update: Utilization of the Tenant Based Rental Assistance (TBRA) program has been consistent in the Anchorage region; Chafee funding was used to add additional housing vouchers. Chafee funding supported five additional housing vouchers for Anchorage-based youth, increasing the number of available housing vouchers to 15 in the Anchorage area. There are currently 69 youth who received housing coupons or vouchers statewide, with 15 additional vouchers issued to youth currently searching for appropriate housing in the community. The "Ready to Rent" training was introduced in 2015 and has been expanded to provide to every youth receiving a TBRA coupons. OCS is also supporting youth attending college who are residing in dorms to maintain their dorm housing during the summer months and scheduled breaks on campus. This promotes permanency in a youth's living situation and offers them direct support during those periods classes are not in session and the campus resources are closed. In 2015 the Independent Living program focused on expanding housing education and home management supports, leading to a stronger partnership with AHFC.

2016 Update: Last reporting cycle, TBRA data was miscalculated to include youth from the DJJ re-entering the community. Therefore, adjusted to correctly account for only OCS IL youth, a total of 19 Independent Living youth have received housing coupons or vouchers statewide, 15 additional vouchers have been issued to youth, and 8 additional youth have been searching

for appropriate housing in the community. The “Ready to Rent” training has continued. In 2016 the Independent Living program focused on expanding housing education and home management supports, leading to a stronger partnership with AHFC and providing housing assistance across the state.

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

2015 Update: The CWA continues to administer the ETV Program statewide. This is allowed for more direct support for youth attending college. Additional resources will be identified to support the growth of involvement.

2016 Update: The CWA continues to administer the ETV Program statewide; this allows more contact and “hands on” support for youth applying for and attending college. The CWA has made progress in leveraging resources, such as the Presidential Tuition Waivers and additional OCS scholarship funding in order to maximize the assistance for youth. CWA is also adept at helping youth to understand what other resources need to be applied for such as the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and Pell Grants, in order to help the education funding stretch as far as possible. CWA promotes youth accountability to help them understand they will be responsible for paying for some of their own educational expenses. The ETV Program reports that 21 students returned and 16 new students enrolled for Academic year 2015-2016. For this reporting period enrollment expanded to include additional University of Alaska campuses across the state which contributed to increased enrollment. In the past year, the ETV and IL program celebrated a total of eleven graduates from UAA Bachelor programs.

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

2015 Update: Every youth who leaves foster care after age 16 due to an adoption or guardianship is eligible to have an individualized subsidy negotiated to meet their special needs until age 18. When each youth is close to turning 18 years old, a letter is sent out to inform the guardian parent(s) that the adoption or guardianship subsidy will be ending. Information about the Independent Living Program, how to apply for Alaska Medicaid beyond 18 years old and how to contact the Regional Independent Living Specialists around Alaska is dispersed. Once the youth engages in the Independent Living Program at age 16, the assigned Regional Independent Living Specialist will conduct the Life Skills Assessment which identifies areas of strengths and needs in functioning and independence. The assessment results guide the development of a transition plan, which guides services and supports for each individual youth. The youth will have opportunities for engagement in youth retreats where they are mentored to develop their leadership skills and identify supports that assist them in their transition. Academic supports are offered while youth attend high school. Post-secondary supports are offered for youth attending college. Many of these youth are utilizing the ETV Program, housing supports, and academic supports offered through the program. There is an increase in the career preparation services offered.

2016 Update: Youth remain eligible for IL services after leaving foster care at age 16 or older, regardless of whether they are adopted, placed in a guardianship, are reunified with their family, or are released to their own independence. Adoptive and guardianship families receive a monthly subsidy payment to assist in meeting the special needs of the youth in their care, until the youth turns 18. When Independent Living youth exit care, either to themselves, an adoption or guardianship, they receive a transition packet. The packet explains the continued supports available to the youth and their responsibility for program engagement, including housing, education and employment resources. Often adoptive/guardianship families will reach out to IL Services for their youth at this time, when they no longer have access to the additional funds to assist the youth with achieving self-sufficiency such as completing high school after age 18, and for post-secondary education. OCS Independent Living staff and Adoption staff, work together to ensure that both youth and/or their families are well aware of the resources which continue to be available to them after they exit care.

8. Ensure children who are likely to remain in foster care until 18 years of age have regular, ongoing opportunities to engage in age or developmentally- appropriate activities as defined in section 475 (11) of the P.L. 113-183.

2015 Update: Alaska will comply with the requirements for normalcy standards, and intends to submit all necessary documentation by the 9/29/15 deadline. Covenant House Alaska will be providing training to local community MDT around child and human sex trafficking and will be a participant in the development of a community. Routine credit reporting now

includes the 14 and 15 year old population as well as all youth in-custody ages 16 to 21 years old. A small number of youth have had credit reporting issues identified and was able to address those issues with support from their RILS. The OCS Program Coordinator will continue to negotiate agreements with all three credit reporting agencies to ensure compliance with credit reporting requirements.

2016 Update: Alaska has complied with the requirements for normalcy standards. To ensure that youth are engaged in developmentally-appropriate activities, Regional Independent Living Specialists and OCS Case workers work together to develop creative opportunities for youth activities. IL organizes, supervises and transports youth to retreats, and career and educational fairs throughout the state that are specifically focused on the youth's developmental needs. The IL Specialists identify training and internship opportunities that are of interest of a youth, engaging the youth in their education and employment future. Finally, each region conducts monthly classes targeted to meet the specific developmental needs of IL youth for self-sufficiency, such as education on budgeting, renter's rights and responsibilities, and credit reporting. These events provide unique opportunities for youth with similar life experiences to come together, support each other and learn skills essential to adulthood while engaging them in their community and in traditional practices.

Chafee funding is used to support individual youth in engagement with traditional hunting and fishing practices, attendance at cultural events, extracurricular activities, firearm safety classes, and lessons essential for youth to attain their driver's permits and licenses.

Chafee funding is also used to help youth attend prom and events normal for high school aged teenagers including senior picture and graduation accessories. Funding is also used for purchasing clothing appropriate for their first interview or employment or items for their first apartment or dorm room.

COLLABORATION

2015 Update: The Independent Living Program incorporates CFCIP and ETV programs. The Independent Living Program (IL) is focuses on collaboration with Tribal and community partners. In the past year the IL staff has continued to engage in substantial, ongoing, and meaningful collaboration with the following partners:

- Facing Foster Care in Alaska (FFCA) to train and recruit foster homes to specifically support older youth and provide joint trainings to OCS staff, community agencies, and to schools on the importance of supporting youth in transition.
- The State of Alaska Dept. of Labor Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) to develop and implement a project to connect transition aged youth currently or previously in OCS custody with Pre-Employment Transition Services (PETS). The project will connect transition aged youth currently or previously in OCS custody with opportunities to engage in hands on, career focused assessment and support services.
- The Alaska Housing Finance Corporation (AHFC) collaboration continues to provide housing support to youth in transition around the state.

2016 Update: The Independent Living Program incorporates CFCIP and ETV programs. The Independent Living Program (IL) is focused on collaborating with Tribal and community partners. In the past year the IL staff has continued to engage in substantial, ongoing, and meaningful collaboration with the following partners:

- Facing Foster Care in Alaska (FFCA) provides joint trainings with OCS staff, community agencies, and to schools on the importance of supporting youth in transition. OCS holds quarterly OCS/FFCA Leadership meetings and three times per year youth retreats which provide leadership skills training, mentorship and transition support. The quarterly collaborative meetings with FFCA and representatives of OCS leadership to include the agency director assist with the identification of common goals. The collaborative meeting serves to assist youth in practicing advocacy skills as well as to show youth how their advocacy can result in support and responsiveness from the highest levels of leadership in the agency. The contractor provides leadership skill building and transition services to youth who are eligible for the IL program during the youth leadership retreats. OCS IL specialists identify and facilitate youth participation in these events.
- The State of Alaska Dept. of Labor Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR), with OCS, implemented a project to connect transition aged youth currently or previously in OCS custody with Pre-Employment Transition Services (PETS). The project will connect transition aged youth currently or previously in OCS custody with opportunities to engage in hands on, career focused assessment and support services.

- The Alaska Housing Finance Corporation (AHFC) collaboration continues to provide housing support to youth in transition around the state. The monthly meetings also serve to develop strong communication between referring OCS Independent Living staff and AHFC staff in Anchorage. Youth in TBRA housing require monthly home visits by OCS workers, therefore, frequent contact and collaboration with this program is needed to assist youth in being successful in obtaining and maintaining housing through this program.
- Covenant House is a non-profit agency which provides emergency shelter services to youth. In SFY16 an Independent Living Specialist position was established to co-locate at the facility to improve IL service delivery to homeless youth who may be eligible for services. Additional information was provided in Section 4 of this report.
- Mentorship for Independent Living Services in the OCS service regions of Anchorage and Southcentral (Mat-Su) collaboration information is available in Section 4 of this report.
- University of Alaska (UAA) CWA collaborates closely with OCS regarding management of the Education and Training Voucher program. OCS provides assistance in identifying eligible youth so that CWA can use University of Alaska systems to identify youth who may need outreach to utilize ETV funding. Collaboration and planning for the annual educational conference occurs annually.
- IL program presentation to Court Improvement Project in October 2014; attendees of the meeting included representatives from Tribe Partners, Judges, and OCS leadership.
- FFCA representatives, ILP staff, and the OCS Director's Executive Team met in August and November 2014 to discuss programs, services, and needs for this population. These meetings will continue three times per year.

USE OF FUNDS

2015 Update: FFY 13 FUNDS

OCS has under-spent the FFY 2013 Chafee funds. The FFY 2013 award amount was \$608,949.00; the grant was under spent by \$95,831.00. OCS has been working with Region Ten to address this under spending of these funds and to insure that future federal funds are fully spent for Chafee. OCS has been transitioning to a new statewide accounting system. The IRIS Project is set to go live on July 1, 2015. This system will better help us to track and record more accurately the major programs such as Chafee. OCS utilizes Chafee Funds to provide the following services and assistance to eligible youth:

- Emergency Housing Services
- Youth Retreat planning and coordination
- Employment Training and assistance
- Goods and services for youth.
- Regional Independent Living Specialist staff

2016 Update: OCS is on track to spend all of the FFY 2014 Funds. There were no changes to how the Chafee funds are used in Alaska. There are no plans to change the way we utilize these funds in the coming year.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND PLANNED ACTIVITIES

2015 Update: The IL Program experienced significant growth in many service areas during the past year. Supervision of the six Regional Independent Living Specialists (RILS) transferred from the 5 OCS regional offices to the state office Independent Living Program Coordinator, offering improvements in program consistency, increased service delivery, and expends Chafee funding more effectively statewide. The spending matrix for the IL Program was reviewed with staff and revised to promote more accountability in the investment of resources for youth in transition. The plan is for youth to receive increased support and will achieve more of their goals with more focused support and increased monitoring of the outcomes for each youth engaged in services.

2016 Update: The IL Program experienced significant growth in the past year; the number of eligible youth for Independent Living Program services increased from 594 youth in SFY 15 to 746 in SFY 16.

Additionally, OCS added an additional Regional Independent Living Specialist (RILS) in the Southcentral Region bringing the total number of Independent Living Specialist staff around the state to seven specialists who serve eligible youth. The addition of the specialist position was critical to delivering timely and quality services to the Southcentral region which serves youth in outlying rural areas in addition to the larger community of Wasilla. Additionally, supervision of the seven Regional Independent Living Program Specialists has been centralized to the state office Program Coordinator. This transition affords

improvements in program consistency, increased service delivery, and expending Chafee funding more effectively and equitably statewide. These efforts also facilitate providing increased support to youth, helping them to focus and achieve their goals and improve overall outcomes for each youth engaged in services.

Increased staffing and supervision provides for increased accountability for service provision to APPLA youth. Recently, during an FFCA quarterly retreat, OCS IL staff facilitated a conversation related to placement disruptions. Youth and staff are beginning to explore both reasons for and ramifications of unanticipated changes in a youth's placement. Notably, and identified by both youth and staff, caseworker visits are critical to both preserving placement and easing transitions. OCS' focus on increasing staffing and supervision will undoubtedly have positive effects for youth and their success in independence. For FY 17 the OCS IL Program will continue to explore systemic solutions to increase youth placement stability. This will be conducted in partnership with community stakeholders such as FFCA, GAL/CASAs, Tribal partners, foster parents and individual meetings with youth.

POLICY AND PRACTICE TO AFFIRM SEXUAL ORIENTATION AND GENDER IDENTITIES OF YOUTH SERVED BY THE PROGRAM

2015 Update: Information regarding sexual orientation and gender identities of youth was not included in the APSR.

2016 Update: The State of Alaska OCS actively practices non-discriminatory and inclusive practices, which are affirmed in the Foster Children's Rights publication. Independent Living Specialists advocate for the youth's wishes with their self-identity. Specialists engage with youth in nonjudgmental manner and ensuring all participants on the youth's team engage in a similar manner. Further, RILS actively seek out supportive connections to LGBTQ communities, resources and appropriate supports in the area in which the youth live. This includes university and high school groups, sexual health medical care, area specific agencies such as Identity Inc. FFCA is another organization which seeks to affirm and support youth who have experienced foster care

NATIONAL YOUTH IN TRANSITION DATABASE (NYTD)

Collaboration

2015 Update: Quarterly phone conferences have been set up for regular communication and collaboration with Tribal partners. Additionally FFCA representatives were invited to attend the TSCG meetings. At those meetings they have shared program goals using the NYTD outcomes pertaining to homelessness, education, substance abuse, and employment.

The IL Program Coordinator has shared NYTD outcomes with community partners, foster parents, and youth in communities around the State of Alaska. Including a large meeting in Anchorage held 9/17/14 to discuss program goals, barriers to services and permanency, and share NYTD data. This meeting included community partners such as DBH, GALs, CASAs, the ACRF, FFCA, OCS IL Staff, Mental Health Trust representatives, Department of Vocational Rehabilitation, community attorneys, and community mental health centers.

2016 Update: Quarterly phone conferences have been established for regular communication and collaboration with Tribal partners. OCS has coordinated with agency Tribal specialists to support outreach efforts in order to increase Tribal attendance and provide seamless support for Alaska Native Independent Living youth. FFCA is also an active participant in the TSCG meetings, advocating on behalf of IL youth and the specialized needs of youth aging out of foster care. At those meetings they have shared program goals using the NYTD outcomes pertaining to homelessness, education, substance abuse, and employment.

The ILP Program Coordinator has shared NYTD outcomes with community partners, foster parents, and youth in communities around the State of Alaska. This meeting included community partners such as DBH, GALs, CASAs, ACRF, FFCA, OCS Independent Living Staff, Mental Health Trust representatives, Department of Vocational Rehabilitation, community attorneys, and community mental health centers. NYTD data is shared at the quarterly retreats with youth. FFCA representatives, ILP staff, and the OCS Director's Executive Team met in May 2016 to discuss programs, services, and needs for this population. These meetings will continue three times per year.

Utilization of NYTD Data in Consultation with Youth and Stakeholders to Improve Service Delivery

2015 Update: NYTD data has provided Alaska with concrete numbers to develop and enhance program focus on three areas: 1) housing/homelessness, 2) healthcare and risk prevention, and 3) educational achievement. Additional funding was allocated

in SFY 2014 and SFY 2015 to expand services to youth based on trends identified through both the NYTD survey and State of Alaska statistics tracked by the department. NYTD data is shared at the quarterly retreats with youth. The NYTD outcomes have informed the FFCA and OCS about needs and caused collaborative efforts to find specialized presenters and activities supporting the areas identified, such as health education, homelessness, budgeting, and employment.

2016 Update: The NYTD outcomes have informed the FFCA and OCS about needs and caused collaborative efforts to find specialized presenters and activities supporting the areas identified, such as health education, homelessness, budgeting, and employment.

Improvements to Data Collection

2015 Update: In SFY 2016, the third cohort of NYTD surveys will be conducted, with the youth previously surveyed at age 17 and age 19, now being surveyed at age 21. This will provide a snapshot of the same population over a five year period, and give the agency increased information about the needs. The data will be informative in evaluating the efforts of the IL Program to provide adequate supports to youth and will suggest what supports will need to be strengthened to address identified trends.

The increased use of social media tools has assisted Regional Independent Living Specialists (RILS) to reach out to more youth in transition than in past years. RILS were able to locate and survey 82.9% of our cohort-age 21 young adults with only 14.3% unable to locate and 2.9% declining to complete the survey. The IL Program uses social media to survey groups of youth to inform program planning and service delivery, including career planning, job skills preparation and housing preparedness.

The NYTD data has assisted OCS in documenting the need for youth engagement and training for attorneys and judges. OCS and FFCA have partnered with the CIP to develop the training; the training is anticipated to roll out in September 2015.

2016 Update: In SFY 2016, the third cohort of NYTD surveys was conducted, with the youth previously surveyed at age 17 and age 19, now being surveyed at age 21.

The increased use of social media tools has assisted Regional Independent Living Specialists (RILS) to reach out to more of our youth in transition population than in past years. RILS were able to locate and survey 82.9% of our cohort-age 21 young adults with only 14.3% unable to locate and 2.9% declining to complete the survey.

The NYTD data has assisted OCS in documenting the need for youth engagement and training for attorneys and judges. OCS and FFCA have partnered with the CIP to develop the training; the training is anticipated to roll out in September 2015.

Involvement of Youth in CFCIP, CFSR, NYTD and Other Agency Efforts

2015 Update: This specific section title was not include in the “2016 APSR” submitted in June 2015.

2016 Update: Facing Foster Care in Alaska (FFCA), is a non-profit organization which serves as Alaska’s youth advisory board. Alaska OCS has partnered with FFCA on improving outcomes for older youth, who are either in care or have exited foster care. OCS and FFCA hold quarterly leadership meetings and 3 youth retreats annually, which provide leadership skills training, mentorship and transition support. The quarterly collaborative meetings with FFCA and representatives of OCS’ leadership team, assist with the identification of common goals, agency efforts, and to discuss concerns and program improvements.

The quarterly leadership meetings occur in conjunction with FFCA-led youth retreats. OCS awards a contract to FFCA named *Development of Transition and Leadership Skills for Youth Participants of the OCS IL Program*, as mentioned earlier in this section. The IL staff continue to work side by side with FFCA to train and recruit foster homes to specifically support older youth and provide joint trainings to OCS staff, community agencies, and to schools on the importance of supporting youth in transition. A FFCA representative was invited to participate in the quarterly CFSP stakeholder calls.

In March, the IL staff met with FFCA youth retreat to work on the issue of placement disruptions for youth. OCS also partnered with FFCA to obtain input from youth regarding updating the Foster Children’s Rights brochure for Alaska. The IL program is working with FFCA on a joint presentation to OCS staff regarding the permanency goal of Another Permanent Planned Living Arrangement (APPLA) for youth. An FFCA representative was invited to participate in discussion, assessment, and planning for the CFSP and APSR through meetings in April.

In FY 17 OCS will continue to involve youth in the CFCIP, CFSR, NYTD, and other agency efforts. OCS leadership will continue to meet quarterly with FFCA representatives to discuss the current projects and ongoing efforts. OCS IL Coordinator will continue to meet regularly with FFCA representatives to work on identified projects and will attend FFCA retreats to gain youth input on the CFCIP and NYTD programs. FFCA representatives will continue to be invited to participate in the quarterly CFSP stakeholder calls. Additionally, FFCA representatives will be invited to participate in Statewide Assessment work as part of the preparation for the CFSR, and they will be one of the stakeholder groups recommended to be interviewed as part of the Services Array stakeholder interviews.

Involvement of Public and Private Sectors in Helping Adolescents in Foster Care Achieve Independence

2015 Update: This specific section title was not include in the “2016 APSR” submitted in June 2015.

2016 Update: Partnerships continue to grow and strengthen for youth in Alaska. OCS is focused on improving resources to increase mentorship and permanency efforts for youth as well as career preparation, educational support and other supportive resources. A formalized agreement with the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation in SFY2016 was established to provide additional career navigation support and encourage greater retention of youth in career preparation services and career focused training programs. This program is being expanded to deliver a yearly career conference to youth, to focus on exposure to some of the more lucrative job prospects in Alaska for young workers without plans to go to college.

The IL Program manages two grants, one contract and three business agreements with organizations who deliver services to youth who are eligible for Independent living services. Monthly or quarterly teleconferences take place with the grantees and service providers in order to maintain relationships, address challenges to service delivery and to work on increasing efficiency and effectiveness of the services to help youth in foster care achieve independence. Specific examples are listed as “collaboration” earlier in this section.

In FY 17 OCS will continue the efforts listed above to involve the public and private sectors in helping adolescents in foster care achieve independence. OCS will continue to explore the use of expanding public/private contracting to expand the accessibility of Chafee IL Services statewide. For FY 17 the OCS IL Program will continue to explore systemic solutions to increase youth placement stability. This will conducted in partnership with community stakeholders such as FFCA, GAL/CASAs, Tribal partners, foster parents and individual meetings with youth.

Coordinate Services with Other Federal and State Programs

2015 Update: This specific section title was not include in the “2016 APSR” submitted in June 2015.

2016 Update: OCS partners with other state and community agencies to deliver services to youth. Increased efforts have been made to collaborate with the Office of Public Advocacy (OPA), to educate GALs and CASAs better coordinate services during transition

- OCS has a formal partnership for Tenant Based Rental Agreements (TBRA) for youth with the Alaska Housing Finance Corporation (AHFC). Monthly teleconferences occur to discuss individual youth who are housed with the program or who are in the process of becoming housed. The monthly meetings also serve to develop strong communication between referring OCS Independent Living staff and AHFC staff in Anchorage. Youth in TBRA housing require monthly home visits by OCS workers, therefore, frequent contact and collaboration with this program is needed to assist youth in being successful in obtaining and maintaining housing through this program.
- Division of Vocational Rehabilitation has partnered with OCS on a project to connect transition aged youth currently or previously in OCS custody with Pre-Employment Transition Services (PETS). The project connects transition aged youth currently or previously in OCS custody with opportunities to engage in hands on, career focused assessment and support services.

In FY 17 OCS will continue to partner with the Office of Public Advocacy, Tribal partners, AHFC, and DVR as mentioned throughout this report. Additionally OCS will continue to partner with Covenant House and the Division of Public Health.

Homeless Prevention

2015 Update: This specific section title was not include in the “2016 APSR” submitted in June 2015.

2016 Update: In March of 2016, the IL program met with youth during a youth retreat to collect input about youth placement disruptions and ideas for OCS to effectively address this issue.

- Covenant House of Alaska provides Emergency Shelter Services to youth. Covenant house is expanding its housing options with a transitional living program called Rights of Passage. OCS is looking at ways to partner with Covenant house for this new resource which may benefit eligible OCS youth who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.
- Covenant House is expanding its housing options with a transitional living program called Rights of Passage.
- The Alaska Housing Finance Corporation (AHFC) collaboration continues to provide housing support to youth in transition around the state. OCS has a formal partnership for Tenant Based Rental Agreements (TBRA) for youth with the AHFC.

Pregnancy Prevention

2015 Update: This specific section title was not include in the “2016 APSR” submitted in June 2015.

2016 Update: The IL program partners with the Division of Public Health who facilitates classes statewide several times a year focusing on reproductive anatomy, birth control options, and information about sexually transmitted infections. Planned Parenthood, Alaska Aids Assistance Association (AAAA), Aiding Women in Abuse and Rape Emergencies (AWARE) and Abused Women’s Aid in Crisis (AWAIC) also regularly present, focusing on health relationships, medical care and personal hygiene. Additionally, the Regional Independent Living Specialist regularly engage the youth in conversations about how to make healthy life choices for themselves and make information, posters, and condoms readily available for youth.

OCS policy 3.14.1 provides guidance to staff to provide health education and risk prevention information; this includes pregnancy prevention and family planning information. The IL Specialists in each region “...provide or arrange for sex education, abstinence education, and HIV prevention, including education and information about sexual development and sexuality, pregnancy prevention and family planning, and sexually transmitted diseases and AIDS...”.

Training re: CFCIP to Resource Families

2015 Update: This specific section title was not include in the “2016 APSR” submitted in June 2015.

2016 Update: The ACRF provides a series of workshops focusing on 18 to 21-year olds in the foster care system. The workshops are called the extended foster care series. Topics of the workshop are: Fostering young adults: *Considerations for resources families, Together- having the conversation, What youth need to know* and *Extending Foster Care: Nuts & Bolts*. Community partners, former foster youth, IL specialists and the ACRF work together to provide resource families information on fostering older youth, including the benefits of the IL program. Additionally Alaska’s Resource Family Handbook was recently updated with information on the IL program. Each foster youth is assigned an IL specialist, who works with the youth on transition planning. Foster parents are informed about Alaska’s IL program through a welcome packet sent to the foster youth at the foster home, as well as through the IL specialist’s direct work with the youth in the foster home. IL specialists visit foster youth and talk with foster parents about transition planning and independent living skills and IL services available.

The ACRF provides information and training opportunities for foster parents, adoptive parents, and workers to support LGBTQ youth. They provide four self-study courses and other books and resources that individuals can access.

REDUCING RISK TO YOUTH TO BE VICTIMS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING

2015 Update: This specific section title was not include in the “2016 APSR” submitted in June 2015.

2016 Update: Alaska has been working to help build awareness of human sex trafficking around the state. Through an OCS grant, Covenant house has been delivering Sex Trafficking trainings to communities, including Kodiak, Fairbanks and Anchorage. These trainings will continue in the coming year as an effort to increase community and OCS worker awareness of sex trafficking issues. The next communities to receive training will be Homer and Kenai. Information regarding compliance with requires for P.L. 113-183 and P.L. 114-22 is provided in Section 11 of this report.

CONSULTATION WITH TRIBES

2015 Update: This specific section title was not include in the “2016 APSR” submitted in June 2015.

2016 Update: OCS provides outreach to Tribes to share information about the availability of program funds for youth who are in Tribal custody or were formally in Tribal custody. Quarterly phone conferences have been established for regular communication and collaboration with Tribal partners. OCS has coordinated with agency Tribal specialists to support

outreach efforts in order to increase Tribal attendance and provide seamless support for Alaska Native Independent Living youth. Facing Foster Care in Alaska (FFCA) is also an active participant in the Tribal State Collaboration meetings, advocating on behalf of IL youth and the specialized needs of youth aging out of foster care. At those meetings they have shared program goals using the NYTD outcomes pertaining to homelessness, education, substance abuse, and employment.

An OCS APPLA webinar is scheduled was scheduled June 14, 2016. Tribal partners received email notice of the upcoming webinar and were invited to participate. This webinar featured a panel of speakers, including youth, as well as OCS IL and permanency staff. The webinar provided the latest information on:

- The OCS policy and new requirements
- What APPLA means for a youth in care
- The steps to explore before recommending the goal change to the court
- Placement with a Fit and Willing Relative which is a preferred permanency goal over APPLA

Describe Concerns Raised by Tribes on Accessing Chafee Services

No concerns have been raised by the Tribes regarding access to Chafee services. OCS presented at Tribal State Collaboration Group meeting and OCS facilitates quarterly teleconferences to provide Tribes with information about the Chafee and independent living services available to youth. However, OCS has been identified that not all Tribes in Alaska are familiar with the Chafee services. In FY 17 the OCS independent living coordinator will collaborate with the OCS Tribal Affairs Advisor to identify and implement new methods to reach out to Tribal partners and provide information so Tribes are aware of the services available.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING VOUCHER PROGRAM

Accomplishments and Progress

2015 Update: This specific section title was not include in the “2016 APSR” submitted in June 2015.

2016 Update: The CWA manages Alaska’s ETV program through close collaboration with OCS. The CWA is housed on the Anchorage campus lending easy access to students who need supportive services, intervention or advocacy with school needs. This has led to better supported students with faculty and educational leadership more ready to accept our foster youth and understand their significant and individual needs. For additional information on ETV funds, please Section 14.

Changes in Administration of ETV Program

2015 Update: The CWA has been administering the ETV funding since SFY 13. There has been increased focus in service delivery and support given to youth who attend the University of Alaska state schools. The Child Welfare Agency is housed on the Anchorage campus lending easy access to students who need supportive services, intervention or advocacy with school needs. This has led to better supported students with faculty and educational leadership more ready to accept our foster youth and understand their significant and individual needs. For additional information on ETV funds, please Section 14.

2016 Update: No changes have been made to the administration of the ETV program in the last year.

Unduplicated Number of ETV Awards

Please see Section 14 and Appendix H for unduplicated numbers of ETV awards.

SECTION 13: UPDATES TO TARGETED PLANS WITH IN THE 2015-2019 CFSP

FOSTER AND ADOPTIVE PARENT DILIGENT RECRUITMENT PLAN

2015 Update: Statewide and regional recruitment and retention plans are used by the OCS to prepare and plan for the diligent recruitment needed to meet the needs of Alaska's children and families. In the past year, OCS experienced success with diligent recruitment, although there will be a heightened focus on this work, as the number of children in out-of-home care continues to rise in Alaska. During the past year, the following accomplishments were made:

- Tangible recruitment supplies were ordered and distributed around the state.
- Increased recruitment for homes to serve children with complex medical needs including development of posters and purchase of an advertisement in the Alaska Nursing publication.
- Western Region SDR efforts have been made to increase the services in Bethel and surrounding communities. An emergency shelter home was identified and established to prevent out of region placement when emergency situations arise.
- Enhanced support and recruitment for the FosterWear program. This program offers clothing discounts to foster parents in Alaska.
- Resource family and adoptive family support and appreciation celebrations were held around the state to support families currently providing care to children in custody.
- Adoption exchanges continue to be utilized. Alaska OCS uses AdoptUSKids, Northwest Adoption Exchanges, and the Alaska Adoption Exchange.
- WWK continues to be a program provided by Catholic Social Services, through partnership with the OCS.
- The PARKA program through the ACRF is funded by OCS to recruit, train, and support families interested in adopting special needs children through the public child welfare system.

2016 Update: Statewide and regional recruitment and retention plans are used by the OCS to prepare and plan for the diligent recruitment needed to meet the needs of Alaska's children and families. The State of Alaska does not have any policies that limits its ability to recruit for resource families that reflect the diversity of children in care. There are no bans or restrictions based on sexual orientation. There have been minimal changes and updates from the previous plan. The SFY 17 plan will be completed in June 2016. The SFY 16 plan is located in Appendix D. During the past year, the following accomplishments were made.

- Western Region licensed two emergency shelter home in SFY 2016. A third emergency shelter home is expected to be licensed in July 2016.
- Western Region ran a foster care recruitment movie theater advertisement in December 2015. The community of Bethel provided positive feedback to the advertisement. Since then, OCS has sent a letter to other movie theaters asking for donated time to run a foster care recruitment advertisement. OCS is currently working with theaters in Anchorage and Juneau.
- Resource family and adoptive family support and appreciation celebrations were held in May and June around the state to support families currently providing care to children in custody.
- Adoption exchanges continue to be utilized. Alaska OCS uses AdoptUSKids, Northwest Adoption Exchanges, the Alaska Adoption Exchange, and A Family for Every Child.
- WWK continues to be a program provided by Catholic Social Services, through partnership with the OCS.
- The PARKA program through the ACRF is funded by OCS to recruit, train, and support families interested in adopting special needs children through the public child welfare system.
- ACRF provides a quarterly report to each regional licensing unit, of the people who call ACRF requesting information on becoming a resource family. The regional licensing units then follow up with these interested individuals, with the licensing process.

HEALTHCARE OVERSIGHT AND COORDINATION PLAN (HCO)

2015 Update: The plan was submitted in 2014 and no updates have been made. OCS policy manual includes a schedule for initial and follow up health screenings that meet reasonable standards. OCS continues to track and monitor the medical needs of children through QA case reviews. OCS policy manual includes the monitoring and use of psychotropic medications. The OCS Regional Psychiatric Nurses have an integral role in the oversight and management of medical issues for children at OCS.

Due to a change in supervision and unclear expectations, data is not available for this submission. OCS will develop a plan and be able to provide additional information about the use of medication in the 2017 APSR.

2016 Update: Due to staff changes in OCS, the HCO Committee did not meet for nearly two years. June 9, 2016 the committee reconvened and reviewed the plan. At the June meeting, recommendations and suggestions for review or changes were identified. This committee will meet quarterly in the coming year and will update the plan prior to next year's APSR. The committee is being led by OCS and includes variety of partners, including community medical providers, OCS staff, DBH, DPA, HCS, and Indian Health Services. The current plan requires updates which will be completed at the next quarterly meeting in September 2016. The committee met in June and discussed the changes and follow-up needed. The comments from the June meeting are noted the attached plan provided in Appendix E.

DISASTER (CONTINUITY OF OPERATIONS) PLAN

2015 Update: There have been no changes and updates from the previous plan, but it has been reviewed and signed by the OCS Director's Executive Team. The current plan is attached. In the past year, the State of Alaska Department of Health and Social Services responded to the following emergency situations:

- April 2015 Ketchikan flooding
- June 2015 Sterling fire
- June 2015 Willow fire
- June 2015 Tanana / Nulato fire
- June 2015 Aniak fire

To mitigate effects of imminent events, OCS researched the families served in each area and employees who might be traveling in the area affected. OCS staff contacted each family to determine their preparedness and response plans should they be affected. OCS tracks the events and families at risk. No OCS offices were affected by the events that occurred this year.

2016 Update: Alaska experiences numerous disasters and weather related issues that affect the health and safety of residents. The OCS goal is that these issues do not affect delivery of services to children and families in Alaska. In the past year, the State of Alaska Department of Health and Social Services responded to the following emergency situations:

- August 2015 Kodiak Island Wildfire: 8/28/2015 the Kodiak Island Borough Emergency Ops Center was activated. The fire was approximately 2000 acres at the time; Kodiak Island Borough EOC issued mandatory evacuation for Chiniak and the Alaska State Troopers enforced evacuation of 45 people. Southcentral Region staff report no effect on OCS office or staff, and no families, children, or foster homes were affected.
- August 2015 Sitka Landslide: The incident was reported to Paula Bentz by memo on August 24, 2015. On August 18, 2015, two and a half inches of rain in 24 hours caused three landslides and a sinkhole in the community. The landslides occurred in a new development site in the community which was not populated. Three people who were working in the development site were killed. There were no other injuries reported. Support services were offered to foster children in the form of mental health services and counseling.
- November 2015 Bethel School Fire: This incident was reported to Paula Bentz by email on 11/5/15. The Lower Kuskokwim School District had a fire in the Kilbuk School building. This building housed the Ayaprun Elitnaurvik Yup'ik immersion school and Kuskokwim Learning Academy Boarding School. At the time of the incident, the Bethel OCS staff and managers researched the children in custody and families served. No one was injured in the fire and OCS did not have any youth in custody attending the school or residing in the dormitory. The school was declared a loss and the students were displaced.
- November 2015 Oil leak in Nome Office: This incident was reported to Paula Bentz by email on 11/23/15. The Nome OCS office was closed due to an oil leak and fumes in the building. The office remained close for the entire week. OCS staff was relocated to the Nome Youth Facility during this period of time and services to clients were not interrupted.
- January 2016 Earthquake in Southcentral in Anchorage: On January 24, 2015, a 7.1 magnitude earthquake, originating near the community of Homer, Alaska, was felt for hundreds of miles in all directions. No damage was reported to OCS offices and services continued uninterrupted. A highway was closed for a period of time for repairs and an alternate route was established. Foster care licensing staff contacted foster families and verified the safety of all foster children in the area. An email was sent to remind staff about what to do in case of an earthquake.

- February 2016 Nome Office closure due to weather: On February 17, 2016, the OCS office in Nome had an office closure due to a weather/storm warning. Some OCS staff reported to work, answering phones and power and communications remained online. The status of foster homes was assessed and the weather improved by the end of that day leading to cancellation of the storm warning.
- May 2016 Deering Flood: No known effects to OCS children/families and no foster homes in the area.
- June 2016 McGrath Wildfire: Families were contacted. No injuries or damage was reported regarding OCS office or OCS families and children.

No significant changes have been made to the disaster plan in the past year; however, contact information for key staff has been updated. To mitigate effects of imminent events, OCS identifies the families served in each area and employees who have or might be traveling in the area affected. OCS staff contacts each family to determine their preparedness and reviews emergency response plans should they be affected. OCS tracks the events and families at risk. The most recent disaster plan is attached in Appendix E

TRAINING PLAN

2015 Update: There were no changes made to the training plan.

2016 Update: Changes to the training plan have been included. Changes include updates to the training plans related to P.L. 113-183. There are updates included in the IV-E eligibility training page, agency and contract training page, and family resource training page. The current training plan and staff development plan are included in Appendix C. A committee has been developed to meet regularly to keep this plan updated.

SECTION 14: STATISTICAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

CAPTA ANNUAL STATE DATA REPORT ITEMS

Information on Child Protective Services Workforce

Education, Qualifications, and Training Requirements For CPS Professionals

2015 Update: The OCS continues to contract with the CWA to provide new staff training, called SKILS. The CWA provides core training to front line staff, social services associates and supervisors. Online training modules and webinars are offered in addition to classroom training. New workers are required to complete a Staff Development Plan that entails 6 months of required activities/events to further the staffs' orientation to the OCS. OCS does not require a minimum number of continuing education hours be required each year, instead when training is needed it is provided in a variety of ways including mandatory staff training. Job descriptions, including education and qualifications, have not changed since submitted last year.

2016 Update: There have been no changes to the employee training requirements. The current Staff Development Plan is attached, but has not been updated since the last submission. OCS does not have a minimum number of continuing education requirements for staff. Webinars and trainings are provided throughout the year on a variety of topics. OCS provides a multitude of training opportunities in a variety of formats to staff, and often includes Tribal and community partners. Trainings may be offered through on-site training, webinars, teleconferences, or email learning opportunities. OCS is excited to experimenting with micro-learning videos as an innovative way to get information out to busy child welfare staff. Micro-learning videos is a new training format for OCS that utilized a series of three short (less than 2 minutes each) training videos starring "OCS Rock Stars" on the topic of background check requirements for foster parents. We were excited about this new learning method and OCS is exploring ways to use this exciting new learning method in the future. OCS continues to partner with the Child Welfare Academy for staff training; a list of trainings provided through CWA in the past year is attached in Appendix C.

Staff with a professional license may be required through their licensure to maintain CEUs prior to renewal. OCS does not require front line caseworker staff to hold a professional license, such as a social work license from the State of Alaska. OCS does not track how many staff are licensed professionals.

There have been no changes to the education and qualifications for OCS staff. The minimal qualifications for a protective services specialist I/II (front line worker) is a bachelor's degree for an accredited institution with a major in a social, behavioral or health science, law, or a related field. The State of Alaska allows applicants to substitute post-secondary education with paraprofessional experience providing assistance, information or referrals to the public related to social services, health care, or legal services.

Demographic Information on CPS Personnel

2015 Update: The OCS does not have data related to education and salaries of personnel at the time of hire. Human resource information is maintained by the Department of Administration, Division of Personnel (DOP) and additional information is not available. Prior to the next submission of this report, OCS will explore, through consultation with the DOP, the possibility of collecting additional data to include in reports to provide additional demographic information related to protective services staff. The 2015 demographic information about Alaska's child protective services personnel was obtained from the Alaska Department of Administration, Division of Personnel & Labor Relations is provided in Tables 18-20. This data protective services manager I & II and protective services specialist I - IV

Table 18: Gender of PSS Staff

2015 Gender of OCS Protective Services Staff		
Female	Male	Total
214	67	281
76%	24%	100%

Source: Alaska Department of Administration, Division of Personnel & Labor Relations (5/15/15)

Table 19: Race of PSS Staff

2015 Self-Identified Race for OCS Protective Services Staff						
ALASKA NATIVE	AMERICAN INDIAN	ASIAN	BLACK	HISPANIC	WHITE	Total
16	4	11	19	15	216	281
6%	1%	4%	7%	5%	77%	100%

Source: Alaska Department of Administration, Division of Personnel & Labor Relations (5/15/15)

Table 20: Age of PSS Staff

2015 Age of OCS Protective Services Staff					
20-29 yrs.	30-39 yrs.	40-49 yrs.	50-59 yrs.	60 yrs. +	Total
47	90	74	45	25	281
17%	32%	26%	16%	9%	100%

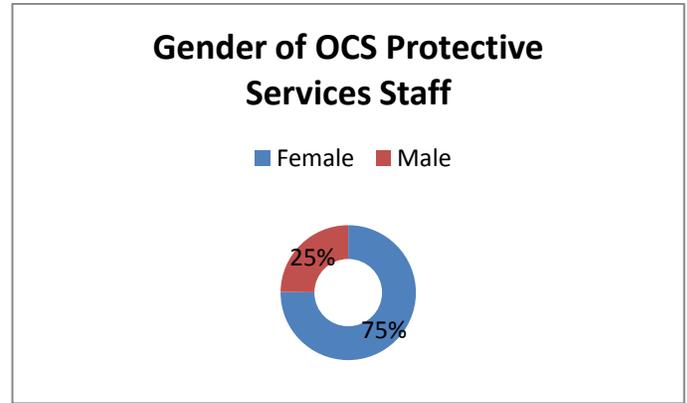
Source: Alaska Department of Administration, Division of Personnel & Labor Relations (5/15/15)

2016 Update: OCS does not have data related to the education level of personnel at the time of hire. Human resource information is maintained by the DOP and additional information is not available. OCS has been in contact with HR staff; they do not collect data specific to the education level of state employees.

There have been minimal changes in the demographic make-up of OCS staff since last year. The majority of OCS staff at the time of this report is identified as white women between the ages of 30 and 49 years old. The 2016 demographic information about Alaska’s child protective services personnel was obtained from the Alaska Department of Administration, Division of Personnel & Labor Relations is provided in Tables 21-23 and the corresponding charts. This data includes information regarding protective services manager I & II and protective services specialist I – IV.

Table 21: Gender of PSS

Gender of OCS Protective Services Staff		
Female	Male	Total
212	70	282
75%	25%	100%

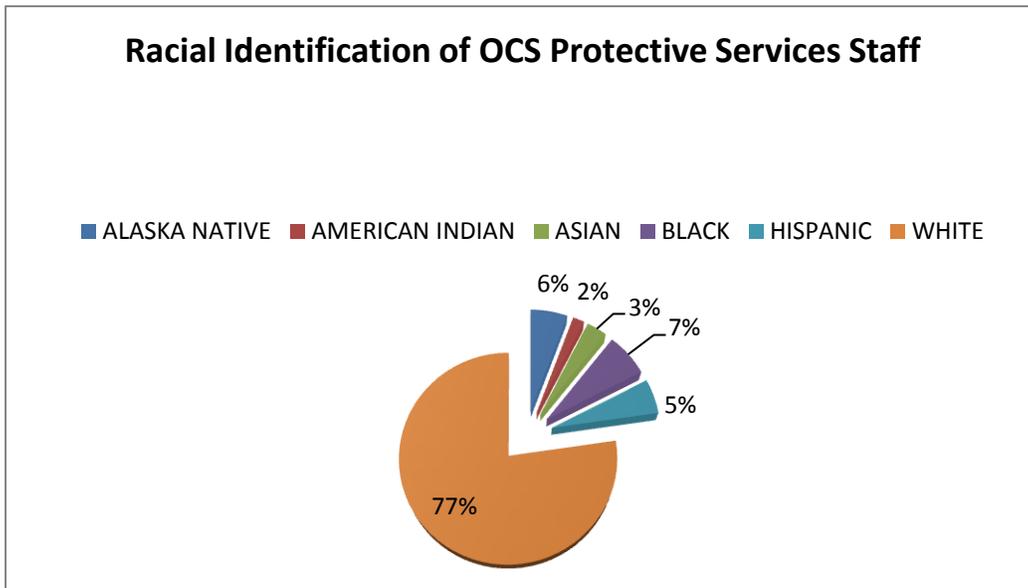


Source: Report by Alaska Department of Administration, Division of Personnel & Labor Relations (3/15/16)

Table 22: Race of PSS Staff

Self Identified Race for OCS Protective Services Staff						
ALASKA NATIVE	AMERICAN INDIAN	ASIAN	BLACK	HISPANIC	WHITE	Total
16	5	9	19	15	218	282
5.7%	1.8%	3.2%	6.7%	5.3%	77.3%	100%

Source: Report by Alaska Department of Administration, Division of Personnel & Labor Relations (3/15/16)

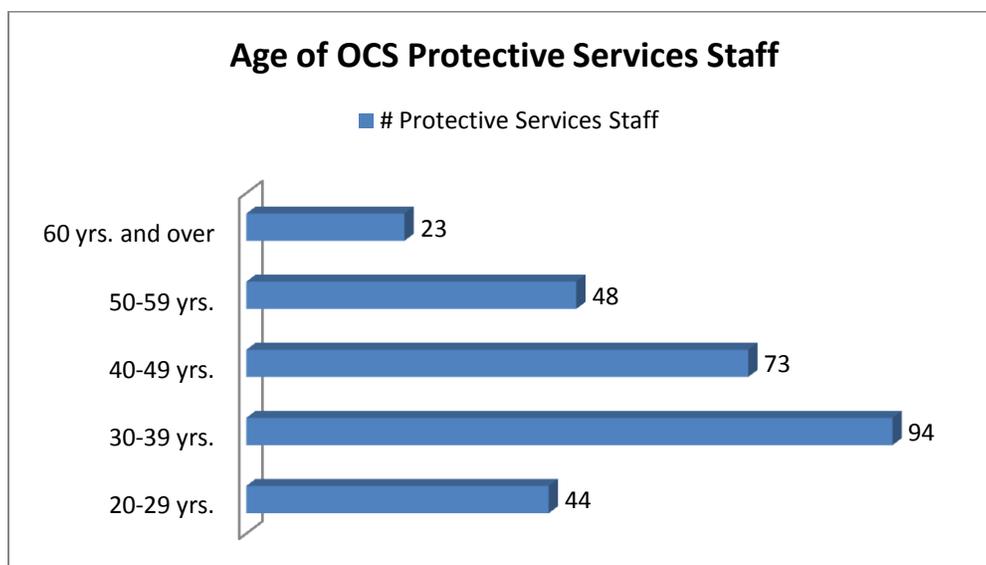


Source: 3/15/16 Report by Alaska Department of Administration, Division of Personnel & Labor Relations

Table 23: Age of PSS Staff

Age of OCS Protective Services Staff					
20-29 yrs.	30-39 yrs.	40-49 yrs.	50-59 yrs.	60 yrs. +	Total
44	94	73	48	23	282
15.6%	33.3%	25.9%	17%	8.2%	100%

Source: 3/15/16 Report by Alaska Department of Administration, Division of Personnel & Labor Relations



Source: 3/15/16 Report by Alaska Department of Administration, Division of Personnel & Labor Relations

Caseload / Workload Information for CPS Professionals

2015 Update: Alaska OCS does not have formal requirements regarding average number or maximum number of cases per worker or supervisor.

Protective Services Specialist (PSS) IV is the job class for the 42 supervisors providing direct supervision to line workers. Statewide ORCA data shows that the PSS IV staff average workload includes: supervision of 6.5 workers; oversight of 56.9 cases; and management of 3.4 unlicensed providers.

Protective Services Specialist I & II are the job classes used for front line workers. Statewide ORCA data shows that PSS I / II staff have an average assignment of 26 cases. Table 24 shows the 2015 case assignment averages for protective services specialist I / II staff, by region.

2016 Update: Alaska OCS does not have formal requirements regarding average number or maximum number of cases per worker.

Protective Services Specialist (PSS) IV is the job class for the supervisors providing direct supervision to line workers. Statewide ORCA data shows that the PSS IV staff average workload includes: supervision of 6.4 workers; oversight of 67.4 cases; and management of 1.2 unlicensed providers.

Protective Services Specialist I & II are the front line workers at OCS. Statewide ORCA data shows that on April 5, 2016 there were 167 PSS I/II staff in Alaska. At that time, the average caseload statewide was of 28.2 cases; this is an increase from last year. It is noted in the chart below that the Southcentral region has seen a 12% increase in caseload in the past year. Table 25 shows the 2015 case assignment averages for protective services specialist I / II staff, by region.

Table 24: 2015 Caseload of PSS Staff

PSS I/II Primary Assignment Cases (06/09/15)			
Region	Workers	Assigned Cases	Average Assignments
Anchorage	63	1858	29
Northern	29	510	18
Southcentral	38	1094	29
Southeast	21	462	22
Western	14	340	24

Table 25: 2016 Caseload of PSS Staff

PSS I/II Primary Assignment Cases (04/05/16)			
Region	Workers	Assigned Cases	Average Assignments
Anchorage	62	1,708	27
Northern	33	658	19
Southcentral	37	1,520	41
Southeast	20	444	22
Western	15	375	25

Source: State of Alaska Online Resources for Children in Alaska (ORCA) Report RR00411

JUVENILE JUSTICE TRANSFERS

2016 Update: See Table 26 below.

2016 Update OCS continues to work closely with the DJJ regarding juvenile justice transfers. As noted in Section 1 of this report, OCS and DJJ are actively working on a dual status project to address the need of this population; more information is provided in Section 1 of this report. Please see Table 26, and note that data provided below is now representative of the State Fiscal Year (July 1 – June 30). Last year's report included a table with data by calendar year.

Table 26: Discharges to DJJ

OCS Discharges to DJJ		
Discharge Year	Discharge Reason	Discharges
SFY11	Transfer to DJJ	3
SFY12	Transfer to DJJ	4
SFY13	Transfer to DJJ	3
SFY14	Transfer to DJJ	5
SFY15	Transfer to DJJ	3

Source: State of Alaska Online Resources for Children in Alaska (ORCA) Report to DJJ RR0014

CAPTA FATALITY AND NEAR FATALITY PUBLIC DISCLOSURE POLICY

2015 Update: Alaska statute 47.10.093, Disclosure of agency records, provides for public disclosure of the finding or information about the case of child abuse or neglect which has resulted in a child fatality or near fatality. The statute specifically states that the department may “publicly disclose information pertaining to a child or an alleged perpetrator named in a report of harm or to the department’s activities arising from the department’s investigation of the report.” The inclusion of these provisions encompasses the minimum information required by Section 106(b)(2)(B)(x) of CAPTA to include the release of:

1. The cause and circumstances regarding the child fatality or near fatality;
2. The age and gender of the child;
3. Information describing any previous reports of child abuse or neglect that are pertinent to the abuse or neglect that led to the child fatality or near fatality;

4. Information describing any previous investigations pertinent to the abuse or neglect that led to the child fatality or near fatality;
5. The result of any such investigations; and
6. The services provided by the state and actions of the state on behalf of the child that are pertinent to the child abuse or neglect that led to the child fatality or near fatality.

OCS policy (CPS Policy 6.1.2, Confidentiality) was updated in January 2014 to delineate the public disclosure of the above information in fatal or near fatal cases.

2016 Update: No changes in the past year.

SOURCES OF DATA ON CHILD MALTREATMENT DEATHS

2015 Update: Alaska has a statewide Child Fatality Review Team. The OCS participates as a team member in the review of child deaths. The State of Alaska reviews child deaths through the statewide. This team operates under the auspices of the State Medical Examiner's Office (SMEO). The team meets monthly in Anchorage. Members of the team are local law enforcement, the AK State Troopers, the district attorney's office, a representative from the OCS, and community physicians. Each team member presents information from their respective fields. The SMEO conducts the autopsy and the manner and cause is determined. The OCS reports the findings from the SMEO in the annual NCANDS report. The OCS collects the child fatality data in two ways:

1. The Alaska Bureau of Vital Statistics generates a monthly report of fetal, infant, and maternal deaths for the Alaska Maternal Infant Mortality Review (MIMR) program (managed by the Division of Public Health). As a participant on this team, the OCS representative gathers information at the monthly meetings and also reviews OCS case records for information.
2. The SMEO maintains a master database of all child deaths. This data base is available to the OCS and is obtained at the time the NCANDS report is prepared and is used to verify the OCS database information.

Additionally, OCS management is part of the Alaska team participating in the National Institute for Children's Health Quality's Infant Mortality COIIN Learning Collaborative.

2016 Update: The procedure for review of child maltreatment deaths remains the same for 2016. OCS continues to use SMEO, BVS, and MMIR sources of child maltreatment fatality data. OCS also receives information from law enforcement regarding child maltreatment deaths.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING VOUCHERS

2015 Update: The ETV served a total of fifty-seven students during the 2014-2015 academic year. There were 56 students enrolled in the Fall semester, and one additional student enrolled in the Spring semester. There was a 73% retention rate from Fall to Spring and one student graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree in Engineering.

2016 Update: The ETV served a total of forty students during the 2015-2016 academic year. The ETV program is anticipating its highest number of graduates of the academic year with 9 graduations scheduled to occur. Table 27 tracks the awarded ETVs as well as other sources of Post-Secondary Educational support provided by the State of Alaska and Alaska's University system:

Table 27: ETV

Post Secondary Education and Vocational Participation					
Academic Year	# Youth attending Post- Secondary (Under Age 23)	Number of Youth Who Received ETV Funds	Number of Youth Who Received Presidential Tuition Waiver	Number of Youth who Received an OCS Tuition Scholarship	Graduates
2010-2011	33	33	10		
2011-2012	39	39	19		1
2012-2013	38	38	19 (12 New)	22	1
2013-2014	41	41	23 (12 New)	22	4
2014-2015	50	50	29 (15 New)	12	3
2015-2016	40	40	29 (15 new)	10	3 (9 Projected)

INTER-COUNTRY ADOPTIONS

2015 Update: During FFY 2014 two children who were adopted from other countries entered into OCS custody as a result of substantiated abuse and neglect. The adoptions were dissolved and both children have a goal of adoption and are placed in pre-adoptive homes.

2016 Update: During FFY 2015 two children who were adopted from other countries entered into OCS custody as a result of substantiated abuse and neglect. The adoptions were dissolved and both children have aged out of the foster care system. They are currently receiving Independent Living Services.

MONTHLY CASEWORKER VISIT DATA

2015 Update: OCS will submit required data on monthly caseworker visits with children in foster care on December 15, 2015 as required. Last year's data showed that the total number of visits made by caseworkers on a monthly basis to children in foster care was less than the required 95%, OCS achieved 83%. This is an increase from the previous year's data (2013 was 80%). The percent of children visited in their home was 69%, which exceeds the 50% federal standard.

2016 Update: OCS will submit required data on monthly caseworker visits with children in foster care no later than December 15, 2016 as required. Last year's data showed that the total number of visits made by caseworkers on a monthly basis to children in foster care was less than the required 95%, OCS achieved 78%. This is an increase from the previous year's data (2013 was 80%). The percent of children visited in their home was 66%, which exceeds the 50% federal standard. OCS has Additional caseworker visit data is provided earlier in this report. Because Alaska failed to meet the standard for performance, the FFY 2016 FFP will be reduced by 3%. More information and data can be found in Section 7 of this report.

SECTION 15: FINANCIAL INFORMATION

PAYMENT LIMITATIONS – TITLE IV-B, SUBPART I

States may not spend more title IV-B, subpart 1 funds for child care, foster care maintenance and adoption assistance payments in FY 2016 than the state expended for those purposes in FY 2005 (section 424 (c) of the Act). Alaska spent \$0 of FFY2005 title IV-B, subpart I funds for child care, foster care maintenance and adoption assistance payments. Alaska used \$0 of non-federal funds for foster care maintenance payment as match for the FY 2005 title IV-B, subpart I award.

2015 Update: Alaska spent \$0 of title IV-B, subpart I funds for administrative costs.

2016 Update: Alaska spent \$0 of title IV-B, subpart I funds for administrative costs. Alaska OCS does not utilize title IV-B I/II funds for administrative costs. Required financial reporting forms are located in Appendix I.

PAYMENT LIMITATIONS – TITLE IV-B, SUBPART II

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

2015 Update: Per the submitted CFS-101, Part III, Alaska spent:

- \$139,776 or 25% of its FFY2013 award on family preservation services.
- \$27,956 or 5% of its FFY2013 award on community-based family support services.
- \$279,552 or 50% of its FFY2013 award on time-limited family reunification services.
- \$111,819 or 20% of its FFY2013 award on adoption promotion and support services.

Per the attached CFS-101, Part III, Alaska spent \$0 or 0% of its FFY2013 award on administrative costs. There were no title IV-B, subpart 2 funds spent on administrative costs for the Monthly Caseworker Visit fund.

2016 Update: Per the CFS-101, Part III, Alaska received \$558,082 in FFY 2014 funds from title IV-B, subpart II and spent those funds as follows:

- \$251,974 or 45% of its FFY2014 award on family preservation services.
- \$31,446 or 6% of its FFY2014 award on community-based family support services.
- \$255,344 or 45% of its FFY2014 award on time-limited family reunification services.
- \$19,318 or 4% of its FFY2014 award on adoption promotion and support services.

Per the attached CFS-101, Part III, Alaska spent \$0 or 0% of its FFY2014 award on administrative costs. There was no title IV-B, subpart 2 funds spent on administrative costs for the Monthly Caseworker Visit fund. Required financial reporting forms are located in Appendix I.

In FFY 2014 OCS did not expend approximately 20% of the grant on each of the four PSSF service categories. OCS was unable to locate documentation to clarify if the disproportion was requested when the state submitted its estimated expenditures during that year. Funds were spent disproportionately during FFY 2014 due to changes in utilization rate of grant services. In calendar year 2013, OCS made a decision to reduce the percentage of title IV-B, subpart II funds used for family support due to other funds available to supplement this service as well as low utilization of the program. OCS utilized other funding sources to support adoption promotion and support services.

As noted in Table 11 in Section 4 of this document OCS intends to spend 20% of the FY 2017 award for three of the four identified service categories. The exception to this is family support services, which Alaska intends to spend 5% of the award.

FUNDING – REVISED BUDGET REQUEST

2015 Update: Alaska will submit a revised FFY 2015 budget form should unneeded portions of other state allocations of title IV-B, CFCIP and ETV funds be reallocated to other states. Alaska does not intend to release funds for reallocation from the title IV-B, subpart 2, the CFCIP, or the ETV Program. Alaska does intend to apply for reallocation of unneeded portions of other state's allocation for the title IV-B, subpart 2, the CFCIP, or the ETV Program.

2016 Update: Alaska will submit a revised FFY 2016 budget form should unneeded portions of other state allocations of title IV-B, CFCIP and ETV funds be reallocated to other states. Alaska does not intend to release funds for reallocation from the title IV-B, subpart 2, the CFCIP, or the ETV Program. Alaska does intend to apply for reallocation of unneeded portions of other state's allocation for the title IV-B, subpart 2 or the CFCIP. Alaska is requesting \$100,000 from reallocation of unneeded portions of other state's allocation for the ETV Program. Required financial reporting forms are located in Appendix I.

BUDGET REQUEST – CFS-101, PARTS I AND II

2015 Update: Alaska submitted Alaska has completed Part II to include the estimated amount of funds to be spent in each program area by source, the estimated number of individuals and families to be served, and the geographic service area within which the services are to be provided.

2016 Update: Part I of the CFS-101 form to request title IV-B, subpart I (CWS) and title IV-B, subpart II (PSSF and Monthly Caseworker Visit funds), CAPTA, CFCIP and ETV funds. Required financial reporting forms are located in Appendix I.

Alaska has completed Part II to include the estimated amount of funds to be spent in each program area by source, the estimated number of individuals and families to be served, and the geographic service area within which the services are to be provided. Required financial reporting forms are located in Appendix I.

TITLE IV-B EXPENDITURE REPORT – CFS-101, PART III

States must track and report annually its actual title IV-B expenditures, including administrative costs for the most recent preceding fiscal year funds for which a final SF-425 Federal Financial Report has come due

2015 Update: Alaska submitted the CFS-101, Part III to report the actual amount of funds expended in each program area of title IV-B funding by source, the number of individuals and families served, and the geographic service area within which the services were provided.

2016 Update: The FFY 2014 SF-425 was submitted prior to December 29, 2015 for the title IV-B programs. Alaska has completed the CFS-101, Part III to report the actual amount of funds expended in each program area of title IV-B funding by source, the number of individuals and families served, and the geographic service area within which the services were provided. Required financial reporting forms are located in Appendix I.

FINANCIAL STATUS REPORTS STANDARD FORM (SF) 425

2015 Update: Alaska submitted expenditures under title IV-B, subparts 1 and 2, CAPTA, CFCIP and ETV programs on the Financial Status Report, SF-425.

2016 Update: Alaska reports expenditures under title IV-B, subparts 1 and 2, CAPTA, CFCIP and ETV programs on the Financial Status Report, SF-425. The report is submitted through the ACF Online Data Collection System as recommended in the program instruction and will be submitted no later than December 29, 2016.

STATE CONTACTS

2017 APSR Coordinator Contact information: KariLee Pietz, 907-465-2145, karilee.pietz@alaska.gov

Link to 2016 APSR: http://dhss.alaska.gov/ocs/Documents/Publications/pdf/2017_APSR.pdf

Anticipate date of posting of APSR: 7/01/2016

2017 CAPTA Coordinator Contact information: Yvonne Hill, 907-465-3458, yvonne.hill@alaska.gov

SECTION 16: SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

Appendix A: Citizen Review Panel Annual Report 2015 and Office of Children’s Services Response

Appendix B: Alaska Court System Termination of Parental Rights Data

Appendix C: Staff Development Plan and Training List

Appendix D: Foster and Adoptive Parent Diligent Recruitment Plan

Appendix E: Health Care Oversight Plan

Appendix F: Continuity of Operations (Disaster) Plan

Appendix G: ICWA Program Instruction

Appendix H: ETV Form

Appendix I: DHSS Strategic Plan to “Transform Child Welfare Outcomes for Alaska Native Children”

Appendix J CFS-101 (parts 1, 2, & 3) PDF Version

Appendix K: CFS-101 (parts 1, 2, & 3) Excel Version

Appendix L: 2017 APSR Acronym List

Appendix M – Tribal State Advisory Team Data Indicators