



office of
CHILDREN'S SERVICES
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State of Alaska • Department of Health & Social Services

2019

Annual **PROGRESS & SERVICES** Report



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SECTION 1: GENERAL INFORMATION

This is the fourth 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 1), Promoting Safe and Stable Families (title IV-B, subpart 2), Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA), and Chafee Foster Care Independence (CFCIP) 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. 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 approved November 6, 2014. Alaska was selected as a Round 3 state for the Child and Family Services Reviews (CFSR). As a part of the CFSR process, Alaska submitted the Statewide Assessment (SWA) in March 2017. The CFSR Round 3 occurred in Alaska in May 2017. In November 2015, Alaska successfully completed a title IV-E audit, and was not required to develop a PIP. Alaska is scheduled to have another title IV-E Audit in November 2018.

2018 Highlights:

- **Tribal Child Welfare Compact:** In October, 2017, DHSS entered into a historic Alaska Tribal Child Welfare Compact with 18 Tribes and Tribal Organizations. The Compact is a government-to-government agreement between the State of Alaska and Alaska Tribes and Tribal Organizations. It establishes a framework for Tribes to provide child welfare services on behalf of the state, and recognizes Tribes' inherent sovereign authority to serve their citizens as they have since time in immemorial. The compact defines the services to be carried out by Tribes and Tribal Organizations in a defined jurisdiction or service area.
- **ICWA Data.** OCS continues to closely Monitor ICWA Data, here are some highlights for Calendar Year 2017:
 - Placement with Extended Family is the highest it's ever been at 54.8%
 - Out of Preference Placements are the lowest ever at 28.6%
 - Reunification Rates for AN/AI children have increased to 59%
 - The number of AN/AI children who are either adopted or entered into a guardianship with extended family or a native placement is over 52%
 - The percent of Tribal interventions is the highest since tracking began
- **Final Report.** Alaska received its Round 3 CFSR Final Report in November 2017, and is in the process of developing and negotiating a Program Improvement Plan.
- **HB 151 Passed.** On May 9, 2018, the Alaska Legislature passed comprehensive legislation to improve Alaska's foster care system. House Bill 151 establishes new training (up to six weeks for new workers) and workload standards (a maximum of 13 family cases) for caseworkers in the Office of Children's Services. HB 151 had broad support from children's advocacy groups and adopts major, comprehensive national best practice standards. The bill was co-sponsored by 18 members of the Senate and unanimously passed the Senate with an 18-0 vote. Governor Bill Walker ratified the legislation on Jun 7, 2018, to be known as "The Children Deserve a Loving Home Act." OCS has one year to implement all aspects of the Act.

Like most public child welfare agencies, Alaska has seen increases in the number of children and families served and with out of home placements since 2014. The table below shows the Alaska 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

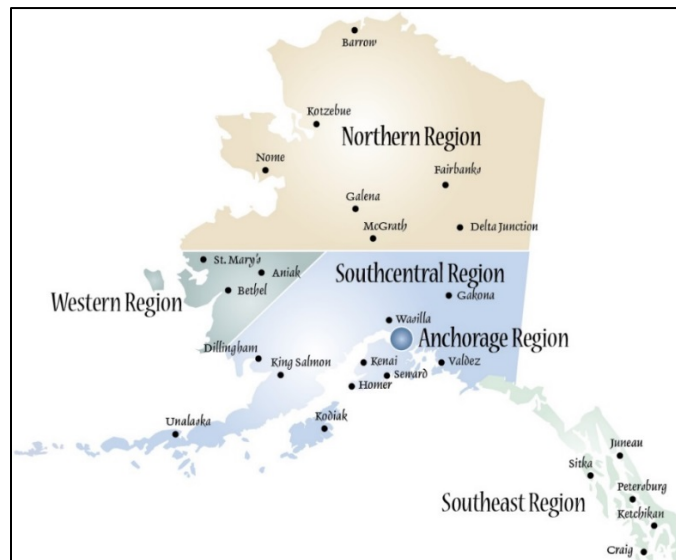
Region	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Anchorage	1,176	1,322	1,580	1727	1729
Northern	510	575	671	757	829
Southcentral	723	832	926	1108	1082
Southeast	251	255	269	267	276
Western	243	277	281	282	299
Alaska, unique count (includes children in Trial Home Visits)	2,902	3,254	3,723	4,133	4,215

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, McGrath, and Delta Junction field offices and the surrounding areas. Galena no longer has 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, and Seward field offices and the surrounding areas. Unalaska office no longer has 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, and Aniak field offices and the surrounding areas.

2016 - 2018 Update: There have been no changes in agency structure since the 2016 APSR was submitted; see map below.



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

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 Annual Programs and Services Report (APSR). Through these 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. Because of this vacancy, the agency efforts prior to January 2015 were minimal.

- January 12, 2015 - Meeting held in Anchorage to review and implement the CFSP: 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 additional focus on the complete assessment through the background check process. This will ensure safe environments and continuation of the current 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 in 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 eight 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 terms used through the document; Alaska Native is appropriate to use but not 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 in the 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. This will include 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 webinar, and invited the following partners to join these quarterly discussions: Tribal State Advisory Team (TSAT) partners, Alaska Public Defender Agency, Department of Law (DOL), Guardians ad Litem (GAL), Court-Appointed Special Advocates (CASA), Court Improvement Project (CIP), Alaska Citizen Review Panel (CRP), Facing Foster Care in Alaska (FFCA), OCS regional and program 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 Public Defender Agency.

Recommendation: Provide additional consultation with DOL and Public Defender Agency 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 DOL and the Public Defender Agency. The Public Defender Agency was provided with OCS policy and other supporting documents to assist in understanding the processes in place for these two items. The Public Defender Agency 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 gave a starting point for the April 29, 2016 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 for development and implementation of 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.

The 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.
- Monthly Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) meetings were scheduled and included ongoing discussion of data related to outcomes, goals, and objectives for the CFSR, 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 the permanency and ICWA specialists' roles and responsibilities. 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 DOL 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 as well as 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;
- 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 (ESC) 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 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 as well as 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 with 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 from 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 DOL attorneys, Public Defender attorneys, CASA volunteers, Guardians ad Litem, 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 as well as information about how to share input or feedback.
 - Monthly consultation and collaboration calls were held with the Children’s Bureau (CB) Region 10 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 to document how their feedback impacted changes to the APSR. In the March and May calls with Region 10, 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 to improve services and outcomes for 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 the children and families OCS works with. At statewide and regional levels, partnership is a key to OCS successes 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.

2017 Update: OCS continues to partner with internal and external stakeholder groups regarding the progress and updates to the CFSP and APSR. OCS has worked to actively engage partners in ongoing and meaningful collaboration for the implementation of Alaska’s CFSP goals and objectives. During this past year, OCS has also utilized the stakeholder meetings as a part of the SWA process as well as the onsite CFSR. OCS uses various meetings and opportunities to demonstrate this collaboration of gathering input and feedback related to the APSR, CFSP, SWA, and CFSR:

- Quarterly Stakeholder Calls: Each quarter, calls are scheduled to allow opportunities to provide updates and gather input from internal and external stakeholders regarding the progress with the CFSP. In the past year, meetings have focused on the development of the SWA and preparation for the onsite CFSR. This is the second year that these calls have been facilitated consistently; based on regular participation by partners, the quarterly meetings are judged to be a successful opportunity for collaboration. 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 Defender Agency, Department of Law (DOL), Guardians ad Litem (GAL), Court-Appointed Special Advocates (CASA), Court Improvement Project (CIP), Alaska Citizen Review Panel (CRP), Facing Foster Care in Alaska (FFCA), OCS regional and program managers, Alaska Center for Resource Families (ACRF), Child Welfare Academy (CWA), and Supervisory Leadership Council (SLC).

- July 29, 2016: This meeting focused on the development of the SWA with discussion regarding the Systemic Factor B: Case Review System.
 - Written Case plans: Discussion about case plans included concerns that case plans are not completed in the first 60 days, leading to delays in for families. OCS implemented a new case plan form that can be completed by the worker and family while meeting with the family in their homes or other off-site locations. Additional discussion occurred in this meeting regarding engaging parents in how the plans are being developed.
 - Periodic Reviews: Concerns were expressed about the recent changes that centralized OCS administrative reviews. Comments included: foster parents are excluded from the reviews and the reviews are too short now; however, there is agreement that this centralization brings statewide consistency. Partners recommended matching the administrative reviews up with court reviews so that the court is conducting both the court and administrative reviews.
 - Permanency hearings: Concern was expressed over court hearing continuations in some communities.
 - Termination of Parental Rights (TPR): discussed collaboration with OCS and Tribes related to TPRs, and how the OCS survey showed 39% of responding Tribal ICWA workers say they are not collaborating with OCS on this item. Concern that barriers to this item include scheduling delays due to court calendars in most areas of the state.
 - Notice of Hearings and Reviews to Caregivers: Some foster parents share they receive notice, some do not, but most say that notices are often short notice to the hearings.

Recommendation: The recommendation from this meeting was to consider the various survey data in the upcoming SWA as well as to monitor the recent changes to the written case plans and progress to see if there are improvements in the completion of case plans within 60 days.

- October 28, 2016: This meeting focused on OCS updates for the stakeholders.
 - Child and Family Services Review: Stakeholders were notified of the move from a state-administered CFSR to a traditional on-site CFSR instead. The CFSR is scheduled for the week of May 22, 2017. Anchorage Office and two other offices will be identified as the sites for the CFSR. The state will identify 24 reviewers from OCS staff as well as Tribal and community partners, for the CFSR on-site review. Recommended to contact KariLee if interested in assisting with the CFSR in some capacity.
 - Statewide Assessment: Several partners joined OCS in August videoconference calls to prepare for the statewide assessment. The statewide assessment will be submitted to Region 10 by March 22, 2017. Prior to submission, a draft of the SWA will be posted and available for review and comment.
 - Other updates: OCS is currently working on policy updates related to House Bill 27, House Bill 200, and the BIA / ICWA Regulations. Kim Guay provided information about the recent change in family service case planning with parents and a new form was developed. Kristie Swanson shared information regarding the ICWA reference guide being developed and a workgroup focusing on home visit safety checks prior to placement with relatives through improved collaboration with Tribes.

Recommendation: Since this meeting was scheduled to provide the stakeholders with current updates on the policy, SWA and CFSR updates, no recommendations were suggested.

- January 25, 2017: This meeting focused on OCS updates and dialogue about Systemic Factor F: Agency Responsiveness to the Community.
 - The SWA and APSR both include information related to OCS engagement and responsiveness with Tribal and Community Partners. In this meeting discussion included ways OCS can gather feedback and suggestions from Tribal and Community Partners. Some suggestions included emails with proposed changes and provide a comment period; ongoing communication with the Resource Family Advisory Board was recommended for issues about resource families; consideration of how OCS staff are oriented to the legal parties and learn about the role of GAL, Public Defender Agency, and DOL. Currently, Anchorage Region does provide this training to staff. Other methods discussed included region-specific items that may be useful for consideration in other OCS service regions; the OCS Frontline newsletter is utilized to disseminate important information to OCS staff and

- stakeholders regarding practice or policy changes; and the continued discussion of about the need for social histories to increase relative search efforts by the agency.
- Data highlights: In previous meetings, OCS had stated that a Tribal data dashboard would be provided, however the dashboard is not yet finalized. Preliminary data regarding placement with relatives was at the highest levels and out-of-preference placement data was lower than previously reported.

Recommendation: No recommendations were identified from this meeting.

- o April 19, 2017: This meeting focused on OCS updates related to the SWA and CFSR as well as policy and practice changes. Stakeholders were provided a link to the SWA and updates on the May 22- 26 CFSR onsite review. Additionally, there was discussion on a recent policy change for permanency goal changes and APPLA. Other discussion concerns expressed by stakeholders included how partners are informed of practice changes. For example, policy case planning changes to implement FSA 2.0 - GALs and Public Defender Agency would have liked talking points or opportunity to learn about the changes prior to OCS implementation. This will be discussed with OCS leadership to develop a consistent method to notify partners of practice changes.

Recommendation: Further discussion is needed with the OCS leadership to find strategies to share practice changes with stakeholders and partners prior to implementation of the proposed change.

- OCS leadership meetings continue to occur to assist in consistent messaging, goal review, and planning.
 - o Two meetings were held: December 15, 2016 and May 5, 2017, to focus on the CFSP and APSR work. Participants included Director Lawton, Deputy Director Spartz Campbell, Division Operation Manager Erickson, KariLee Pietz, Kim Guay, Bernita Hamilton, Kristie Swanson, and Tim Huffman. Discussions were related to SWA, the current CFSP plan for improvement, and the updates needed for the 2018 APSR that will be submitted in June 2017.
 - o On March 3, 2017, program managers from OCS met to discuss the upcoming APSR and items that would be needed to successfully report on our progress and services.
 - o Monthly CQI meetings continue to be held with the Regional Protective Services Manager IIs, Travis Erickson, Kim Guay, KariLee Pietz, and Bernita Hamilton. OCS Policy committee reviews all policy changes at OCS, and has opportunity to make recommendations to change the OCS, CPS Policy manual. The policy committee includes OCS staff, DOL representatives, and Tribal partners. The policy committee meets twice monthly and reviews any draft policy changes before they are sent for approval.
 - o Executive Steering Committee (ESC) is part of the ongoing process of engagement with internal stakeholders (state office and regional management,) and other identified partners such as Tribal representatives, SLC, and CWA. The purpose of the ESC is to oversee implementation and facilitate and manage change in the OCS practice model by providing leadership to the CQI process.
- Regular consultation calls with Children’s Bureau (CB) Region 10 and OCS managers have occurred more than monthly since July 2016, in preparation for the Statewide Assessment and CFSR. These consultation meetings have been held as frequently as weekly to ensure thoughtful planning and preparation. In addition to regular meetings, a full day meeting was held in August 2016 by video and telephone conference with OCS, Children’s Bureau, and Alaska stakeholders specific to the planning for the SWA and review of the required items. These meetings provided support to OCS in development and successful completion of the SWA, stakeholder interviews, and on-site CFSR. OCS included the following stakeholders in these meeting opportunities: Tribal-State Advisory Team (TSAT) partners, Public Defender Agency, Department of Law (DOL), Guardians ad Litem (GAL), Court Improvement Project (CIP), Alaska 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).

- OCS included a variety of internal and external stakeholders and partners in the SWA and CFSR process. In August 2016, numerous individuals were included in the videoconference with Children’s Bureau regarding the SWA. Partners participated in the Stakeholder Interviews after completion of the SWA. The Stakeholder Interviews included youth, birth parents, foster parents, Tribal-State Advisory Team (TSAT) partners, Public Defender Agency, Department of Law (DOL), Guardians ad Litem (GAL), Court Improvement Project (CIP), Citizen Review Panel (CRP), Facing Foster Care in Alaska (FFCA), OCS staff and managers, Alaska Center for Resource Families (ACRF), and other community service providers. Several partners participated in the CFSR process as state reviewers, including Tribal partners, DOL, Public Defender Agency, CIP representative, and CWA staff.

OCS anticipates continuing the partnership opportunities listed above in the coming year. Additionally, OCS anticipates increased collaboration and consultation with partners, Tribes, courts, and other stakeholders to assist in the development of the Program Improvement Plan based on the findings and recommendations of the CFSR.

As in past years, OCS provides the following additional information to highlight other collaborative efforts and projects that may not relate directly to the CFSP, APSR, or CFSR, but that are imperative to improving the safety, permanency, and well-being of children in a state as large as Alaska.

2018 Update: The CFSR Final Report identified Agency Responsiveness to the Community as a Strength area for Alaska, based on the active and responsive involvement of internal and external stakeholders in the CFSP/APSR and Statewide Assessment processes. Since the completion of Alaska’s CFSR in May 2017 and the receipt of the CFSR Final Report in November 2017, much of OCS’s engagement with stakeholders have related to the development of Alaska’s CFSR Program Improvement Plan (PIP). These stakeholders included representatives from: Tribal-State Advisory Team (TSAT) partners, Public Defender Agency, Department of Law (DOL), Guardians ad Litem (GAL), Court Improvement Project (CIP), Alaska Citizen Review Panel (CRP), Facing Foster Care in Alaska (FFCA), OCS managers, Alaska Center for Resource Families (ACRF), Child Welfare Academy (CWA), the Supervisory Leadership Council (SLC) and the Alaska State Legislature. OCS will continue to engage these key stakeholders and Tribes in the development and implementation of the PIP.

As evidenced in the updates below, OCS continues to works hard to foster collaborative relationships with numerous entities which may or may not directly relate to the CFSP and APSR

Alaska Citizen Review Panel

2015 Update: Alaska’s Citizen Review Panel (CRP) evaluates OCS compliance with federal and state laws, and examines policies and procedures for consistent statewide implementation. Additionally, the CRP conducts public outreach, gathering public comment on current OCS procedures and practices involving children and family services. Each year, the CRP prepares an annual public 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) continued to evaluate OCS compliance with federal and state laws, and examines policies and procedures for consistent statewide implementation, conducts public outreach, gathering 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 an annual public 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.

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.*

2017 Update: The Alaska 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 State 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. The following items were recommendations made by CRP in the 2016 report:

1. Consider assigning the CRP a significant role in implementing various priority areas of “Transforming Child Welfare Outcomes for Alaska Native Children: Strategic Plan 2016-2020”.
2. Tribal State Collaboration Group should consider a dialogue with the leaders of Alaska Native for-profit corporations to garner support and resources to leverage to enhance child protection services.
3. The enterprise of CRP should be evaluated by an external entity to assess its effectiveness with particular attention to internal structure and CRP-OCS relationship, roles, and responsibilities.
4. OCS should consider building on CRP’s survey efforts and made 3 specific recommendations.
5. OCS should work with CRP to strengthen CRP’s ability as a robust mechanism for public participation and rely on it to improve public awareness.

2018 Update: Per the 2016 CRP Annual Report recommendation, the CRP was assigned to the Community Engagement Workgroup associated with the “Transforming Child Welfare Outcomes for Alaska Native Children: Strategic Plan 2016-2020”. Through this workgroup OCS and the Citizen Review Panel joined efforts to combine their respective annual surveys of tribal representatives into a single survey to meet the needs of both organizations and increase efficiencies. That survey is completed and the results will be tallied and shared by the Citizen’s Review Panel. In addition, the workgroup has worked with the Citizen’s Review Panel to include a community meeting during each of their site reviews for the purpose of engaging community members in dialogue around child welfare services on a community basis. The community meetings begin in May, 2018.

The following recommendations were made in the CRP 2017 Annual Report. The full report and OCS’s response are in Appendix B.

1. Consider assigning the CRP a significant role in implementing various priority areas of “Transforming Child Welfare Outcomes for Alaska Native Children: Strategic Plan 2016-2020”. With its statutory authority, CRP will be an asset for OCS in implementing this strategic plan.
2. Speed up the grievance process and implement the new tracking system by December 2017.
3. Establish adequate connection between a case file and any related grievances, with necessary protection for the worker identify.
4. Publish monthly aggregate data on the number of grievances received, nature of those grievances, and time to resolution of those grievances outlined.

Alaska Housing Finance Corporation (AHFC)

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

2016 - 2018 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.

2017 Update: During the past year, the Alaska State Legislature continued to provide on-going support and commitment to OCS. During this legislative session several legislative proposals were introduced to affect significant changes to OCS processes, related to ICWA standards, worker caseload limits and expanded training and proposed jury trials for termination of parental rights proceedings. None of these proposals passed this year; however, all of these proposals will carry over into the 2018 legislative session, which begins in January, 2018.

2018 Update: In 2017, the Alaska State Legislature passed a FY2018 Budget Amendment which provided for an increase of 31 new positions for OCS. The majority of these positions were filled by front line caseworkers. During the 2018 session, the Alaska State Legislature passed House Bill 151, known as the “Children Deserve a Loving Home Act,” a comprehensive bill aimed at establishing new training and workload standards for OCS case workers. Additional case work positions are also anticipated as a result of this bill. The Act also requires the department to encourage the continued connection and fostering of relationships for foster children with their siblings and previous out-of-home foster care providers, if in the best interest of the child; mandates the department assist adult family members and family friends in applying for any needed variance in order to obtain a foster care home license; strengthens language and imposes agency accountability in writing for timely relative searches; provides an exception under which certain adult family members or family friends otherwise barred from providing foster care may be eligible to do so; and Mandates that a child in custody and at least age 14 be included in their own case planning, and a child in custody for at least 6 months and at least age 16 be provided with their own birth certificate, social security card, medical records and health insurance information, certificate of degree of Alaska Native/Indian blood (if applicable), and be offered assistance in obtaining a driver’s license or ID card.

Casey Programs

2015 Update: 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 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 an ongoing, 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 one's 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 and 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 25, and CFP is working with OCS on the need to enhance permanency values and leadership at OCS. In the coming year, OCS will partner 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 as well as 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 three-day training for interior rural Tribal and family and youth services workers. This training included 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 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 support 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 foundation’s support. OCS will continue to partner with Annie E. Casey Foundation to improve leadership within OCS and 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.

2017 Update: The long-standing partnership with Casey Family Programs (CFP) and Annie E. Casey Foundation (AECF) continued during this past year. Through the AECF, OCS received additional technical assistance related to the restructure and “re-boot” the OCS Team Decision Making protocols and processes for statewide consistency and fidelity. This assistance began in August 2016 and continues into State Fiscal Year 2018. During the past year, there have been a total of 17 meetings with AECF related to this project, or at least one meeting each month. During the next year, AECF will be conducting another site visit in September 2017 that will include training of all OCS staff in the three regions where TDMs are occurring. This training will focus on the role of the TDM and understanding the process.

Through Casey Family Programs (CFP), OCS has continued to utilize technical assistance and support in the areas of enhanced and expedited permanency for children in care, Tribal- State collaboration efforts, and State and Tribal recruitment and retention efforts for resource families. Specific efforts have included:

- Tribal-State Data Workshop in August 2016, in which CFP provided technical assistance to the Tribal-State Data Workgroup. CFP supported travel costs associated with the 2-day, in-person meeting and also provided a data expert to assist with the design of Tribal-State Data Indicators sheet.
- In October 2016, CFP provided technical assistance and training to OCS Regional Managers and State Program Managers in an OCS Permanency Summit. CFP provided a permanency expert to present on methods and strategies to improve planned permanency for children waiting in foster care.
- Western Region Office (WRO) support, development and recruitment work specifically focused on improving foster home resources in the Western Region, which serves the highest number of Alaska Native families;
- Assistance with regional Tribal-State Collaboration meetings throughout Alaska (Please see the Tribal State Collaboration Group section for more detail on these regional meetings);
- In March 2017, CFP partnered with OCS on the OCS Permanency Summit for Managers, in which a permanency expert provided training and technical assistance on permanency values, strategies and techniques to move more children in care to permanency through reunification, adoption or guardianship. The outcome of this training was a renewed focus on permanency for children in care.
- During this past year, CFP has provided evaluation support and technical assistance to OCS regarding the collaborative efforts in Rapid Safety Feedback through Eckerd Kids (Please see the information related to Eckerd Kids which can be found later in this section).
- Community of Hope Project: CFP has partnered with DHSS, OCS, the Alaska Children’s Trust, Kawerak, Inc., All-Alaska Pediatric Partnership, First Alaskans Institute, and the Rasmussen Foundation. The purpose is to implement a pilot project with a multi-sector Tribal, community and state prevention plan that would reduce the incidents of child abuse and neglect for children ages 5 years and under. These incidents were indicated by a reduction of child abuse reports received by the State of Alaska Office of Children Services, in a pilot community within the Bering Strait region. This project funding is time-limited and expected to end in December 2017.

2018 Update: OCS continues to benefit from the long-standing partnership with Casey Family Programs (CFP) and Annie E. Casey Foundation (AECF). OCS is receiving ongoing technical assistance from AECF to help strengthen the TDM practice in

the three regions that currently provide TDMs (Anchorage, Northern, and South Central). One of the primary goals of TDMs is the reduction of placement moves for children in addition to critically analyzing if children need to be removed from their home. The focus the technical assistance is to move OCS closer towards model integrity. This included retraining all of the TDM facilitators and their supervisors. In addition, AECF continues to be integral in helping OCS collect key data elements that will drive practice needs. AECF Technical Assistance Staff travel to Alaska on a near monthly basis to provide training, technical support, and TDM observations.

Casey Family Programs (CFP), OCS has continued to utilize technical assistance and support in the areas of enhanced and expedited permanency for children in care, Tribal- State collaboration efforts, and State and Tribal recruitment and retention efforts for resource families. These initiatives are further described in other sections.

Children's Justice Act Task Force (CJATF)

2015 Update: The Alaska CJATF meets quarterly, with five 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, 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. 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 responding to child abuse and providing recommendations as well as taking improvement actions.

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 working to address child maltreatment from across the state. During this reporting period more than \$10,000 in scholarships was 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.

2017 Update: The Alaska CJATF participated in three, 2-day meetings in Anchorage this year in addition to one, 3-day meeting in Juneau. The 3-day meeting focused on wrapping up the CJA's 3-year review process in time for completing Alaska's CJA 3-Year Review report due on May 31, 2017. CJA members used their time in Juneau to meet with State legislators and share information about activities and the mission of the task force. This year the task force was responsible for promoting an idea for legislation that will help enable sibling contact to occur following the release of a youth from state custody. This idea was incorporated into Alaska House Bill 151, introduced in March by Representative Les Gara and co-sponsored by seven additional House members.

This year the task force lost one member but added two additional members. A new law enforcement representative from the Alaska State Troopers was recruited, replacing an outgoing member from the Anchorage Police Department. The task force also added a clinician from Covenant House in Anchorage who has many years of experience working with homeless youth, including outreach to youth who may be being sexually exploited.

This year the task force released its recently completed Child Abuse and Neglect Training which is intended for both the general public and for training mandatory reporters to help them better understand their role in responding to child abuse. The training is offered on line at: <http://dhss.alaska.gov/ocs/Pages/childrenjustice/mandatoryreporting.aspx>. More than 1,000 Alaskans have completed the training so far and many of those have provided valuable feedback through a link to a questionnaire embedded in the online version of the training. This feedback will be used to update and improve the training in the future. The design of the training allows editing and updates to be performed as needed. The task force is producing a version of the training for USB drives that will be available by the end of April 2017. A poster and Public Service Announcement media campaign advertising the training will soon follow.

The Alaska CJA Scholarship and Training Committee awarded \$10,000 in sponsorships this year in support of the Alaska Child Maltreatment Conference which occurred from November 14-16, 2016, with a post-conference event held on Nov. 17 and 18. This conference is sponsored by the Alaska Children's Alliance, the Alaska CJA, OCS and other partners. In addition, the committee awarded close to \$10,000 in scholarships for professional development training and conferences in the field of child maltreatment (including law enforcement, child protection, and child advocacy center staff).

The task force also formed a new committee to focus on a rural issues related to response to child maltreatment. The Rural Issues Committee met by teleconference between scheduled in-person meetings of the CJATF, and organized a listening session which took place at the Bureau of Indian Affairs: Rural Providers Conference in October 2016. This hour and a half long session was facilitated in collaboration with the First Alaskans Institute, Tina Woods from the Alaska Native Medical Center, and involved about 200 participants from across the state. Information gathered from the listening session will be used to inform the work of CJATF as well as to guide and inform additional outreach efforts to rural Alaska are being planned for the near future.

2018 Update: The Alaska CJATF held three in-person meetings in Anchorage as well as a meeting in Juneau during the Legislative Session. While in Juneau the task force presented before the House Health and Social Services Committee and the Senate Judiciary Committee. Alaska Legislators were observed to be engaged, asking questions and encouraging task force members to return with further actionable recommendations. The task force conducted a Lunch and Learn

presentation, sponsored by Representative Les Gara, at the Capitol Building which was well attended by legislative staff, policy makers and the public.

The task force has continued to maintain its membership by adding two new members to replace those that left the task force in 2017. The new members include the chief juvenile probation officer for the Alaska Division of Juvenile Justice and a principal overseeing multiple programs for special needs youth and their families in the Anchorage School District.

The task force is continuing to maintain and improve its online child abuse and neglect training, which has been visited thousands of times in 2018. <http://dhss.alaska.gov/ocs/Pages/childrensjustice/mandatoryreporting.aspx> The task force, in conjunction with the Alaska OCS, began a media campaign which advertises the availability of the online training as well as contact information for the recently created OCS Centralized Intake program. Posters, refrigerator magnets, business cards, and USB versions of the training have been distributed statewide as part of this effort. The Office of Governor introduced legislation that would require Alaskan's who work with community youth-serving organizations (both government and non-government) to complete child abuse and neglect training. If this or similar legislation is enacted, the online training resource will become more valuable. Work to maintain, improve and build awareness of the training will continue into 2019.

The Alaska CJA Scholarship and Training Committee awarded nearly \$10,000 in scholarships to support child welfare and law enforcement professionals to attend forensic interview and other training to further their professional development. The committee anticipates awarding a similar quantity of scholarships in the next year, in addition to providing support to the bi-annual Alaska Child Maltreatment Conference which takes place in November 2018.

The task force has received regular updates on Alaska's progress with implementation of the State's Child and Family Services Plan through regular presentations about the CFSP and APSRs. Two members of the Alaska CJA Task Force participated as reviewers in Alaska's last Child and Family Services Review (CFSR). The increased familiarity that the task force has gained will assist the task force in further aligning its work with the goals of the CFSP.

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 SFY15, 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” 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 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.

2017 Update: CIP and OCS have continued to collaborate on systems improvements in child welfare in Alaska. The CIP Coordinator has been involved in planning meetings regarding both the APSR and CFSP updates. The CIP Coordinator participated as a case reviewer in the Round 3 CFSP in May 2017. The CIP steering committee now has a second OCS representative: In addition to Director Lawton, Division Operations Manager Travis Erickson has been added as a committee member in 2017.

OCS has maintained its support for the development of CIP's CINA Core curriculum project. A 3-day Legal Module pilot was conducted in February 2017, with numerous OCS staff attending. OCS has requested that additional staff be invited to future CIP training events. CIP anticipates an Education Law pilot being held in August 2017, as well as a proposed joint state CIP/Tribal CIP training event in Sitka during the Fall 2017. CIP will ensure that OCS staff will continue to have opportunities to attend CIP training events.

OCS leadership staff participated in the Region 10 Parent Representation Leadership Forum in Vancouver, WA in November 2016, as part of the CIP team from Alaska. OCS has been a key partner in supporting CIP's initial efforts to enhance the quality of parent representation in Alaska and the meaningful engagement of parents in the child welfare system as a whole. CIP and OCS discussed a joint permanency project at the Annual CIP meeting in August 2016. CIP and OCS conducted further review and determined to work on a joint project, the Permanency Priority Project (P3) to reduce the length of time in out-of-home care and minimize barriers/delays in permanency for children in state custody in Alaska. The initial target population for the project includes children placed with relatives and who have been in out-of-home placement for at least two years. The project will be data-driven, with primary data and evaluation sources from the Court System and OCS as well as other CINA stakeholder agencies. CIP and OCS staff will develop further next steps for the project at the CIP regional meeting in Seattle in May 2017.

Finally, CIP will continue to collaborate with OCS to collect and mutually exchange data and work cooperatively to ensure safe and timely permanency for children in Alaska. The CIP Coordinator and CINA CMS Analyst have been invited by OCS management to become members of their existing CQI committee and to begin attending monthly meetings.

2018 Update: The CIP has continued to meet quarterly with active participation by OCS Director and Operations Manager as well as other OCS employees serving on sub-committees. During FY 18, the CIP Coordinator changed and OCS has been working to establish priorities with the CIP for the development of the upcoming PIP. CIP will be a key stakeholder in the development of the next CFSP as well. Highlights of the 2017 CIP work with OCS includes:

- **Permanency collaboration.** Joint work has continued with a focus on establishing permanency for young children and developing a greater understanding of opportunities for improvement by conducting case reviews, data sharing and analyzing information as a group. The two primary CIP employees working on this project had staffing changes this year which contributed some delay, but with the positions now filled, meetings are occurring once again.
- **Family with Infants and Toddlers (FIT) Court.** A FIT Court was created in the Mat-Su/Palmer district and OCS has a Protective Services Specialist assigned exclusively to families served by that court. The court serves families with children age 3 and younger with emphasis on judicial leadership

- **Core Curriculum Training.** The ten-module Core Curriculum Training has graduated from pilot project phase and is now a standard offering for child welfare professionals involved in child in need of aid cases.

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

2015 Update: It is the vision of the DHSS to move towards an integrated enterprise of which the OCS SACWIS system, 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 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: 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.

2017 Update: OCS continues to be represented at the DHSS IT Governance Team; however, in May 2017, Alaska's Governor created a new Office of Information Technology at the State level to better integrate IT systems statewide. This effort is being assessed and evaluated by all State departments; the impacts of the IT consolidation for OCS efforts (and ORCA in particular) are currently not known. In the meantime, the OCS efforts as outlined in the 2016 APSR are on-going. OCS was able to go-live with the NEICE project in the Spring of 2017; OCS is now referring ICPC referrals and paperwork through the federal NEICE database as an effort to improve permanency for children covered through ICPC.

2018 Update: The Modernization of ORCA under CCWIS regulations are now subject to the IT Governance process. Efforts are underway to obtain approval for ORCA mobility as a sub-project of Modernization. OCS is working with IT Governance toward a Department-wide HIPAA compliant solution for state work using personal computers and mobile devices for email, calendaring, pictures, video, texting, and dictation services.

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 Child Welfare Academy (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.

2017 Update: The DOL continues to support OCS in the same ways presented in last year's APSR. In addition, the DOL has worked closely with OCS to provide legal guidance related to significant changes in the past year, including guidance on the ICWA changes, the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act of 2016, and the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act of 2015, as well as implementation of Alaska Statute HB 200 regarding CINA proceedings.

2018 Update: The DOL was highly involved in this year's historic achievement of creating and negotiating a Tribal Child Welfare Compact with 18 Tribes and Tribal Organizations. Additionally, the DOL remains very involved in the ongoing development and negotiation process associated with the Service Funding Agreements. These agreements delineate the scope, targeted population and service area of the agreed upon services that Tribes will assume on behalf of the state.

Additionally, the DOL has been an active stakeholder and partner for the CFSR in May of 2017, serving as reviewers in the CFSR review. Additionally, DOL continues to participate in the development of the PIP.

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.

2017 Update: OCS continues to work closely with the DBH to improve and streamline services for children and families. During the past year, the Department of Health and Social Services has been actively involved in a Medicaid reform and expansion project. As a part of this effort, the DHSS is actively pursuing an 1115 waiver to assist with expanding services to children and families as a priority population of the 1115 waiver. Additionally, designated OCS staffs are working with DBH staff to find efficiencies in services such as mental health assessments, behavioral health, and substance abuse treatment. These efforts are expected to continue throughout the next year.

2018 Update: In January 2018, DBH submitted an 1115 Behavioral Health Medicaid Waiver application aimed at increasing culturally appropriate family-based and peer-based in home support services designed to promote family wellness, stability and reunification with the targeted goal of reducing children/youth in OCS custody. If approved, implementation of waiver services are anticipated to begin in July 2019.

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.

2017 Update: OCS continues to work closely with HCS to improve and streamline services for children and families. The service with the Seattle Children's Hospital for third-party medical oversight of psychotropic medication for children in foster

care was expanded to include children who are on three or more psychotropic medication while in care. Previously only children on four or more psychotropic medications were referred to Seattle Children's Hospital.

2018 Update: HCS continues to partner with OCS to contract services through Seattle Children's Hospital for third-party medical oversight of psychotropic medication for children in foster care.

Division of Juvenile Justice (DJJ)

2015 Update: 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. 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.

2017 Update: OCS and DJJ continue to collaborate when youth are involved with DJJ and have legal involvement with OCS. This Dual Status Youth (DSY) initiative aims to serve this highly vulnerable population through sharing resources between agencies and community partners. The main goal is to reduce recidivism and increase success for the futures of dual status youth. Joint training and combined staff meetings have also occurred in the Anchorage region during the past year.

2018 Update: The Dual Status Youth initiative is currently on hold as decisions about confidentiality and information sharing between DJJ and OCS continue to be a sticking point to be addressed in a pending regulation project.

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.

2017 Update: During this past year, OCS continued the partnership with DPA regarding the childcare services as well as implementing Purpose 3 and 4 programs across the divisions to better serve children and families. OCS continues to work closely with the DPA to improve and streamline services for children and families and look for efficiencies in services and resources for children and families.

2018 Update: The OCS continues to partner with DPA's Child Care Programs Office 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: DPH, 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.

2017 Update: OCS continues to work closely with the DPH. The efforts outlined in the 2016 APSR continue with representatives from OCS on the child fatality reviews workgroup.

2018 Update: OCS and DPH continue to partner on several key initiatives:

- Safe Sleep Practices training was provided in the spring of 2018 for all OCS child protection and community care licensing staff, tribal representatives and other local partners such as medical providers to increase awareness of the greater risk to this population and provide information of the most current safe sleep recommendations.
- The Alaska Child Death Review process, a multidisciplinary team led by the Division of Public Health in reviewing all child deaths in Alaska, fostering collaboration between organizations, and developing recommendations for preventing child deaths in the future.
- OCS is involved with DPH on the ALCANLink longitudinal project. This project combines the PRAMS (Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System) survey data with multiple agency data systems (including OCS, Law enforcement and others) to follow a cohort of births over time to measure the cumulative risk and predictive factors to identify and target prevention and intervention efforts.

From ALCANLink it was learned that 32% of children born in Alaska will be reported to OCS before age 8 years, indicating that the lifetime burden of contact with OCS is much greater than would be estimated using the annual prevalence alone. This data is being used to influence the eligibility criteria (e.g., the presence of certain social determinants) for new community-based behavioral health services designed to target children and families at-risk of entering the child welfare system.

Division of Senior and Disability Services (SDS)

2016 Update: OCS partners with SDS to promote health, well-being, and safety for children and families with disabilities. 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 working 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.

2017 Update: Through ongoing partnership, OCS and SDS have been able to implement a data sharing agreement to identify children and youth in the custody of the Department who are pending or receiving a Medicaid Waiver. This helpful data is being used to ensure the OCS Regional Psychiatric Nurses are familiar with all children receiving Waiver services, as these children have a higher level of need and require specialized services and care. The Infant Learning Program transferred from OCS to the SDS on July 1, 2016. The other efforts and partnerships listed above continue.

2018 Update: OCS and SDS continue to improve data sharing methods to identify children and youth in the custody of the Department who are pending or receiving Medicaid Waiver services. Crucial data is being used to help ensure the OCS Regional Psychiatric Nurses are familiar with all children who may be eligible for Waiver services as these children have a higher level of need and often require specialized services and care. OCS and SDS are making efforts to better address the needs of Waiver eligible children through ensuring that progress is being made in obtaining the necessary Waiver services. Efforts include centralizing coordination of the caseworker, regional psych nurse, SDS representative, care coordinator, foster parent and home-based waiver services agencies. Efforts are also underway to clarify policy and secure meaningful training to specialists in the field. The other efforts and partnerships listed above continue.

Eckerd Kids

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

2016 Update: 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. OCS Quality Assurance 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 20, 2016, 15 cases have had a staffing.

2017 Update: OCS has continued working with Eckerd Kids in the Rapid Safety Feedback project. The project is a joint effort between the Quality Assurance Unit and field offices to improve the quality of safety management. The project identifies high-risk children under age three years and provides for an ongoing monitoring process by Quality Assurance staff to enhance safety management. The case is reviewed periodically using a standardized instrument to review the safety assessment process and case activities. A coaching model is utilized by Quality Assurance staff to support workers on the case. The project identifies cases across the state. During the time the case remains in the initial assessment phase, the case continues to be monitored.

2018 Update: The Rapid Safety Feedback project was discontinued this year after difficulties in implementation and questionable results of this process were found.

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 Supervisory Leadership Council (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 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. See page 11 of this document for more details about ESC.

2017 Update: The ESC continues to meet monthly. Over the last year ESC has worked on implementing practice changes through the lens of continuous quality improvement. Some of the projects that the ESC has been working on include: standardizing intake practice and moving to a centralized call center; improving case plan development for children, parents,

and care providers; workforce initiatives such as recruitment, competencies, and retention; and new BIA regulations. In addition to these new projects we have continued to work on many practice changes that started in 2016 such as early identification of relatives, coaching program for supervisors, and analyzing and improving core services.

2018 Update: The ESC continues to be a monthly meeting focused on change management techniques in an effort to improve child welfare outcomes. ESC membership is comprised of OCS managers from the field, regional, and state offices, Tribal-State Collaboration Group (TSCG) and Supervisory Leadership Council (SLC) Representatives, and UAA Child Welfare Academy. This group continues to implement strategies identified through various avenues of CQI to better the system for our families. Over the last year some of the initiatives that ESC has been working on is the continued implementation of our OCS Intake statewide hotline. In addition, ESC is focused on recruitment efforts, competency based evaluation of staff, and the culture and retention within OCS' field offices.

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; a venue that provides 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).

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.

2017 Update: The Independent Living Program 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. FFCA regularly participates and presents to IL bi-weekly Life Skills classes in the Anchorage and Southcentral regions. Throughout 2017, FFCA provided three retreats in May, August and November, with increased youth participation to include 101 foster youth and alumni in attendance. These retreats cover a variety of independent living topics and offer opportunities of participating youth to advocate and support changes in the child welfare system at policy and legislative levels. This participation and collaboration lead to the finalization of the Foster Youth Bill of Rights brochure. This strategic tool is to inform foster youth of their rights, what they can expect from OCS and important contact information. The collaboration led to the inclusion of QR codes, making the brochure available electronically and linking all points to specific laws, websites and policies. FFCA also lead the development of a retreat evaluation tool. The tool was piloted during the November retreat, gaining critical feedback from youth to support future retreat development.

2018 Update: Through the partnership with Independent Living staff and FFCA, OCS updated its policy regarding APPLA. The policy changes were a result from discussions held during OCS/FFCA Leadership meetings. The new policy requires a high level of OCS oversight prior to allowing APPLA as a primary permanency goal. Implementation continues to occur and, OCS has been able to restrict the use of APPLA to only the most appropriate situations for youth. As of April 2017, only 7 youth have the goal of APPLA.

Another new development is the addition of the Office of Youth Empowerment. This joint venture between FFCA and the Child Welfare Academy is the culmination of a long-term effort to increase focus on youth-led trainings, youth and alumni leadership opportunities, development of tools and resources for youth and providers, and strengthening youth leadership activities in all five regions. This partnership will create a feed-back loop, increase youth leadership skills, strengthen youth voices, and create youth-led changes at the policy and agency levels. FFCA is also focusing on developing their Northern and Southeastern Chapters, which will increase opportunities for current and former youth to come together in a supportive environment.

Resource Family Advisory Board (RFAB)

2015 Update: The Resource Family Advisory Board (RFAB) currently has 14 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 SFY16 there were 13 members on the Board (six resource families, three OCS staff, two Tribal representatives, and two staff from ACRF). The Board continues to meet telephonically once per month and during this fiscal year the Board met face to face in October 2015 and March 2016. During SFY16, 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 9, OCS representatives 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 where relative identification did not happen quickly, and they 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.

2017 Update: The RRFAB currently has 13 Board members representing all five OCS service regions of Alaska. The makeup of the Board includes: current and former foster, adoptive and guardianship parents; community partners such as the ACRF and Tribal representation. The RFAB continues to meet telephonically once per month and during this fiscal year, the RFAB met face-to-face on two occasions, in October 2016 in Anchorage and again in March 2017 in Juneau.

Accomplishments during FY 2017 include:

- Finalization of Foster Parent Bill of Rights including distribution to resource families and OCS staff in May 2017
- Continued promotion/implementation of Starter Kits for resource families (backpack with essential items needed at time of emergency placement). During SFY17, Starter kits were provided to OCS regional and field offices including, Bethel, Kotzebue, Barrow, Nome, Ketchikan and St. Mary's.
- Re-signing of all RFAB members for another two years as term limits were due to expire in April 2017.
- During SFY17, the RFAB has developed the following initiatives to support resource families:
 - Foster parent feedback & communication with OCS Management
 - Education to resource families on foster home investigations
 - Continue with Starter Kits for resource families, but also concentrate on identifying supports to obtain fire/safety related items for resource families including smoke detectors, fire extinguishers and carbon monoxide detectors

- Promote regional support networks for resource families
- On-going support/development of the FosterWear Program
- Successful implementation of the Foster Parent Bill of Rights with resource families and OCS staff.

2018 Update: The Resource Family Advisory Board (RFAB) is currently comprised of 14 Board Members and one Associate Member. Representation on the Board covers the entire 5 regions within Alaska. The RFAB continues to meet telephonically one time per month and holds two in person Board Meetings each year.

Accomplishments during FY 18 include:

- Statewide distribution of Resource Parents Bill of Rights posters.
- On-going distribution of starter kits to OCS Regional and Field Offices.
- Bi-Annual updates to the OCS Director and Senior Leadership regarding board initiatives as well as feedback from resource families.
- RFAB Board Members received training by the OCS Licensing and Child Protective Services Assistant Attorneys General regarding foster home investigations to better understand the investigation process.
- A presentation was given to the National Foster Parent Association
- Development of an RFAB Facebook page.
- Providing input for the Foster Parent Survey that OCS is working on for 2018.

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 2014, the SLC met and a decision was made to revise the Strategic Plan to align more closely with the 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.

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.

2017 Update: The SLC has collaborated with OCS management and the Director’s Executive Team (DET) to align with the agency goals. Staff retention and training is a goal for OCS. To support that, the SLC has updated the Staff Development Plan (SDP) for new workers. In the coming year, the SLC will be creating and implementing a similar document for supervisors. The supervisor SDP will establish a consistent training plan for all OCS supervisors.

2018 Update: The SLC continued to meet monthly and worked on a variety of organizational improvement efforts including developing a staff development plan for new Protective Services Specialists and serving on Executive Steering Committee, Employee Retention workgroup and Competency-Based Evaluation workgroup. Membership has continued with representatives from each of the five geographical regions. The SLC continues to provide input to the Director’s Executive Team and staff training through ongoing collaboration with the Division Operations Manager and Child Welfare Training Academy Director.

Tribal-State Collaboration Group (TSCG)

2015 Update: TSCG is comprised of Tribal child welfare leaders and ICWA workers, 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 met 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 provides an opportunity for 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, DOL, Office of Public Advocacy (OPA), Alaska Court System, CFP, Region 10 and OCS 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.

2017 Update: To date, the Tribes/Tribal organizations who have signed the Tribal Agreement of Confidentiality has increased to 138. This continues to allow OCS to provide information to the child's Tribe in the initial assessment/pre-filing phase. Key statewide Tribal data points were also examined. The statewide racial disproportionality rate was 60.1% in 2014 and has decreased to 58% in 2016.

OCS continues to work collaboratively with Tribes/Tribal organizations across the state to focus on better outcomes for Alaska Native children and families. OCS issued new policy to align the final BIA ICWA regulations, which became effective December 2016. Training was provided to all OCS staff and Tribal partners were invited.

OCS Regions continued to hold regional collaboration meetings throughout the past year. The Southeast Region held its Tribal State gathering August 30 - September 2, 2016, in Juneau. The meeting was held in partnership with Central Council Tlingit Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska; conference topics included:

- Tribal Sovereignty and Tribal Child Welfare
- Permanency Options -Alternatives to TPR
- Independent Living Services
- New ICWA Regulations and Qualified Expert Witness
- Trauma Informed Care and Case Plan Development
- Relative Search and Increasing Placement Compliance

The Anchorage Region (ARO) hosted its second Tribal State meeting on March 1 - 2, 2017. The ARO Tribal State team worked for several months with the First Alaskans Institute to bring the ANDORE experience to the summit. ANDORE stands for Advancing Native Dialogues on Racial Equity. Anchorage OCS staff and Tribes were grateful to be together for two days and to have the time to acknowledge differences and strengths, discuss how to combat institutional racism, recognize biases and conditioned ways of viewing each other, all in an effort to move the work forward to benefit the families we serve. OCS staff and Tribes were very excited to come away from this experience with tangible goals and objectives that can be achieved together.

On April 18 - 19, 2017, the Southcentral Region Tribal State held their 4th Annual Regional Tribal State collaboration group in Kodiak. The 28 participants included eight OCS staff and 20 representatives from 15 different tribes; 17 of whom traveled from other areas of the state thanks to the support of Casey Family Programs. Topics of discussion during the two day meeting included Tribal leaders sharing their practices and services offered. This included many current and upcoming projects within their areas of service; a presentation on Strengthening Families; an overview of the CINA legal process; a presentation on Independent Living Programs; and training on the Unlicensed Relative or Prospective Foster Home Safety Evaluation. The Unlicensed Relative or Prospective Foster Home Safety Evaluation training was conducted with a Q & A session on barrier crimes, variances and a “how to” discussion on the process of becoming an OCS licensed foster parent. Immediately following the Tribal/State Meet and Greet, a Knowing Who You Are (KWYA) workshop was held in the same KANA Koniag building on April 20 & 21. This was the second time the newly revised curriculum of KWYA was presented. In May of 2017, a statewide Tribal State Collaboration meeting was held in Anchorage. 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, Tanana Chiefs Conference, Native Village Chickaloon, Department of Law, Office of Public Advocacy, Alaska Court System, Casey Family Programs, ACF Region 10, and OCS were in attendance. Topics included Statewide and Regional data indicators; BIA ICWA regulation and House Bill 200 implementation; Tribal participation on OCS hiring teams; updates on the Tribal State Strategic Plan; Child and Family Services 5-year plan; the Emergency Relief Support program; Knowing Who You Are training; Community of Hope: Transforming Child Welfare Outcomes for Alaska Native Children; and Ways to Work Better Together to improve outcomes for children and families. Additionally, Tribal State Data Indicators were distributed to participants illustrating key data points for each region as well as statewide.

2018 Update:

OCS continues with its numerous collaborative efforts with Tribes. Much of the work in 2017 was focused on Tribal Self-Governance which led to the signing of the Alaska Tribal Child Welfare Compact in October 2017. Another milestone was the First Annual Tribal Consultation between the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS) and Tribes that took place on November 7-8, 2017. Invitees included all 229 Tribes, all CEO/Presidents of Tribal Non-Profits, and all CEO/Presidents of Tribal Health Organizations. Policy is being drafted for future consultations by a workgroup of Tribal and State leaders.

The Transforming Child Welfare Strategic Plan Steering Committee had an in-person meeting on April 4, 2018 to discuss progress being made in each of the plan’s six strategic priorities. In addition to the Compact and Tribal Consultation, other highlights include the Cultural Services Resource Guide that will include culturally specific services that social workers can use for case planning.

In March 2017, OCS received permission to have Tribal representatives participate on hiring panels for the majority of job classes/positions. One of the items the Embrace & Implement the Spirit of ICWA workgroup is focusing on is updating the bank of interview questions used for hiring to assist in hiring staff that value and respect the government-to-government collaboration with Tribes.

The Tribal State Advisory Team met face-to-face April 5, 2018 and decided to change the reoccurrence of the TSCG teleconferences to every 4 months due to the demands of implementing the Compact and related Support, Services, and Funding Agreements. Every OCS region facilitated a Regional Tribal State Collaboration Group meeting over the last year, and these continue to be effective. The Annual Statewide Tribal State Collaboration Meeting is being planned for fall 2018.

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 UAA CWA to develop and support OCS workforce development efforts. Through this partnership the UAA CWA and OCS strive to improve practice, increase capacity of staff, and support

professional development at OCS. The UAA 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.

2017 Update: OCS and UAA CWA continue to work on improving and delivering quality training and development through the use of information collection. In the last year UAA CWA staff attended the Leadership Academy for Middle Managers (LAMM) training along with key OCS middle managers. This training is delivered through the National Child Welfare Workforce Institute (NCWWI). CWA has representation on every LAMM workgroup working to improve our workforce here at OCS. In addition to this training, NCWWI, OCS and CWA are exploring and learning more about how technology can be used to assist adult learners in a large geographical state like Alaska. CWA has worked closely with the Supervisor Leadership Council (SLC) with efforts in improving the “on boarding” of new line workers.

2018 Update: The Child Welfare Academy (CWA) at University of Anchorage Alaska (UAA) is continuing to work diligently as a partner with OCS. The CWA is still actively engaged in NCWWI work with a strong focus on recruitment and retention efforts statewide. In addition, OCS and UAA have been meeting to develop a Child Welfare certificate program at UAA. This new program would allow for numerous disciplines to receive a child welfare certificate at the bachelor’s or master’s level. This last year CWA has been developing our Protective Services Manager I level of practice expertise through a coaching model.

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 OCS staff meet 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 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 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 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 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.

2017 Update: The Anchorage Regional office continues to work closely with service providers and partners in their communities. The efforts listed above have continued in the past year. Additionally, the following items have been added during the past year:

- 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 been so successful that OCS is looking to expand to a second Alaska Native Family Services Unit.
- Annie E. Casey Foundation provided “re-boot” training to our Team Decision Making facilitators and will be returning in September to train staff. Team Decision Making is a vital part of our practice so it is crucial to stay current on the Family to Family Model.
- Permanency for children is a focus of community partners who are collaborating with OCS in the development of a Heart Gallery to assist in recruiting permanent homes for children in the care of OCS. These Heart Gallery events have been very successful in recruiting permanent supports for children in custody.
- ARO’s relationship with Beacon Hill continues to be a great success for us. This comes through the provision of Family Contact as well as Safe Families. This program has been successful in assisting high needs families prior to OCS involvement.
- The Anchorage Leadership Team has created a program improvement plan to improve function areas as well as track trends and/or challenge areas. They update these plans and the scorecards on a monthly basis.
- The Leadership Team is also looking forward to a Strategic Planning Session in August to continue the “Stop doing” exercise that was started at the Management Summit.
- ARO staff continues to hold on-going conversations about customer service at each all staff and individual program staff meetings. We will now be giving out Customer Service Awards at each of our all Staff meetings to encourage continued positive customer service interactions.

2018 Update: The Anchorage Regional office continues to work closely with service providers and partners in their communities. Some of the efforts from the 2017 APSR report out are still underway. Additionally, the following items have been added during the past year:

- The Anchorage OCS Office strives to enhance relationships with our Tribal partners through a variety of ongoing efforts each year. We currently have 4 co-located Tribal partners from AVCP, Kawerak and BBNA who utilize office space in the Anchorage office, allowing for easier and swifter communication with OCS staff and joint training opportunities. The Anchorage Regional Tribal State team meets monthly to discuss program needs, relationships, service delivery, case consultation, foster parent and staff recruitment, training, etc. We host an annual Tribal State summit as well as an annual Alaska Native Heritage Month celebration and Alaska Native Foster Parent appreciation event.
- The Anchorage OCS Office is working in partnership with UAA's Child Welfare Academy to provide staff and community training on the Strengthening Families approach. There will be four community-based trainings in calendar year 2018 bringing Anchorage service providers together in an effort to align our service delivery for families.
- The Anchorage OCS Office has a robust liaison program. Each member of the Anchorage Leadership Team is assigned an average of two local agencies to serve as a formal liaison to. This helps improve communication between agencies, keeps us informed of cross-training opportunities and allows us to work on cross-system improvements.
- The Anchorage OCS Office continues to work closely with the Annie E. Casey Foundation on improving the Team Decision Making program and ensuring adherence to the Family to Family Model. Annie E. Casey (AECF) provided "re-boot" training to the Team Decision Making (TDM) facilitators in February of 2017. Since then, AECF staff have returned several times to train staff and continue providing technical assistance. This technical assistance also includes improving the OCS data collection and outcome information, which is a substantial improvement. AECF provided a training to all staff in September, a youth engagement training in March, and will be providing a domestic violence/interpersonal violence training in August. Annie E. Casey Foundation also facilitated a TDM introduction to our community partners, legal partners, and Tribal Representatives in April 2018.
- The Anchorage OCS Office is partnering with Cook Inlet Tribal Council on a 5-year, Regional Partnership Grant aimed to assist parents in navigating recovery systems through enhanced TDM and peer support.
- Permanency outcomes continue to be enhanced by the partnership between OCS and Beacon Hill. The Heart Gallery continues to be successful in finding forever families for legally free youth.
- The Anchorage OCS Office's relationship with Beacon Hill continues to be a great success for OCS. This comes through the provision of family contact as well as the Safe Families program. This program has been successful in assisting high needs families prior to OCS involvement.
- There is continued work with Anchorage School District, Child in Transition, and the Alaska Center for Resource Families to maintain children in their school in accordance with the Every Student Succeeds Act.
- The Anchorage OCS office has recently partnered with the social work team at Providence Hospital through the establishment of a monthly P.R.O.C.S meeting. The goal is to share information and ideas as to how we can partner to assist families and keep children safe when concerns exist.
- The Anchorage OCS office has established a weekly MDC Leadership Team meeting that brings supervisors and managers from each of the MDC partners together to collaborate on ways to improve our team approach to child safety and service delivery to caregivers.
- The Anchorage OCS office is working in partnership with the Anchorage Reentry Coalition on coordinating services to clients who are reintegrating back into the community following incarceration.
- The Anchorage OCS office is in the beginning stages of enhancing our relationship with RurAL CAP who facilitates supportive housing to our clients.
- The Anchorage OCS Office conducts routine "fix-it" meetings with the Department of Law's Child In Need of Aid, Assistant Attorneys General and the Office of Public Advocacy's Guardians at Litem in an effort to reduce barriers amongst legal partners and work efficiently within the court system.
- The Anchorage OCS Office conducts quarterly Resource Family Forums for foster parents to meet with members of the management team. These forums consist of additional training, extensive Q&A and allow us to address any systemic factors needing improvement.
- The Anchorage OCS Licensing Team hosts annual Resource Family Appreciation events allowing for Resource Family networking and morale-building.
- The Anchorage OCS Licensing Team is working on building a relationship with the Anchorage Museum in order to offer opportunities for our Resource Families and youth in care.
- The Anchorage OCS Licensing Team partners with the SCRO OCS Office and the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium on an annual Alaska Native Resource Family recruitment event held at the Alaska State Fairgrounds.

- The Anchorage OCS Licensing Team hosts 10-20 different recruitment events throughout each year at a variety of different community fairs. Examples are things such as partnering with the LGBTQ community and ACRF on a recruitment booth during Anchorage's annual Pride Fest.

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 three-day family services training with a wide variety of workshops that included: Self-Governance; Barrier Crimes 101; Mandate Reporter Training and Trauma-Informed Care. There were over 100 ICWA workers from surrounding villages as well as OCS workers in attendance.
- The Nome and Kotzebue areas attended a three-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 two 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 two and a half day 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 identified two 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.

2017 Update: The OCS Northern Region serves 85 villages and covers 348,000 square miles; this is bigger than the state of Texas. NRO 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 2017. The two and a half day joint conference provided information and highlighted the ICWA regulations.
- 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. Additionally, the regional psychiatric nurse collaborated with licensing managers to implement a statewide recruitment effort to identify foster homes for children with high medical needs.

- Permanency unit developed with internal experts to focus on reunification, adoption and guardianship. This unit has led work in the region to improve timely permanency for children and youth.
- OCS partners closely with the Rural Child Welfare grantees in Nome and Kotzebue. The focus on partnership assists OCS and Tribal partners in providing high quality services for families and children and also assists caseworkers by providing additional support to their cases through grantees' efforts in caseworker visits, case planning, and referrals for services.
- The Emergency Relief Support program is being piloted in NRO. The pilot began December 1, 2017. The pilot was created to support relatives 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.
- NRO facilitates regional Tribal/State collaboration conference calls and meetings to improve partnership with Tribes in the region. The joint meeting opportunities assist with finding and identifying relatives, understanding the ICWA regulation and policy changes, and assessing areas of strength and need in the services to children and families.

2018 Update: The geographical vastness of Northern Region creates many opportunities for out of the box and creative strategies for collaboration with Tribal and Community partners:

- Early Infant Mental Health Professionals meet monthly with Northern Region staff to provide training and consultation to improve services to children 0-5 years of age with a focus on trauma. The training and consultation is being expanded to parents, resource families, and Tribes.
- OCS and Kawerak teamed up in November 2017 in Nome and convened a 3-day conference focusing on the Rural Child Welfare Grant; Cultural Connections Training; Data Sharing; Emergency Relief Support; and shared traditional Native foods together.
- There are four Child Advocacy Centers; one in each of the following communities: Fairbanks, Nome, Kotzebue, and Utqiagvik. Each has a multi-disciplinary team that includes law enforcement, child advocacy center, attorneys, Tribal partners, DJJ, legal, and mental health providers.
- The Child Welfare Academy convened 2-day Strengthening Families trainings in Kotzebue, and Fairbanks. Community partners from all sectors including Tribes participated in learning about the 5 Protective Factors.
- NRO ICWA Specialist convenes quarterly teleconferences with Tribal partners throughout the region. A variety of topics are explored: ICWA; Family Finding; OCS/Tribe/Tribal Organization Updates. These teleconferences were born out of a changes to the Tribal/State configuration.

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 occur monthly 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 third regional TSCG meeting occurred in Kenai. This meeting included OCS, Tribal partners, and Region 10 staff. It provided collaborative learning related to mandated reporting, foster home licensing, a Kenai pilot project, and Title IV-B and IV-E programs.

2017 Update: The OCS Southcentral Region is unique in that the region is growing very quickly, has 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 strengthen 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.
- A monthly steering committee meeting with Akeela, DBH, and OCS is held to assure grant compliance and improve communication.
- 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. Safe Babies court has been renamed to Palmer Family, Infants and Toddlers court. It is projected to launch July 1, and OCS has been involved in the community stakeholder meetings as well as steering committee meetings.
- 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 still in its infancy but OCS has partnered with Infant Learning (Head Start) as well. In addition ROCK Mat-Su and OCS is exploring the concept of Differential Response to address the community response to trying to be preventative.
- OCS partners closely with Tribal partners in the SCRO region. SCRO facilitates monthly region-wide meetings with Tribal partners. In May 2017, SCRO had the fourth regional Tribal State meetings in Kodiak. Tribal members were supported with travel and lodging costs through Casey Family Programs; Tribal representation from the three communities served were present. There were 20 tribal members in attendance at this meeting.
- The Wasilla field office has entered into stronger relationships with community stakeholders. Monthly Building Community Connections meetings are held with ROCK Mat-Su committee members and OCS leaders to strengthen community relationships and help workers to develop partnerships. In January 2017, the first round robin, “speed dating” meeting was held. Thirteen service providers met with 39 OCS members to share their services, ethos, and referral process. The event was focused on substance abuse counseling and assessment services. The next meeting will focus on mental health services in the community.
- The Wasilla field office has the lead role in a meeting focused on the safety of teens in the community. The Care for Our Teens meeting includes law enforcement and several levels of OCS leadership. It also focuses on support to birth and foster parents.

2018 Update: The OCS Southcentral Region continues to have collocated services happening with Akeela and Cook Inlet Tribal council.

- Akeela continues to serve clients for substance abuse assessment on site and will make recommendations for services based on their assessments. Meeting occur monthly as a steering committee to assure that any problems are addressed immediately.
- CITC has a Tribal representative who has been considered a tribal foster care resource for ICWA homes and families. OCS workers invite the Tribal representative to participate in meetings (IDMs) as well as IAs and family visits to support ICWA and tribal involvement with families.
- AYFN- in the last year AYFN has received money to develop a parents as partners unit. They are hiring parents who have had OCS involvement in the past who can help current clients navigate the system, advocate for parents’ rights and be supportive of them as they make changes.

- ROCK Mat-Su, through funding by Mat-Su health Foundation, continues to be a resource for the local OCS office. The Palmer Families, Infants and Toddlers court is up and running with an aim at achieving permanency within one year. Tribal members (Chikaloon and Knik Tribal Council) are present at stakeholder meetings and have been involved in the steering committee for this court all along. There are monthly stake holder meetings that are attended by OCS and the legal community as well as tribal representatives.
- ROCK Mat-Su has brought in the Butler Institute from Denver, CO to conduct a site assessment concerning family contact in which a large variety of stakeholders are present at the assessment meetings in a cross- collaborative approach to improving families experiences of supervised family contact.
- Building Community Connections is another activity and workgroup that has come out of ROCK Mat-Su. There have been three speed networking meetings in which up to 13 vendors have come and shared the goals, vision and mission statements of their agencies with all of the Wasilla staff members. Substance abuse, mental health and direct services providers has been the focus of the meetings.
- Safety of our teens meetings continue.
- Wasilla staff still attend the MAT-SU Area Partnership meetings (MAP) for nonprofit and DHSS entities.
- Wasilla staff attend the regional hospital scan team meetings to discuss cases that we have in common with the local medical community.
- Wasilla field office IA unit will co-locate with the Children's place (CAC) in July 2018.

Region wide:

- Local Supervisors attend MDT meetings in all offices that have CACs: Homer, Kenai, Kodiak, Dillingham and Wasilla.
- Our Gakona field office is co-located with the local CAC already.
- Kenai holds monthly service providers meetings for relationship buildings and OCS updates.
- Regional Tribal State breakaway meetings will be held this year in Wasilla. Previous sites included Wasilla, Kenai, Gakona and Kodiak, with Dillingham expected to be the next identified site in 2019. It is expected that between 20 and 30 tribal members to attend and at least that many OCS participants from all over the region.

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 (Juneau's local domestic violence service provider,) provide new staff orientation to the new staff within 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 provide orientation to the new staff within 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, DOL 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 local Tribes to increase access to relative information.
- The Emergency Relief Support program is being piloted in SERO. The pilot began March 1, 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.

2017 Update: The Southeast region focuses on partnership with Tribes and other community partners to assist in meeting needs and providing services to families in all areas of the region. T&H Tribal Family & Youth Services continued to meet regularly with staff in the past year. Below are highlights of the collaborative partnerships in the past year:

- Tribal title IV-E agreement and Tribal jurisdiction in CPS cases: although the title IV-E agreement with T&H was signed in 2016, in the past year T&H took jurisdiction of two cases that transferred from state court and CPS services, to Tribal court and services. This is a positive step for Alaska Native children and families.
- Emergency Relief Support Pilot program: this pilot relied heavily on OCS field staff, state office staff, and Tribal partners around the region. This innovative program began in March 2016, and provides financial and emotional support to unlicensed relatives while they pursue foster care licensing or public assistance benefits to assist in meeting the needs of relatives in their care.
- Juneau Re-entry Coalition is a coordinated effort with the Department of Corrections and has offered an opportunity to educate, advocate, and inform local partners about the OCS system. The group is working on a project to support visits for parents in prison.
- 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.
- 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.

2018 Update: The Southeast region focuses on partnership with Tribes and other community partners to assist in meeting needs and providing services to families in all areas of the region. T&H Tribal Family & Youth Services continued to meet regularly with staff in the past year. Below are highlights of the collaborative partnerships in the past year:

- Tribal title IV-E agreement and Tribal jurisdiction in CPS cases: although the title IV-E agreement with T&H was signed in 2016, in the past year no new cases were transferred to tribal jurisdiction in Juneau.
- Emergency Relief Support Pilot program: this pilot relied heavily on OCS field staff, state office staff, and Tribal partners around the region. This innovative program began in March 2016, and provides financial and emotional support to unlicensed relatives while they pursue foster care licensing or public assistance benefits to assist in meeting the needs of relatives in their care. The Juneau office had a two-year celebration to honor the work of state office, case workers and supervisors, licensing staff and the tribal partners who have made this program such a success in Southeast. Southeast Region continues to rely heavily on this program to support families who take children in their home, keeping them from foster care.
- Juneau Re-entry Coalition is a coordinated effort with the Department of Corrections and has offered an opportunity to educate, advocate, and inform local partners about the OCS system. The group is working on a project to support visits for parents in prison.
- Alaska Native foster home recruitment team was created with OCS and T&H staff and managers from both agencies. A community readiness survey was completed last year and this team will be exploring the results this year and use the results to continue driving the work of recruiting Native foster homes.
- 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. Recently, an advanced training on sexual abuse cases and unexplained injuries was conducted and the CAC partnered with the CWA in helping with this training.

- This year has seen the renewal of the Community Orientations, a collaboration between TFYS, OCS, and AWARE staff. OCS hosted the first orientation and it was standing room only in the large OCS conference room. OCS staff rotated through by unit to explain their programs and how to partner with each other to better serve families and children. It was a well-attended gathering and included a shared lunch with one another and learned more about each other.

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 6,300. 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 SFY15, 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 (YKHC), the DBH, DJJ, DPH and local law enforcement agencies.
- OCS Western region is currently working on development of a 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, 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 YKHC.
- The Yuut Kellutestiit Core Group began meeting in 2103, and 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.

2017 Update: The OCS Western Region has continued to partner with the community and Tribal stakeholders in their communities. Highlights of collaboration in the last year include:

- Emergency Relief Support Pilot program: this pilot relied heavily on OCS field staff and state office staff around the region. This innovative program began in March 2016, and provides financial and emotional support to unlicensed relatives while they pursue foster care licensing or public assistance benefits to assist in meeting the needs of relatives in their care.
- WRO is working with Association of Village Council Presidents and CFP to plan a Regional Tribal-State Collaboration Group gathering.
- The regional ICWA specialist has spent time reaching out to all of the 56 Tribes in the region to improve partnerships and build resources that will assist children and families.

- OCS continues to participate in the Multi-disciplinary Team and The Yuut Kellutestiit Core Group.
- 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 YKHC.
- Additionally, OCS staff continues to participate on the Sex Offenders Treatment Program Advisory Board and the Tundra Women's Center Board.

2018 Update: The OCS Western Region has continued to partner with the community and Tribal stakeholders in their communities. Highlights of collaboration in the last year include:

- Emergency Relief Support Pilot program: this pilot relied heavily on OCS field staff and state office staff around the region. This innovative program began in March 2016, and provides financial and emotional support to unlicensed relatives while they pursue foster care licensing or public assistance benefits to assist in meeting the needs of relatives in their care.
- WRO is working with Association of Village Council Presidents and CFP to plan a Regional Tribal-State Collaboration Group gathering.
- The regional ICWA specialist has spent time reaching out to all of the 56 Tribes in the region to improve partnerships and build resources that will assist children and families.
- OCS continues to participate in the Multi-disciplinary Team at the Child Advocacy Center.
- 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 YKHC.
- Additionally, OCS staff continues to participate on the Sex Offenders Treatment Program Advisory Board and the Tundra Women's Center Board.

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 focuses on the prevention of adverse childhood experiences while 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 DHSS and the Department of Education and Early Development (DEET). 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 well as strengthening connections between health, mental health, education and family support systems and public and private partners.

2017 Update: The ECCS project's primary purpose is to improve the developmental skills of place-based communities 0-3 year olds. The vision of the Alaska ECCS project is that Alaska children, families, and communities are safe and healthy, and to promote and protect the developmental health and well-being of Alaskan families. Alaska seeks to improve children's developmental health and family wellness through improved linkage to necessary resources, reduction of the impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences, and technical assistance for Primary Care Case Management. The long term goal is to build a sustainable system based on community-driven solutions.

The State of Alaska partners in this project with community and Tribal partners in the place-based communities of Kodiak, the Matanuska-Susitna Borough and the Norton Sound Region to strengthen leadership and expertise in Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) approach, using the Collaborative Innovation and Improvement Network (CoIIN) methodology to drive vertical and horizontal integration and mobilization of early childhood services and systems at the state, community and

family/child levels. Using the Collective Impact model, supported by the CoIIN, at the state level this project will produce an increased integration of early childhood and other health and family wellness systems, development and adoption of core sets of indicators to measure Early Childhood system processes and outcomes, and testing innovative systems changes and improvements. At the community and family levels, this project will support the Collective Impact approach to integrate service delivery and collaboration resulting in improved child development and family wellness, measured by a 25% increase from baseline in developmental skills in 0-3 year olds by 2021.

2018 Update: Alaska’s Early Childhood Coordinating Council (AECCC), and the Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS) continues to partner with other state organizations and non-government entities to ensure the integration and alignment of services to address the developmental needs of all vulnerable children under the age of five in Alaska. Members of AECCC include the Commissioners of the Department of Health and Social Services, the Department of Education and Early Development (DEED), the Department of Labor, and the Department of Public Safety; a representative from the Governor’s Office; the DEED Partnership Liaison; the Child Care Program Manager; the Part C/Early Intervention Manager; the Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems Manager; Alaska Infant Learning Program Association, Alaska Head Start Association, Alaska child care resource & referral network (thread), Alaska Native Health, the Children’s Trust, Chamber of Commerce, and mental health providers. For more information see the section later in the document entitled, “Services for Children under the Age of Five.

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 for supporting families and addressing extra-familial interactions promoting 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.

2017 Update: The Strengthening Families Leadership 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. Strengthening Families™ is a research-informed, strength-based approach to helping families reduce stress, address risk factors and promote healthy development. The overarching goal is the promotion of child and family well-being. It is based on engaging families, programs and communities in building five protective factors helping families succeed and thrive, even in the face of risk and challenges. 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. Under the direction of the leadership team, Strengthening Families expanded its reach to include Kodiak, two trainings in Matanuska Valley, a re-visit to Nome and a re-visit to Bethel. Strengthening Families also provided training to Behavioral Health Aides, with the support of Alaska Native Tribal Health Corporation as well as to Rural Alaska Community Action Program, Inc. (RurAL CAP) providers. In addition to the face-to-face trainings, Strengthening Families is offering extended reflection opportunities to develop and support implementation of the protective factors framework through learning cohorts. OCS has adopted the Strengthening Families framework to promote a strength based child and family-centered approach to case planning and has been receiving positive feedback on this model.

2018 Update: The Strengthening Families Leadership Team has been working to diversify not only its membership but also moving into new communities. Largely, the leadership team has consisted of early childhood professionals. The anticipated plan is to not add additional membership outside of the early childhood field. For the last year, the focus has been to continue the efforts to support existing communities such as Nome, Kodiak, and the Matanuska Valley in addition to starting to engage

new communities such as Fairbanks, Anchorage, Kenai, Juneau, and Sitka. The trainings have been well received and the audience is multidisciplinary.

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, appropriate interventions, and creating collaboration involving 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”. The primary goals include the capacity of mental health professionals to promote social and emotional development, address mental health concerns, identification and intervention for young children with difficult behaviors and 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.

2017 Update: OCS leadership continues to facilitate the “Network”. The primary goals include the capacity of mental health professionals to promote social and emotional development, address mental health concerns, identification and intervention for young children with difficult behaviors and 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. In addition to the grant funded work, the State of Alaska through OCS, was one of ten states to receive a technical assistance award from the Zero-to-Three Center for Policy to develop funding strategies using Medicaid payments to enhance Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health (IECMH) Services. As a result the state is drafting IECMH services into the Medicaid Redesign and Reform benefits package due out for public comment in the spring 2017.

2018 Update: The State of Alaska through OCS, was one of ten states to receive a technical assistance award from the Zero-to-Three Center for Policy to develop funding strategies using Medicaid payments to enhance Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health (IECMH) Services. As a result the state drafted IECMH services into the Medicaid Redesign and Reform benefits package. The 1115 Behavioral Health Demonstration Waiver application was submitted to the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) on January 31, 2018.

Infant Learning Program

2015 Update: Child welfare and the Part C early intervention system (known in Alaska as the Infant Learning Program, or ILP,) 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. This services is available statewide with 16 agencies providing ILP services in the State of Alaska.

2016 Update: ILP continues to be available in Alaska as described in 2015. In the past year, a department decision was made to move the ILP 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

2017 Update: The ILP was transferred to the Division of Senior and Disability Services as of July 1, 2016. OCS continues to refer children and families for services to ILP as assessment and services indicate.

2018 Update: The OCS SACWIS system continues to automatically refer children and families for services to the ILP as screening and assessment indicate.

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 have established MOAs with OCS offices. 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.

2017 Update: As mentioned in the 2016 update, OCS continues to partner with Head Start Programs to meet the needs of young children in 2017. Additionally, the ECCS project is collaborating with Head Start to embed standardized developmental screening into Head Start programs across the state and will be sharing data between the two programs to improve health and educational outcomes for young children.

2018 Update: OCS continues to partner with Head Start Programs to prioritize referrals to eligible children in 2018.

SECTION 2: UPDATE ON ASSESSMENT OF PERFORMANCE

2018 Update: OCS completed the third Child and Family Service Review in May 2017. This update on the assessment of performance considers the data contained in the *CFSR Alaska Final Report 2017*, from the OCS case review system and SACWIS. This section provides an update to the current CFSP goals; and potential changes to these goals, as well as the priority strategies to be addressed in the OCS 2018 Program Improvement Plan based on the results of the Round Three CFSR Final Report.

CHILD AND FAMILY OUTCOMES THROUGH THE OCS CQI/QA UNIT

2015 Update: OCS has continued a rigorous case review system. OCS has a CQI Unit (often called the QA team) with dedicated staff maintaining ongoing case reviews for OCS. The agency has utilized the federal review instrument 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 seven 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. The agency utilizes the federal review instrument and in March 2015, the QA team began using the revised instrument through OMS. In CY 2015 there were 277 case reviews

conducted. CY 2014 findings show gains were maintained in six 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 continues to be 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 2014 with CY 2015 because the items have changed. The tool has changed from 23 to 18 items, and the information used to determine if each item is considered a strength or need has changed as well. In CY 2015, relative placement and physical health needs of the child are two areas in which OCS shows a high level of compliance.

OCS is in the process of completing the Alaska Statewide Assessment (SWA). OCS will be undergoing the CFSR in the coming year and anticipates a Program Improvement Plan (PIP) 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.

2017 Update: Much of this past year has focused on the development of the OCS SWA which was submitted on March 22, 2017. The results of the SWA informed the on-site CFSR which occurred the week of May 22-26, 2017. However, the Quality Assurance Unit has continued case reviews of items 1-18 during CY 2016. The statewide results of these findings are listed below in Table 4. It is anticipated that the QA Unit will continue to provide on-going, robust QA reviews utilizing the OMS during FY 2018.

2018 Update: The statewide OCS Quality Assurance Unit continued case reviews of items 1-18 during CY 2017. In CY 2017 there were 263 cases reviewed of which 155 were foster care cases and 108 were in-home cases, in 25 field offices. The statewide results of these findings are listed below in Table 2. The QA Unit will continue to provide on-going, robust QA reviews utilizing the OMS during CY 2018.

Table 2: Quality Assurance Case Reviews Calendar Year 2017					
Outcome/Item	Qtr1 Jan- March 2017	Qtr2 April-June 2017	Qtr3 July- Sept 2017	Qtr4 Oct- Dec 2017	State-Wide 2017
Outcome S1: Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect	67%	35%	59%	46%	52%
S1-Item 1: Timeliness of initiating investigations of reports of child maltreatment	67%	35%	59%	46%	52%
Outcome S2: Children are safely maintained in their homes whenever possible and appropriate	59%	50%	64%	35%	52%
S2-Item 2: Services to Family to Protect Child (ren) in the Home and Prevent Removal or Re-Entry Into Foster Care	61%	69%	76%	59%	67%
S2-Item 3: Risk and Safety Assessment and Management	62%	50%	64%	35%	52%
Outcome P1: Children have permanency and stability in their living situation.	39%	36%	47%	26%	37%
P1-Item 4: Stability of Foster Care Placement	78%	73%	87%	78%	81%
P1-Item 5: Permanency Goal for Child	65%	59%	62%	49%	58%

Outcome/Item	Qtr1 Jan- March 2017	Qtr2 April-June 2017	Qtr3 July- Sept 2017	Qtr4 Oct- Dec 2017	State-Wide 2017
P1-Item 6: Achieving Reunification, Guardianship, Adoption, or Other Planned Permanent Living Arrangement	57%	59%	65%	54%	59%
Outcome P2: The continuity of family relationships and connection is preserved for children.	91%	64%	85%	82%	82%
P2-Item 7: Placement With Siblings	100%	83%	97%	94%	95%
P2-Item 8: Visiting With Parents and Siblings in Foster Care	70%	62%	79%	70%	72%
P2-Item 9: Preserving Connections	100%	95%	93%	96%	95%
P2-Item 10: Relative Placement	91%	86%	93%	96%	93%
P2-Item 11: Relationship of Child in Care With Parents	85%	62%	82%	69%	75%
Outcome WB1: Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs.	14%	22%	48%	17%	30%
W1-Item 12: Needs and Services of Child, Parents, and Foster Parents	57%	42%	66%	23%	48%
W1-Item 13: Child and Family Involvement in Case Planning	51%	49%	69%	24%	49%
W1-Item 14: Caseworker Visits With Child	19%	25%	56%	21%	35%
W1-Item 15: Caseworker Visits With Parents	11%	9%	33%	13%	20%
Outcome WB2: Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs	95%	78%	95%	87%	90%
WB2- Item 16: Educational Needs of the Child	95%	78%	95%	87%	90%
Outcome WB3: Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs.	64%	53%	77%	54%	64%
W3-Item 17: Physical Health of the Child	78%	82%	96%	75%	85%
W3-Item 18: Mental/Behavioral Health of the Child	73%	39%	71%	51%	60%

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 5: 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 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.

2017 Update: On October 11, 2016, the Administration for Children and Families issued a Technical Bulletin #9, in which it was noted that the ACF had identified technical errors in “the syntax and formulation for statewide data indicators.” As a result of these errors, the CB indicated that it “would not use the indicators in determinations of substantial conformity for the entire round 3 of the CFSR”. As such the states were advised to utilize the AFCARS data indicators in context to assist with the SWA process, while also relying on other data sources such as quality assurance reviews and SACWIS data. As a result of this guidance, OCS elected to not utilize the data profiles in the development of the SWA.

2018 Update: Due to the reasons listed in the 2017 update, OCS is not currently relying on AFCARS data, but is considering the AFCARS data for contextual and informative purposes as a part of the PIP development.

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 Round 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.

2017 Update: OCS continues to utilize information provided in the CFSR State Performance Workbook and continues to address the four areas identified in 2015.

Since the OCS completed both the SWA and the CFSR during this past year, a summary of the SWA findings is provided below.

For purposes of assessing Alaska's performance for the Statewide Assessment, Alaska relied heavily on data from the OCS Online Resources for Children in Alaska (ORCA) data system as well as the data collected through routine quality assurance case reviews; these reviews are routinely conducted by the OCS Quality Assurance Unit and produces data to inform quality improvement initiatives. Based on these data sets as well as interviews with key stakeholders, Alaska was able to determine its ranking for each of the 18 items related to Safety, Permanency and Well-being outcomes. In all cases, Items 1-18 indicate Alaska's state performance standard as compared to a national performance standard of 95%. Alaska did not meet the national performance standard on many items.

Alaska's lowest ratings are related to timely initiation of investigations, and caseworker visits with children and parents. Managing risk and safety to prevent removal of the home and addressing the mental health needs of children were both rated at 74%. Both of these issues may be tied to the lack of or accessibility of support services available to Alaska's at-risk families. Generally, Alaska's highest ratings were around Permanency Outcome 2: related to maintaining and preserving family relationships for children after they are removed from home. Alaska also performed well with respect to meeting children's educational and physical needs.

2018 Update: Alaska completed its third CFSSR in May 2017 and received its final report in November 2017. According to the results of the review, Alaska was found to not be in substantial conformity with any of the seven safety, permanency and well-being outcomes; and in substantial conformity with only one out the seven systemic factors.

Consistent with Alaska's 2017 Statewide Self-Assessment, the Final Report found Alaska's lowest ratings related to timely initiation of investigations, and caseworker visits with children and parents. Managing risk and safety to prevent removal of the home and addressing the mental health needs of children were both rated at 74%. Both of these issues may be tied to the lack of, or accessibility to, support services available to Alaska's at-risk families. Generally, Alaska's highest ratings were around Permanency Outcome 2: related to maintaining and preserving family relationships for children after they are removed from home. Alaska also performed well with respect to meeting children's educational and physical needs.

Please see *CFSSR Alaska Final Report 2017*, Appendix A of this document, for detailed information. Below is a summary of each of the outcome areas.

Safety Outcomes: For the Safety Outcomes 1 and 2, OCS did not meet the national performance standard of 95% in any of the items or measures. For Safety Outcome 1, Item 1, Timeliness to initiating investigation of reports of maltreatment, OCS shows a rating of 72%. For Safety Outcome 2, Item 2, Services to family to protect child(ren) in the home and prevent the removal or re-entry into foster care, had an overall rating of 38%, which is well below the national performance standard of 95% and one of Alaska's lowest scoring items. For Item 3, Risk and Safety Assessment and Management, which addresses whether or not the state took sufficient actions to control present/impending danger to the child, Alaska had a 40% strength rating out of a national performance standard of 95%.

Permanency Outcomes: For permanency outcomes 1 and 2, there are a total of eight items by which the state performance is assessed. For Permanency Outcome 1 there are three items: Item 4, Stability of Foster Care Placement; Item 5, Permanency Goal of Child; and Item 6, Achieving Reunification, Guardianship, Adoption, or Other Planned Permanent Living Arrangement. Alaska's ratings for each of these items was below the national performance standard of 95% with individual rating of 80% for Item 4, 50% for Item 5; and 25% for item 6.

For Permanency Outcome 2 there are five items for which Alaska was assessed. These are Item 7, Placement with Siblings; Item 8, Visiting With Parents and Siblings in Foster Care; Item 9, Preserving Connections; Item 10, Relative Placement, and Item 11, Relationship of Child in Care with Parents. All items rated below the national performance standard: Item 7, rated 89%; Item 8 rated at 55%; Item 9 rated at 75%; Item 10 rated at 76%, and Item 11 rated at 79%.

Well-Being Outcomes: Well-Being Outcomes focus on the how well the child and families assessment of needs and services are being met. There are three Well-Being Outcomes, and there are a total of seven items. Well-Being Outcome 1 has a total of 4 Items; however, Item 12, Needs and Services of Child, Parents, and Foster Parents, has separated in additional subsections:

- Item 12A: Needs Assessment and Services to Children
- Item 12B: Needs Assessment and Services to Parents
- Item 12C: Needs Assessment and Services to Foster Parents

For this Outcome, all of these subsection measures are considered and assessed separately, in relation to a national performance measure of 95% for each item. For Item 12, the state performance rating is 33%; For Item 12A the state performance rating is 63%; for Item 12B, the state performance rating is 30% and for Item 12C, the state performance rating is 56%.

Item 13, Child and Family Involvement in Case Planning, OCS had a state performance of 39%, well below the national performance standard. Item 14, Caseworker Visits with Child, OCS has a state performance of 48%; while Caseworker Visits with Parents, Item 15, is rated at 28%, which is well-below the national performance standard. For Well-Being Outcome 2, there is Item 16, Educational Needs of the Child. For this item, the state performance rating was 85%, with a national performance standard of 95%.

For Well-Being Outcome 3, two items were assessed. Item 17, Physical Health of the Child, Alaska rated very near the national performance standard; Alaska has a state performance standard of 68%, with a national performance standard of 95% for this item. Item 18, Mental/Behavioral Health of the Child has a state performance standard of 45%, with a national performance standard of 95%.

SYSTEMIC FACTORS

Please note: For the purpose of this section, a brief update is provided for each item and also references the Alaska 2017 CFSR Final Report.

Systemic Factor A: Item 19: 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 two 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.

2017 Update: In the SWA, Alaska asserted that this item was a strength; however, upon further review and consultation with the Children's Bureau, it was determined that this item is an area needing improvement. While the location data within ORCA may be sufficient, the state did not provide the needed data to demonstrate that the ORCA is a fully functioning, compliant Statewide Automated Child Welfare System (SACWIS), as it relates to effectively and accurately identifies the status, demographic characteristics, and goals for the placement of every child who is (or within the immediately preceding 12 months, has been) in foster care.

2018 Update: Alaska's Statewide Information System was rated as an Area Needing Improvement during the 2017 CFRS. Although Alaska uses a variety of standardized processes to input and verify the accuracy of the status, demographics, location, and goals for placement of children in foster care it was determined that these processes have limitations for producing quality and reliable data. The following is a list of enhancements deployed in CY 2017 were to enhance efficiencies for users and the quality of data:

- Created and implemented a quality assurance assessment of sex trafficking data. As a result, reference data was modified to achieve more accurate results.
- Created/enhanced an online data fix tool to resolve data errors, conflicts, or missing data in a timely manner. Resolving data problems such as incorrect placement or legal status dates, missing allegations, and child case plan goal approvals used to have to wait for implementation in a software deployment cycle. The ability to resolve data errors 'live' facilitates timely and accurate data.

- Created a Data Analysis page so that ORCA functional staff can easily and proactively identify data conflicts and missing values.
- A Training site was created for users that is a replica of the SACWIS system without any production data. This site is used for one-off testing and new user training.
- A new alert communicates to the user that the Date of Alleged Maltreatment may be too early. This alert is triggered if the Date of Alleged Maltreatment is at least 364 days in the past.
- The system does not allow the user to document an alleged maltreatment date that exceeds the date the report was received by OCS.
- Regional Managers receive an email notification when an Incident Report activity note is logged. Examples of Incident Report categories are Physical Assault, Verbal Threat, and Serious Injury to Child in Custody.

In the coming year, the ORCA team is working on an assessment of the SACWIS system code base to determine what modifications are necessary for an encasement strategy to facilitate modernization and migration to a CCWIS system. The team intends to implement a set of device and browser agnostic pages for off-site use. The team is actively working on a training plan, modifications to worker and regional data, and the general process to facilitate system access for our tribal co-signers. In addition, the ORCA team will begin planning and designing Dashboards for Initial Assessment (IA) and Family Services users. The Dashboard will display information such as IA by due date and priority, Caseworker visits and Case Plans by due date.

Systemic Factor B: Case Review System

OCS fully anticipated not being in being in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Case Review System in accordance with the 2017 CFSR finding. This has been an area identified for growth for the last decade and will be continue to be an area of focus for the next CFSP.

Item 20: 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 implemented 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.

2017 Update: In the 2017 SWA, Alaska asserted that Item 20 is an area needing improvement. OCS data provided in the SWA shows that case plans are not completed within desired timelines and are not developed jointly with the children and parents. Until recently, all case planning needed to be completed in ORCA, whereby, the worker has had to rely on completing the plan on the office computer and not in the field where a worker is more likely to meet with parents and children. Current, technologies for the OCS ORCA system do not include mobility options for workers to access electronic case files and/or complete necessary documentation in the field. Additionally, increased caseloads and high worker turnover may also contribute to low levels of family engagement with case planning. Alaska is hopeful that the documentation improvements in this area and anticipate that the program change made in September 2016 related to case planning will assist in increasing compliance in this area.

2018 Update: For Item 20, the 2018 CFSR found that in only 73% of foster care and in 45% of in home cases children and family were included in the case planning process. Additionally, case plans were established timely in only 26.1% of the cases.

Item 21: 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 six 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 June 1, 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.

2017 Update: Alaska asserted that this item was a strength, and the Children’s Bureau concurred with this assertion. Alaska demonstrated through data and information in the SWA, that OCS has a fully functioning administrative review system that ensures periodic reviews no less than every six months for custody cases. The QA Unit has successfully developed a process to conduct the administrative reviews from a centralized location in Anchorage for every child in care while maintaining a high rate of functioning on a statewide basis

2018 Update: Out of all of the items that comprise the systemic factors, the completion of periodic reviews is one of two ratings identified as a strength. Data from the CFSR Final Report indicated that 99.9% of the reviews are occurring timely for children in care.

Item 22: 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 first permanency hearing being held or continued in court was 351 days, 683 cases were included in this data. 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.

2017 Update: In the SWA, OCS asserted that based on the court system data, this item is a strength area for Alaska as the statewide average to timely permanency hearings are occurring within the 12-month federal requirement, both for initial as well as subsequent permanency hearings. This is an item that the Children's Bureau did not agree with Alaska's assertion and a Stakeholder Interview was held on May 22, 2017, to gather additional data.

2018 Update: Alaska received an overall rating of Strength for Item 22, based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews. On average permanency hearings occur not later than 12 months from the date the child entered foster care, and subsequent permanency hearings occur on average every 169 days.

Item 23: 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 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.

2017 Update: Through the SWA, Alaska asserts that this item is an area needing improvement and the Children's Bureau agreed with this assertion. Alaska does not have a data system to ensure TPR petitions are filed in a timely way and does not have a method to track when the court has found compelling reasons not to file a TPR petition.

2018 Update: Item 23 remains an Area Needing Improvement for Alaska. Like the 2008 CFSR, the 2017 CFSR found that the state continues to not have a standardized process to track or ensure that TPR petitions are filed timely or that compelling reasons not to file a TPR are filed. This will remain an area to be addressed in the PIP and CFSP and must have strong support and collaboration from the CIP and the courts in order to gain momentum.

Item 24: Notice of Hearings 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.

2017 Update: In the SWA, Alaska asserts that this item is an area of need, and the Children's Bureau agreed with this assertion. Because there is not a standardized system in all field offices and regions, there is not a method to track notices being received by the caregivers, and because caregivers are not included in all administrative reviews related to children, Item 24 is an area of need for Alaska.

2018 Update: Item 24, Notice of Hearing and Reviews to Caregivers remains an Area Needing Improvement. The 2017 CFSR found that Alaska continues to not have a standardized method in place to ensure caregivers are consistently notified of, and have a right to be heard in administrative reviews and court hearings with respect to the child.

Systemic Factor C: Quality Assurance System

While Alaska continues to work towards a CQI process, Alaska has not yet affected a consistent, statewide, data-driven process that assesses, evaluates and informs policy and practice improvements and outcomes based on the totality of the data available to the agency. Alaska understands that strong CQI must demonstrate how data informs the entire agency of program and practice improvements, gaps, strengths, and barriers but data does not necessarily drive practice change, nor does the CQI process fully consider all of the data available consistently across the agency and across the OCS service regions.

Item 25: 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 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 evaluate 50% of the sample for out-of-home cases and 50% for in-home cases. When there are 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 wellbeing 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.

2017 Update: The SWA identified the quality assurance system; CFSR Item 25 is an area needing improvement. OCS has many components to build on for an effective Quality Assurance System. Unfortunately, Alaska is not using the data and information collected to make informed decisions or improvements across the child welfare system, on a consistently systematic basis. OCS has a strong QA case review process and large amounts of relevant data available through the case reviews and the ORCA system; however, as a whole, this systemic factor is an area of need because OCS does not have a standardized method to use data collected to consistently inform practice change. The SWA provides additional data about this item.

2018 Update: The quality assurance system continues to be an area for needed improvement. The system lacks a comprehensive integrated process which incorporates the activities of data gathering, use of that data to identify needed program change, and the ability to tie program change to the data elements. Further, when program change is instituted, there is not a system in place that provides for further information gathering and use of that information to conduct evaluation of the programs. There are strengths in the system upon which to build. These include multiple sources of data which are routinely collected and available for use. This includes an ongoing case review system which evaluates each field office annually using a model which mimics the federal child and family review process. This provides for a rich source of information reaching across the state into both urban and rural areas. In CY 2017 there were 263 cases reviewed of which 155 were foster care cases and 108 were in-home cases, in 25 field offices (see Table 2). These reviews provided information which was used to focus staff efforts on increasing visits with parents and on the assessment of need and case plan development. It is anticipated in CY 2018 the number of cases reviewed will be approximately 65 cases across three identified field offices to establish a data baseline and thereafter 65 cases reviewed as proposed in the pending PIP.

In addition, the Administrative Case Review system provides for a review of all out of home cases every six months. This review system incorporates Tribal partners and other community partners who are able to provide information on the case status. In 2017 there were 2994 administrative case reviews held. The reviews are accurately documented into the ORCA system. This system provides immediate data on the status of the case and the well-being of the children. When needs are identified in the case review, the case information is forwarded to the supervisory and management system for immediate action.

The Office of Children's Services will incorporate the needs identified in the QA system with the system strengths which are present to move forward in the development of a comprehensive CQI process in the PIP. The state will work with and receive consultation from the Centers for States and for Organizational Improvement

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 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.

2017 Update: During this past year the OCS Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) committee has continued to meet monthly to review the essential core services needs and mapping out processes to improve outcomes and track data. Due to the findings of the SWA and the CFSR, the OC CQI team will likely be a key component to CQI improvements through the pending Performance Improvement Plan.

2018 Update: The OCS Continuous Quality Improvement committee coordinates management activities across the regions through involvement of the five regional managers, the Division Operations Manager, the Social Services Program Administrator, and the Quality Assurance Manager. Monthly meetings are held in which data reports are reviewed and program activities analyzed. The committee, while serving to support improved quality of services, will need to be revamped as the agency moves forward in improving its CQI program in response to the CFSR findings through the PIP. As previously noted, the agency will be working with the Centers for States and for Organization Improvement in these efforts.

Systemic Factor D: Staff and Provider Training

The 2017 CFSR found that Alaska is not in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Staff and Provider Training. None of the items in this systemic factor were rated as a Strength.

Item 26: 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. New additions 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 is 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 and utilize his expertise in evaluation to establish a more informed measurement tool.

2017 Update: Although Alaska's SWA asserted that this was an area of strength for the state, after consultation with the Children's Bureau, it was determined that this item is an area needing improvement. OCS has not demonstrated how the skills learned in initial training are applied to the job.

2018 Update: The 2017 CFSR Final Report determined Item 26 to be an Area Needing Improvement because, although Alaska's Initial Training to state staff who deliver services includes basic skills and knowledge, the state is not adequately evaluating the training. The evaluation of initial training and assessment of on the job skills competencies will be an area to be addressed in the next CFSP. In the meantime, OCS started a mentor program for all new line staff in 2018. This program is designed for new staff to transfer class room knowledge and skills into the field. This new program was launched March 2018.

Item 27: 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 provides onsite training. CWA provides bi-annual reports regarding the number of workers and partners who attend training. In January 2015 – August 2015, 316

workers attended training. In 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.

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.

2017 Update: Based on the SWA, Alaska and the Children’s Bureau agree that Item 27 is an area needing improvement. Alaska does not have a standardized way to ensure ongoing training is readily available and accessible to all staff statewide to provide them with the skills needed to carry out their work. While Alaska has training available, there is not a systematic way to ensure all staff receives the training as needed and there is not a minimum training hour requirement for ongoing staff.

2018 Update: Item 27, Ongoing Staff Training, was identified in the 2017 CFSR Final Report as an Area Needing Improvement because the state has no requirements for ongoing staff training hours or processes and tools to assess staffs’ ongoing training needs and the ability to evaluate the effectiveness of the training that is offered. During the last year some efforts have been made to evaluate ongoing training needs. Likewise, Alaska received additional funding to focus on training in 2018. As a result, staff within their first year of employment will now receive an additional two week of face-to-face instruction through the Child Welfare Academy at University of Alaska, Anchorage. This additional two weeks has allowed the ability to expand on topics that were only briefly covered in the past. Some of the expanded topics include: the importance of permanency, mental health issues, substance abuse and addiction, and domestic violence. OCS has also increased the curriculum to address secondary trauma and self-care.

Item 28: Foster and Adoptive 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. 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 Alaska Center for Resource Families (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. OCS 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.

The ACRF conducted a 2015 satisfaction survey in which 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 methods people find out about ACRF's services and training events. Overall, ACRF's staff and services received positive feedback. The general theme 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.

2017 Update: Alaska's SWA asserted that this was an area of strength for the state; however, after consultation with the Children's Bureau, it was determined that this item is an area needing improvement.

2018 Update: Item 28, Foster and Adoptive Parent Training was rated as an Area Needing Improvement during the 2017 CFSR. This rating was made based on the finding that while training requirements are in place for foster parents, no training requirements exist for adoptive parents; and no data is available on compliance with the requirements for Residential Licensed Care Facilities. The adoptive parent training requirement will be addressed in the CFSP, however any changes to training for Residential Child Care Facilities will need to be addressed in the next CFSP as this issue will require inter-department collaboration and regulatory changes to address. The Division of Health Care Services, Residential Licensing Department oversees regulations to allow for a Residential Child Care Facility (RCCF) license or a Residential Psychiatric Treatment Center (RPTC) license. Residential Licensing does not mandate or provide a generalized training regimen that would meet the needs of all types of licenses. Each facility is required to have a system for training their staff and orientation and training regulations outline the minimum requirements a Facility must provide each caregiver in addition to orientation, training in CPR and first aid, and additional training requirements based on each specialization of the license they are operating under. Each Facility monitors the effectiveness of their training and Residential Licensing ensures training requirements are met during on-site inspections and self-monitoring inspection reports. No data is currently available to determine if training prepares RCCF staff for the position for which they are employed.

Systemic Factor E: Services Array and Resource Development

The systemic factor related to Service Array and Resource Development is an area of need in Alaska. Alaska acknowledges that it does not have a fully functioning/effective service array. Due to Alaska's vast geographical areas and limited resources, many services are lacking in many areas of the state.

Item 29: Array of Services

Alaska did not achieve substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Service Array during the CFSRs in 2008 or 2017.

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.

2017 Update: The Array of Services was assessed as an area needing improvement. The array of services is not fully functioning, and there are many services that are not available in all communities of Alaska. The services that are available do not have automated or standardized referral processes, and families and workers may not always be aware of what services and resources are available to them. Stakeholder Interviews were facilitated by the Children's Bureau to gather more information about this item; they were held May 2 and 22, 2017.

2018 Update: Item 29 was determined to be an Area Needing Improvement. The 2017 CFSR Final Report reiterated Alaska's challenges:

- Because of the state's vast geographical area, Alaska is challenged in ensuring that the array of needed services is accessible in all political jurisdictions covered by the CFSP.
- There are significant gaps in the service array throughout the state, most notably in in-home services and specialized medical, mental health, and substance abuse treatment, both outpatient and residential, especially in rural areas.

The OCS Statewide Service Array Unit continues to support a variety of services through grants and contracts 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. Service providers are located in specific communities across Alaska and are provided by Tribal and non-Tribal entities. OCS maintains a web-based, resource listing of all of the OCS funded grants available in the State of Alaska and the communities they serve. OCS is working on harnessing more efficient procurement methods which will ensure service provision in more communities in the state, within the limitation of available funding. Some OCS grant programs, including Family Support (Prevention), Family Reunification, Rural Child Welfare and the Family Preservation program "Circles of Support" have been revised in order to define and focus the programs on necessary services to be delivered. Associated quarterly grant report templates have been revised in order to provide OCS with clear and easy to understand data which will assist OCS in determining not only how many people are being served but whether the programs are effective. In addition, two significant DHSS statewide initiatives including Tribal Compacting and the 1115 Medicaid Behavioral Health Waiver project is expected to start to improve service provision in the near future.

Item 30: 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 and 2017 CFSR final reports.

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.

2017 Update: Alaska asserted in the SWA that this item is an area needing improvement due to limited services being available, and individualized services are not always available or accessible to children and families. Stakeholder Interviews were facilitated by the Children's Bureau to gather more information about this item; they were held May 2 and 22, 2017.

2018 Update: Item 30, Individualizing Services, was identified as an Area Needing Improvement in the 2017 CFSR. Specifically, the final report concluded that: "The flexible funding and the developmentally and culturally appropriate services that exist are not sufficient and do not meet the unique needs of all the children and families in the state, particularly in rural areas. The lack of culturally competent agency workers, turnover in the agency's and Rural Child Welfare grantee staff, lack of universal acceptance of culturally sensitive interventions, and travel restrictions also contribute to the state's inability to individualize services."

OCS is committed to continuing to strengthen the individualization of services delivered by its service array by working closely with Tribes and Tribal organizations. Alaska is making efforts to fill service gaps by partnering with Tribes to facilitate culturally competent and local resources to help families who need services. A five-year strategic plan entitled, "Transforming Child Welfare Outcomes for Alaska Native Children", was developed in partnership with community and Tribal partners to identify objectives to transform outcomes for Alaska Native children. One result of this is the creation of a Cultural Resource Guide which will be utilized by OCS workers and the community in order to link the unique needs children and families with culturally appropriate and local resources. These types of services may be available in virtually every corner of this state regardless of the remoteness of location and in some instances may be used as in lieu of traditional western services, or as a supplement to formal services in the form of pre or post care. Services delivered through Tribal Compacting will also be added to the array of services available across regions in Alaska. In 2018, the first service being implemented is diligent relative search services.

OCS also partners with Division of Behavioral Health to fund specialized behavioral health services through Individualized Service Agreements for children and youth in custody for which no other funding sources are available and services are needed to maintain a lower level of service placement.

Systemic Factor F: *Systemic Factor F: 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.

2017 Update: For the 2017 SWA, this systemic factor was determined to be a strength. Details of the item rating are listed below with the respective item.

2018 Update: According to the 2017 CFSR Final Report Alaska was determined to be in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Agency Responsiveness to the Community.

Item 31: 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 DSIDS. 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, DSIDS, and other local and statewide partners.

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 are 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.

2017 Update: In the SWA, Alaska assessed that the State Engagement and Consultation with Stakeholders with respect to the CFSP and the APSR was a strength area, and the Children's Bureau agreed with the assertion. OCS engages and seeks feedback from internal and external partners. Tribal and community partners are included in identifying concerns, reviewing data, and developing and implementing change efforts. The CFSP and related APSRs were developed with input and through ongoing consultation with Tribal representatives, consumers, service providers, foster care providers, the juvenile court, and other public and private child- and family-serving agencies. OCS has documented that Alaska engages partners and utilizes the feedback from them to improve policy and practice.

2018 Update: Item 31, State Engagement and Consultation with Stakeholders with respect to the CFSP and the APSR was identified as a strength area in the 2017 CFSR Final Report. As reflected in Section 1 of this report, Alaska continues to engage and seek feedback from internal and external partners with respect the goals and strategies identified in Alaska's CFSP and subsequent APSRs.

Item 32: 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; DSIDS; 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.

2017 Update: In the SWA, Alaska assessed this item as a strength, and the Children's Bureau agreed with the assertion. OCS is working closely with partners to ensure that the state's services under the CFSP are coordinated with services or benefits of other federal or federally-assisted programs serving the same population. Through partnership and collaborative opportunities,

OCS is able to maximize the efforts to improve services to children and families and address the objectives in the CFSP. The provisions of the CFSP are coordinated with services or benefits of other federal or federally-assisted programs serving the same population. OCS has a close partnership with other state and private agencies, Tribal organizations, and community partners to ensure funds are used in an effective manner to support services to children and families.

2018 Update: Item 32, was identified as a strength area in the 2017 CFSR Final Report. OCS continues to have 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.

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

Alaska was determined to not be in substantial conformity with this systemic factor during the 2017 CFSR. Only one of the four items (Item 33) in this systemic factor was rated as a Strength.

Item 33: 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.

2017 Update: In the SWA, Item 33, was assessed as a strength because Alaska applies the licensing and adoption or guardianship home study standards equally, on a statewide basis. The Children's Bureau agreed with the assertion. The SWA provides additional data about this item.

2018 Update: Item 33 was assessed as a Strength in the 2017 CFSR. The foster and adoptive parent licensing, recruitment, and retention system is functioning statewide to ensure that state standards are applied to all licensed or approved foster family homes receiving title IV-B or IV-E funds. To ensure continuity, Alaska has a functioning processes for tracking foster care homes that are not fully licensed to ensure that licensing standards are met. Data reports are accessed from the Online Resource for the Children of Alaska (ORCA) database to identify, assess, and address homes that are out of compliance with the Federal IV-E requirements. The data review is ongoing and assessed by the Community Care Licensing Specialist, their supervisors, and managers.

Licensed foster families or unlicensed relatives may adopt, or become the guardian of, the child placed in their care if the child cannot return home. Home studies are conducted using a standardized format covering required content, including an assessment of the family and verification that a CPS check and fingerprint-based background checks were completed. In the last year, there have been improvements in tracking foster care licensing investigations. The Provider and License Investigations ORCA report indicates the reported date, screening decision, priority, investigation initiated date, investigation completed date, report mailed to provider date, violations, and enforcement. For 2017, there were a total of 653 foster care licensing investigations. This is a 37% increase in total investigations over the last five years. Community Care Licensing Specialist III monitors the report to ensure timeliness in the completion of the Report of Investigation.

Item 34: 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.

2017 Update: In the SWA Alaska asserted that this item was a strength; however, after consultation with the Children’s Bureau, Alaska concedes that this is an area needing improvement. The reason for the change is there was insufficient data provided regarding the monitoring of flag hits, limited tracking and data regarding investigations, and no information about how often barriers are identified after an initial approval. The SWA provides additional data about this item.

2018 Update: Item 34 received a rating of Area Needing Improvement in the 2017 CFSR. Alaska continues to work on addressing this issue. On June 29th, 2017, new background check regulations took effect. The [7 AAC 10.900-990 –Barrier Crimes and Conditions; Background Checks](#) regulation expanded the search criteria to all providers using Health Care Services Background Check Program for Child in Need of Aid (CINA) matters and or denied, suspended, revoked licensing matters. The new regulations decrease the state-mandated barrier timeframes on CINA probable cause and adjudication findings from permanent barriers to 10 year barriers, with termination of parental rights as a permanent barrier.

The Office of Children’s Services (OCS) Background Check Program relies on the Department of Public Safety, Health Care Services Background Check Program, and the OCS Alaska Public Safety Information Network (APSIN) Unit to determine if there are safety concerns on unlicensed caregivers who are relatives, and foster care applicants. The 2017 Statewide Assessment, noted this item as an area needing improvement due to insufficient data provided regarding the monitoring of flag hits, limited tracking and data regarding investigations, and no information about how often barriers are identified after an initial approval.

Although at this time there is still insufficient data in regards to approved applicants who have received a subsequent barring crime or condition notice, the information is now being tracked by the Health Care Services Background Check Program. This was not tracked in the past and it has been only nine months since the new background check regulations took effect. Health Care Services Background Check Program utilizes its own database (NABCS), which in the future will be able to provide better data in this area.

Item 35: Diligent Recruitment of Foster and Adoptive Homes

The 2008 and 2017 CFSR final reports both 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 three 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 three months. The commercials featured former foster children and the Director of the Office of Children’s Services. The hyperlinks are available to open to view the 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 SFY 16, 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 SFY 16, OCS has reached 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).

2017 Update: OCS identified this item as a strength in the 2017 SWA, however, after consultation with the Children’s Bureau, it was determined to be an area needing improvement. This item needs improvement because there is a discrepancy between the number of kids needing permanency and the available foster homes, as well as the lack of reliable data to measure and adjust R&R plans when needed.

2018 Update: Item 35, Diligent Recruitment of Foster and Adoptive Homes, continues to be identified as an Area Needing Improvement, according to the 2017 CFSR Final Report. During FY18, each of the 5 OCS Regional Offices submitted updated resource family recruitment and retention plans. The plans are developed by regional teams comprised of OCS Licensing staff, community agencies, resource families and Tribal partners. Teams meet every quarter to review and assess the overall effectiveness of their plans in regards to the recruitment and retention of foster and adoptive resource families in their region. Each of the regional plans have specific goals, objectives, interventions, and base line measurements.

In addition to the regional plans, OCS maintains a statewide resource family recruitment and retention plan to insure the support is being provided to the regional teams, as well as identify recruitment and retention needs throughout the State. The FY18 Statewide Resource Family Recruitment and Retention Plan is comprised of 4 key areas:

- Support to the Regional and Field Offices
- Statewide Efforts for Recruitment and Retention
- Foster Wear Program
- Resource Family Advisory Board

The diligent recruitment of potential foster and adoptive families who reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of children represented in the foster care system is an area in need of improvement as noted in the 2017 Statewide Assessment. Regional recruitment and retention plans currently prioritize the recruitment of ICWA preference placement homes. Beginning in April of 2018, the statewide resource family recruitment and retention plan was updated to incorporate the need for data on the race and ethnicity of children in state’s custody as well as the race and ethnicity of the current resource families located throughout Alaska. The data will be reviewed and assessed by the regional resource family recruitment teams to better assist with the development of targeted recruitment efforts to meet the needs of the children in out-of-home care. OCS is also making progress on determining the most effective sources of recruitment by collecting data from interested persons.

Priorities have been established by each OCS Region in their regional recruitment and retention plans to increase the numbers of resource families in their area. Each region has identified a need for an increase in foster homes for children with complex medical needs, large sibling groups, youth ages 13-21, and foster homes that may be considered an ICWA preference

placement. Additionally, there are some efforts to increase homes who are interested in providing care to children who need permanent homes and children who need immediate care under emergency conditions.

The regional recruitment and retention teams have utilized a number of strategies for targeted recruitment such as:

- Co-sponsorship with Alaska Center for Resource Families of two Northern area resource families competing in this year's "Iron Dog" snow machine race through rural Alaska as a means of spreading the word about the need for licensed foster parents in remote villages.
- Continued airing of the "One Child" television commercial narrated by DHSS Commissioner Valerie Davidson, as well as resource family advertisements at the Bethel movie theater.
- Recruitment tables at community health fairs throughout the State, including on-site training provided by regional OCS Psychiatric Nurses on how to care for children with complex medical needs.
- Collaboration with Stone Soup Group and Providence Medical Hospital to develop training and recruitment activities for families interested in caring for medically-fragile infants.
- Collaboration with Tribal partners at resource family recruitment events including; Alaska Native American Indian Heritage Month in Anchorage and Mat-Su, Tanana Chiefs Tribal Family and Youth Services Fall Conference in Fairbanks, Camai Dance Festival in Bethel, Kenai River Festival, and the Attachment, Responsive, Relationships and Resilience Conference in Juneau.
- Advertisements placed in the Alaska Nurses Magazine and First Alaskan Magazine

OCS also works collaboratively with a number of organizations to recruit adoptive homes for children who are legally free for adoption. One of the primary methods is through a series of online listing sites and exchanges, including the Alaska Heart Gallery, Northwest Adoption Exchange, and AdoptUSKids. These sites host current photos and strengths-based profiles of waiting children, generating dozens of inquiries by families both in and out-of-state per month. Currently, there are 36 legally-free children listed on these sites.

Monthly collaboration calls between OCS, Beacon Hill, Northwest Adoption Exchange, ACRF, and representatives of the field office permanency teams provide a forum to discuss methods of improving orientation for interested families, new techniques for writing strengths-based child profiles, and ways to streamline the inquiry process for families so that they are handled quickly and with a single point of contact. This cooperation has resulted in more standardization and clarity in the recruitment process for waiting children. The most recent process is organized as follows: Inquiring families are invited to an orientation on the foster-to-adopt process, hosted by Beacon Hill and ACRF, available by teleconference; ACRF provides CORE foster care licensing training and a series of adoption trainings; then notifies permanency specialists that the family has completed their "Adoption Learning Path" training and that they are prepared for matching with a legally free child.

Item 36: State Use of Cross-Jurisdictional Resources for Permanent Placements

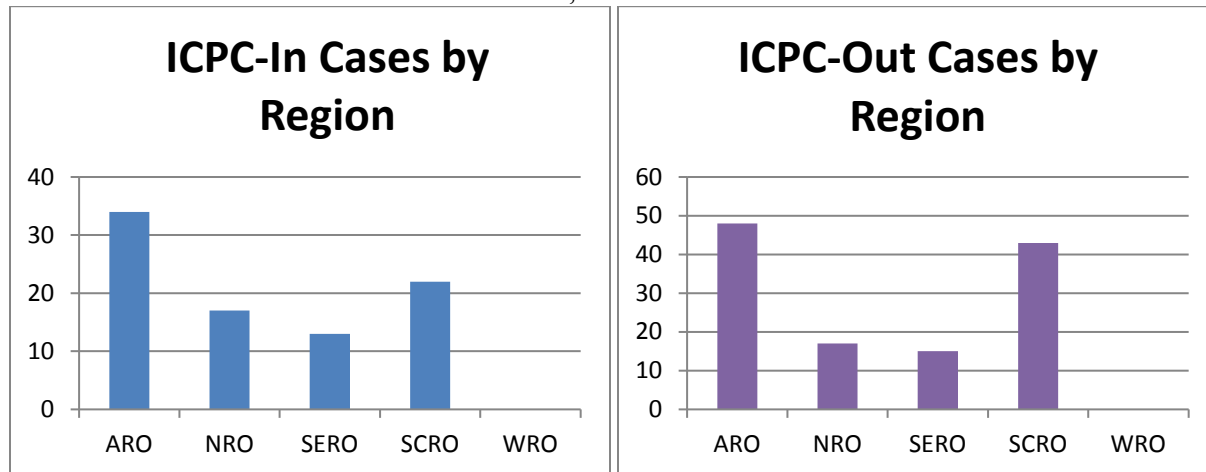
The 2008 CFSR reported this as a strength, however in 2017 CFSR Final Report, this item was rated as an Area Needing Improvement.

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 (ICPC) 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 3: 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 4: 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.

2017 Update: In the SWA, Alaska identified this item as an area needing improvement; the Children’s Bureau concurred with the assertion. Alaska does not have a fully functioning system to ensure successful placement across region or state lines, for this reason, Item 36 is assessed as an area needing improvement. Although Alaska has methods to facilitate inter- and intra-jurisdictional placements, the practice is inconsistent and timelines are not met consistently or timely.

2018 Update: As noted in the Alaska 2017 Child and Family Services Review, Item 36 was assessed as an area needing improvement. Although Alaska has methods to facilitate inter and intra-jurisdictional placements, the practice is inconsistent and timelines are not met consistently or timely. Barriers to timely completion continue to include external factors (e.g., grantees have 90 days to complete adoption studies, licensing has 90 days to complete the foster care license, background check results are completed by the Department of Public Safety and may take more than 60 days) as well as internal factors (e.g., worker training, staff shortages, delays with fingerprinting. Additionally, workers accommodate family circumstances which often requires giving families additional time to complete the requirements in order to promote a placement approval.

ICPC

In April 2017, Alaska ICPC began using an explanation of delay letter to report the reason for the delay and the anticipated timeline for completion when it looks unlikely that the home study and placement decision can be made by the 60 day mark. The form was supplied to supervisors to disseminate to workers, but implementation remained somewhat inconsistent for most of the year. Compliance rates increased across all categories, although not as much as was hoped. In early 2017, Alaska began using the National Electronic Interstate Compact Enterprise (NEICE). In July 2017, NEICE instituted a feature that sends a reminder of the upcoming deadline at the 50-day mark. Rates of compliance were higher for NEICE cases with the total compliance rate of 71.4%, as compared to 47.1% for cases not transmitted through NEICE.

Table 5, shows the percentage of ICPC home studies completed within 60 days, 90 days, and over 90 days. Table 2, shows the percentage for specific ICPC-In types, adoption, licensed, parent, and relative placement.

Table 5: Total number of ICPC-In Home Studies Completed by Calendar Year

Year	Total	Completed in 60 Days	Percentage in 60 Days	Completed in 90 Days	Percentage in 90 Days	Over 90 Days	Percentage Over 90 Days
2014	99	37	37.4%	23	23.2%	39	39.4%
2015	78	30	38.5%	15	19.2%	33	42.3%
2016	49	21	42.9%	9	18.3%	19	38.8%
2017	87	41	47.1%	20	23.0%	26	29.9%

Source: OCS ORCA ICPC Home study Completion Time Report, RR

Table 6: 2017 Home Study Completion Compliance

Type	Total	Completed in 60 Days	Percentage in 60 Days	Completed in 90 Days	Percentage in 90 Days	Over 90 Days	Percentage Over 90 Days
Adoption	10	3	30.0%	1	10.0%	6	60.0%
Licensed	32	13	40.6%	9	28.1%	10	31.3%
Parent	14	6	42.7%	7	50.0%	1	7.1%
Relative	31	19	61.3%	3	9.7%	9	29.0%
Total	87	41	47.1%	20	23.0%	26	29.9%

Source: OCS ORCA ICPC Home study Completion Time Report, RR

Out of Town Requests

OCS implemented a centralized tracking of requests between regions on July 1, 2017, in order develop a statewide baseline for timeliness on Out of Town Request (OTR) completion. OTRs are broken into three main categories: Caseworker visit requests, home studies, and initial assessment assistance. Caseworker visit and home study requests were assigned within seven

days of the request being made, approximately 57% of the time. Initial assessment OTR assignments were divided into categories based on the priority level per OCS policy. The percentage of assignments within the timeframes were slightly higher at between 76% and 83%.

Adoption

Beginning in 2017, The Alaska Center for Resource Families (ACRF) has been working to streamline the process of identifying training equivalencies for out-of-state families who have already undergone a home study and/or foster care training, so that they may sooner be listed as a home ready for a permanent placement.

ACRF also conducts training for Alaska families so that they are prepared to adopt through their Adoption Learning Path series of classes and PARKA (Preparation of Adoption Readiness for Kids in Alaska) Programs. Families who have undergone either training are referred to the OCS permanency specialists, and their profiles are maintained by ACRF and the OCS as resources for placing children. In particular, The PARKA Project promotes intra-state adoption by providing intensive preparation and training for 10 families per year, so that they can receive placement of children with intensive needs. In efforts to streamline the inquiry process for parents out of State, OCS coordinates with Beacon Hill and Northwest Adoption Exchange in order to ensure that children-awaiting-adoption photo and profile listings are current and regularly updated between The Alaska Heart Gallery, The Northwest Adoption Exchange, and AdoptUSKids. Additionally, any inquiries received on these sites are responded to by a single point of contact at Beacon Hill, who offers the family foster-to-adopt orientation. This training can be attended remotely in order to increase accessibility to inquiries by families in remote locations or those who are in another State. The OCS continues to provide grant funding to the Alaska Center for Resource Families (ACRF) in order to make available a comprehensive provider training system 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. ACRF tracks resource family training information, provides the initial and ongoing training for resource families, and offers a toll free phone number to receive inquiries from potential foster and adoptive families.

The ACRF 2017 Satisfaction Survey was conducted from June to July 2017. The yearly satisfaction survey assists ACRF and OCS to measure whether the foster and adoptive parent training system is functioning effectively to address information and skills needed to carry out their duties as foster and adoptive parents. The survey was sent to 2400 foster and adoptive parents, and OCS staff with a response rate of approximately 9.5%. 82% of respondents found the topics and subjects current and useful to the foster parent's situation. 86.6% used ACRF services in the past twelve months two or more times.

ACRF administers evaluations to participants of training to include the following question: "How well do you feel these classes will help you with/add to your skills/knowledge?" In calendar year 2017, 581 surveys were returned for on-site training, not including CORE. Of these, 92.4% of participants stated that the trainings were excellent or good for increasing the knowledge they need to be a foster parent. In addition, during the same time period, 289 evaluations were returned for on-site CORE Training. Of these, 90.3% of participants stated that the trainings were excellent or good for increasing the knowledge they need to be a foster parent.

In this past year, ACRF and OCS have been reviewing efforts to help resource families meet the mandatory reporter training requirement. The mandatory reporting information is a regular part of the Core Training for Resource Families. A new web-based training produced by the Children's Justice Act Task Force and DHSS is being promoted along with shorter, concise training to meet ongoing needs. Licensed families must complete Core Training for Resource Families within one year from the date of the initial licensure. In the last year, a new version of Core was developed and tested using a teleconference style to focus more on needs of rural areas of Alaska. In calendar year 2017, a total of 630 people participated in Core training.

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 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.

2017 Update: After completion of the CFSR, OCS anticipates receiving findings for a PIP development. OCS has begun working on planning the upcoming PIP. OCS intends to modify the CFSP Plan for Improvement to incorporate the PIP items and eliminate items that do not tie closely to the CFSR findings. For this year, OCS is providing an update to the following table and the items identified in the CFSP and updated in previous APSRs:

2018 Update: The 2017 CFSR found Alaska to not be in substantial conformity with all seven outcomes and six of the seven systemic factors. Alaska is currently in the process of developing a Program Improvement Plan (PIP) that will address the areas needing improvement through cross-cutting goals and strategies. With internal and external stakeholder input, the emerging top priorities to be addressed in the plan include: #1) Timely and Appropriate Safety Intervention, #2) Quality Engagement with Families, Tribes and Stakeholders; #3) Continuous Quality Improvement; 4) Workforce Development and Retention.

Similarly, the three priorities identified in its current CFSP remain relevant. These priorities include: #1) Assess and Address Risk and Need; #2) Timely & Safe Permanent Homes for Children/Youth; #3) Continuous Quality Improvement. Where progress has not yet been achieved with the current plan, revisions to the strategies, objectives and interventions and any implementation supports needed are individual addressed in the update section for each strategy.

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 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 Update: 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 Update: 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</p>

			<p>community partners regarding the centralized intake functions, to respond to questions and concerns regarding this strategy.</p> <p>2017 Update: The first steps toward Centralized Intake were taken in July 2016. A Protective Services Manager I was hired to supervise and oversee all Intake supervisors. The initial months focused on identifying areas of Intake that needed increased consistency or policy development. A workgroup was established to develop a consistent method of writing Protective Services Reports, workload balancing among the Intake workers in each region, and technology changes were implemented. OCS has been working to design a hotline system to improve OCS ability to answer calls throughout the state in a timely manner, with a prioritization for law enforcement agencies. This update is expected to go live in the summer of 2017, along with one reporting email address and expanded Intake hours to cover from 7am to midnight. Training was designed for Intake workers, with a focus on geographical and cultural differences, sufficient data collection, critical thinking, and customer service.</p> <p>Tribal partners have participated in workgroups and provided suggestions throughout the development process. Some recommendations from Tribal partners that have been successfully implemented include hiring externally, adding Tribal contact information to every PSR, and the creation of a new data report to help analyze disproportionality data at the Intake level.</p> <p>2018 Update: The statewide toll free intake hotline number was launched. Currently, the hotline is staffed from 7am-7pm. The</p>
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				<p>agency is working up to being a 24 hour hotline system. All of the intake positions have been located in one central hub.</p> <p>With the use of data, intake accuracy of decision-making process is observed. Through this QA system, line staff can now screen in their own PSRs if they have met a 90% accuracy of screening rate. The screen out PSRs still require supervisor approval. At this time approximately 40% of staff have met the criteria to screen in the PSRs they are processing.</p> <p>With the work of the Tribal Compact it has been determined that intake can share the screen out PSRs with the Tribes. Intake was able to devise a system to share these PSRs with the child's Tribe when a new screened out PSR is received.</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 2017 and 90% by June 2018. 	Reduce Repeat Maltreatment	<p>2015 Update: FRAN and IDAA training completed. Coaching / Mentoring position in Anchorage began. Data from QA reviews utilize the old CFRS instrument. Of 255 cases reviewed in CY 14, 67% were in compliance for item 4 (safety and risk assessment).</p> <p>2016 Update: 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 OCS. Dates to achieve this objective by have been changed.</p> <p>2017 Update: The workgroup is implementing practice changes that impact case work in addition to timely completion and is exploring the definition of risk and how to serve this high risk population.</p>

				<p>2018 Update: An Initial Assessment (IA) workgroup reviews cases to ensure fidelity around new practice changes. Through this review, the workgroup found the need to do more analysis of cases, refine tools, and offer additional trainings to staff and supervisors. One of the changes that occurred is making the IDAA a more prominent product of work within our SACWIS system.</p>
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 2019.	Reduce Repeat Maltreatment	<p>2015 Update: 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 Update: 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</p>

				<p>documentation requirements. OCS is implementing the “Rapid Response! System” for cases with children under the age of three.</p> <p>2017 Update: A workgroup is analyzing data in order to make changes. OCS anticipates that in 2017 new procedures will be implemented to streamline the safety assessment process.</p> <p>2018 Update: OCS has continued to enhance its safety assessment processes and this year further reduced paperwork requirements necessary for completing an initial assessment, emphasizing the information necessary for making safety decisions.</p> <p>The IA workgroup modified documentation requirements and is assessing the effectiveness of this strategy. Through this assessment it was determined additional work needs to be done in regards to quality, refinement of tools, and additional training to include conversations of accountability and mentoring with supervisors as needed.</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	Increase Timely Permanency	<p>2015 Update: 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. *Measure of progress language has been changed for this objective.</p> <p>2016 Update: A workgroup was established to review case plans and case worker visits. Pilot sites have been identified to utilize</p>

		and addressed by June 2017.		<p>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 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.</p> <p>2017 Update: In CY2016 a new hand-written, carbon copy case plan was launched statewide. This is an effort to ensure that case plan development engages parents, children and placement providers. In addition to this practice change, OCS has moved away from the use of protective capacities and embraced the Strengthening Families model and the use of Protective Factors.</p> <p>2018 Update: As of 5/4/2018, ORCA reported 55.7% of children who have been out of the home for 60+ days have a current case plan. This reflects an undesired decrease from the last three years. OCS is still assessing whether the use of hand written, carbon copy case plans will, over time, positively impact the quantity, quality or desired outcome of increased engagement with parents; so far, this has not been the case. High staff turnover and vacancy rates are believed to directly impact this practice area, a factors in the limited success achieved for this goal.</p>
1.B.2	Improve the timeliness to permanency for	90% of children under the age of five will be placed in a potentially	Increase Timely Permanency	2015 Update: No work completed on this objective OCS will report on this goal in

	<p>children under the age of five through development of programming to meet the child's specific needs.</p>	<p>permanent placement within 13 months of being in care.</p>	<p>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 Update: 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. 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> <p>2017 Update: OCS permanency and ICWA specialists have continued working to improve timeliness to permanency. OCS has monthly permanency meetings with statewide managers to review permanency data from each region and discuss regional efforts to increase timely permanency. With these efforts, OCS has seen a large increase in overall</p>
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				<p>achievement of permanency for children and youth in SFY 2017. On 6/5/2017 495 children under age five were in OOH care for 13 months or more. Of these children, 339 (68.5%) are in a potentially permanent placement.</p> <p><u>Data correction, please note:</u> The 2016 numbers for potentially permanent placements (82.8%) was not accurate as expired permanency plans were being counted as being potentially permanent placements inflating the percentage being counted as potentially permanent.</p> <p>2018 Update: Permanency efforts have continued for all children with special emphasis on select populations including children age 0-5 in out-of-home care more than twenty-four months and in relative placement greater than six months. This effort includes staff training on concurrent planning and the utilization of guardianships for kinship placements as an acceptable permanency option, especially for ICWA cases. The percent of children in a permanent placement by the age of five has increased significant in the last three years, from 41% in SFY 2015 to 57% in SFY18.</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 Update: 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</p>

			<p>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 Update: 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 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 Program 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% of permanency goals for all youth, ages 16 to 19 in out of home placement.</p> <p>2017 Update: OCS permanency and ICWA specialists have continued working to improve timeliness to permanency. OCS has monthly permanency meetings with statewide managers to review permanency data from each region and discuss regional efforts to increase timely permanency.</p> <p>The focus areas are on permanency for children on a trial home visit 90+ days, children placed with a relative</p>
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				<p>for 24+ months, and AN/AI children who are in an out-of-preference ICWA placement. OCS revised the permanency goal policy to provide guidance surrounding how case workers set and change goals and reiterating the federal timelines for which goals need to be achieved.</p> <p>In 2017, the APPLA policy was updated to provide clarification around how a case worker establishes the goal of APPLA, which now includes the approval of the OCS director. This change was based on feedback from the FFCA advocacy group. The Independent Living specialists provide APPLA training OCS staff. The number of APPLA goals for youth in care (statewide) remains consistent, around 30.</p> <p>2018 Update: OCS continued to have monthly permanency meetings with statewide managers to review permanency data from each region and discuss regional efforts to increase timely permanency.</p> <p>Initial FY18 data from ORCA indicates 68.9% of children in care for 13-18 months are in a permanent placement, a 29% increase since 2015.</p> <p>Additionally, as of 5/4/2018, there were 8 youth with the permanency goal of APPLA. This reflects a marked decrease from recent years and is strong evidence that the targeted efforts to address timely and meaningful permanency plans for children and youth are working.</p>
1.B.4	Increase the quality and frequency of case worker visits with parents and children to	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 Update: No work completed on this objective; OCS will report on this goal in the 2017 APSR. See monthly case worker visit information</p>

	<p>promote progress towards case plan goals.</p>			<p>provided elsewhere in this report.</p> <p>2016 Update: 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%. This is a decrease from the previous year and OCS is not in compliance with the standard of 95%. OCS is required to have at least 50% of the monthly visits occur in the child's residence. In FFY 2015 OCS ORCA data shows that 66 % 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> <p>2017 Update: This is an area of need for Alaska. In FFY 2016 OCS ORCA data shows that the total number of visits made by OCS caseworkers on a monthly basis to children in foster care</p>
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				<p>was 73%. This is a decrease from the previous year and OCS is not in compliance with the standard of 95%. OCS is required to have at least 50% of the monthly visits occur in the child's residence. In FFY 2015, OCS ORCA data shows that 63% 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>QA review data provided in the SWA shows an increase in compliance for CWV with children and parents, but the Alaska rates are still significantly below the federal standard.</p> <p>2018 Update: 2017 data reflects the total number of visits made by caseworkers on a monthly basis to children in foster care was 67%, less than the required 95%. This is a decrease from 2016. The percent of children visited in their home was 63%, which exceeds the 50% federal standard.</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 January 2016.	Improve safety in foster care settings and increase placement stability.	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

				<p>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> <p>2017 Update: The work has been completed, but continues to be an area of focus for OCS. OCS data related to timeliness of background checks can be found in Item 34 of the Statewide Assessment.</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 	Increase placement stability and number of relative placements	<p>2015 Update: Community Care Licensing Specialist I (CCLS) position description (PD) updated. CCLS II and CCLS III PDs will be updated. The Provider Payment Unit (PPU) Coordinator provided TA to four regional offices related to support and resources. PPU and Div. Public Assistance managers</p>

		<p>concrete supports in times of need, and other resources/services needed to stabilize the placement.</p>	<p>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 Update: OCS is working on the development of an Emergency Relief Support (ERS) program for unlicensed relatives. This program is currently being piloted in the SERO. Unlicensed relatives receive a monthly stipend for the first three 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</p>
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				<p>updated the notice to make them easier to read and understand.</p> <p>2017 Update: OCS continues to work on all initiatives listed in the 2016 updates. The ERS program has expanded to include SERO, NRO and WRO. Relative placement has been a focus for OCS due to updated policy related to the ICWA changes.</p> <p>2018 Update: OCS continues to work on all initiatives listed in the 2016 update. The Emergency Relief Support (ERS) program continues to provide additional assistance to unlicensed relative foster parents in SERO, WRO and NRO immediately following placement, by providing financial assistance, initiating a support call to the family, assisting them in completing background checks, and providing information about licensure and public assistance programs. ERS has served 550 children since 3/1/2016, 378 relatives have received ERS payments, and 106 relatives have become licensed foster parents. ERS is scheduled to roll out in ARO July 1, 2018.</p>
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 September 2016. • Fully implement the process by December 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> <p>2017 Update: This strategy is removed from the AK CFSP The OCS ILS Program</p>

				Coordinator consulted with FFCA representatives. It was determined that this goal was no longer a priority and that they would be identifying other goals to work on jointly.
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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	<p>Develop and standardize a process for making and determining the right referrals are made to community services and families are assisted with initiating the service if needed, regardless of whether a case is opened or closed.</p>	<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 monitor referrals by June 2017. • Demonstrate incremental increases in number of referrals made annually by 2019. 	<p>Enhance Community Partnerships</p> <p>Reduce Repeat Maltreatment</p>	<p>2015 Update: 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 Update: OCS services and needs assessment survey sent to CFSP stakeholder group in April. The results of the survey were reviewed and discussed in 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.</p> <p>2017 Update: OCS has not completed additional work on this goal, due to focus on the SWA and CFSR.</p> <p>2018 Update. Efforts to address this strategy include updates to OCS policy, 2.9.3, <i>Family Services Assessment: Case Planning with Parents</i>, to reinforce the process for identifying and securing services to families; and the development of a <i>Cultural Resource Guide</i>, to assist case workers in connecting Alaska</p>

				<p>Native families with cultural services.</p> <p>OCS staff also participated in the statewide Services 1115 Behavioral Health Medicaid Waiver, <i>Services Work Group</i>. Many OCS clients will benefit from the enhanced community based family support services to be offered under the 1115 Medicaid Waiver; and the referral/linkage assistance to be provided through the Administrative Service Organization to be contracted to administer behavioral health services in Alaska.</p>
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.	<p>Decrease removals to foster care</p> <p>Increase Reunification Rates</p> <p>Reduce Repeat Maltreatment</p>	<p>2015 Update: 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.</p> <p>2016 Update: This year's CRP identified this as an area of concerns in Alaska. Since the report, OCS completed a comprehensive review of current and past in-home models used in Alaska. OCS is exploring options to contract or grant services for in-home programs.</p> <p>2017 Update: OCS has not completed additional work on this goal, due to focus on the SWA and CFSR.</p> <p>2018 Update: With record numbers of children requiring out of home care over the last three years, OCS has not had the resources to address improvements in the delivery of in-home service. The absence of a robust, functioning in-home model is identified as an ongoing growth area in the CFSR 2017 Final Report. OCS anticipates the inclusion of this objective in the 2020 CFSP as it will take</p>

				longer than the 2 year PIP to address.
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	<p>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.</p> <p>2016: OCS is exploring options to contract or grant for birth parent mentoring program.</p> <p>2017 Update: OCS is awarding a parent navigation contract which is scheduled to begin in July of 2017. Parent navigation services will be provided in the Mat-Su area of the Southcentral region. Families involved with OCS will be referred for parent navigation services and the contractor will serve at least 10 parents at any given time.</p> <p>2018 Update: Parent Navigation Services are currently being provided by a contractor in the Mat-Su Valley as of July 1, 2018. The program has served 64 families to date and 47 families remain active with the services. The agency is also providing group support and psychoeducational classes to the families to build knowledge and skills, reduce social isolation and build healthy connections and relationships. Since this is the first year of the contract, known outcomes are limited to; volume served, anecdotes of case milestones achieved; high rates of families remaining engaged; and that OCS referrals are increasing. A system of parent survey still needs to be developed.</p>
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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. 	<p>Increase timely Permanency</p> <p>Enhance Community Partnerships</p>	<p>2015: This objective is on hold until 2.B.2 is completed.</p> <p>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.</p>
2.B.2	Administrative Review process will be restructured and enhanced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a work group with internal and external stakeholders to explore and identify needed changes and develop a work plan by June 30, 2015. • Work plan will be fully implemented by June 2017. 	<p>Increase timely Permanency</p> <p>Enhance Community Partnerships</p>	<p>2015: OCS workgroup assessing the feasibility of court administered administrative reviews. A work plan has been developed. Additionally, OCS is reviewing the current process and exploring re-aligning positions to streamline the process.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>2017 Update: OCS continues to partner with the Department of Law on planning a process for coordinating court hearings with the review process.</p> <p>2018 Update: Changes in leadership on the CIP, significant legal resources consumed by the Tribal Compact work, and Court System budget reductions resulting in a 4 day work week for the courts, have significantly hampered the progress on this objective, no progress was made</p>

				over the last year. OCS leadership and the CIP will re-assess the viability of this objective over the next year.
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 2017 80% of children will have 3 or more relatives documented within 60 days of removal. 	<p>Enhance Community Partnerships</p> <p>Increase Placement Stability</p>	<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 two or more relatives documented within 30 days. 45% of children removed during CY14 for 60+ days had three or more relatives documented within 60 days of removal.</p> <p>2016: 62.8% of children removed during CY15 for 30+ days had two or more relatives documented within 30 days. 47.5% of children removed during CY15 for 60+ days had three 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 two relatives documented within 30 days was met last year and again this year. Measurement #2 with 80% of children having three 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</p>

			<p>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 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. 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 four maternal relatives documented and 9.1% of children with at least four paternal relatives documented. In April 2016 (for children in custody 45 days) ORCA data shows ARO at 28.6% of children with at least four maternal relatives documented and 23.8% of children with at least four paternal relatives documented.</p> <p>2017 Update: In the past year, OCS has shown an increase in the identification of relatives. Of the children removed during CY16 for 30+ days, 70.8% had</p>
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				<p>two or more relatives documented within 30 days. Of the children removed during CY16 for 60+ days, 63.9% had three or more relatives documented within 60 days of removal.</p> <p>2018 Update: The percent of children in out of home care with documented relatives continues to increase. As of 5/4/18, 93.1% of children out of home for 30 or more days had 2 or more relatives documented and 90.4% of children out of home for 60 or more days had 3 or more relatives documented. This represents nearly a 20% increase since last year.</p>
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 and Director's Executive Team prior to the implementation of program changes. By June of 2016.	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 Director's Executive Team (DET) and is responsible for sharing information between the two groups. The Executive Steering Committee is another avenue for</p>

				<p>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	Staff training post-tests will demonstrate a statewide competency level of 90% or higher with respect to understanding key concepts about IV-E	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.</p>

	significance of title IV-E compliance with child welfare field staff.	eligibility by June 2015 and annually.		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.
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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, subparts 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 counseled staff 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 divisions of the DHSS 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 as well as to strengthen families. The resulting information will be shared and highlighted within the Department. Additionally, we work closely with other DHSS 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.

2017 Update: The 2017 SWA provides detailed information and assessment of Alaska’s array of services and individualization of services.

2018 Update: The OCS Service Array Section continues to manage funding for services provided under Title IV-B Subparts 1 & 2, Chafee, ETV, CAPTA, Title IV-E, CBCAP, Adoptions and Legal Guardianship Incentive Funds, and state general funds to provide services including:

- Child Advocacy Centers (CAC)s and the associated Multi-Disciplinary Teams (MDT);
- Family Support Services: Community prevention services available to non-OCS involved families;
- Family Preservation Services: In-home services to prevent removal for families identified by OCS to have children at high risk of maltreatment;
- Family Reunification Services: Services to promote the return of children to their parents’ home following out-of-home placement. These services include family contact/visitation services;
- Emergency Shelter Services: Supporting the needs of youth in transition;
- Mentorship Services: Identifying and fostering supportive relationships for youth;
- Chafee Independent Living Services: Assisting youth in their transition to independence;
- Education and Training Voucher Program: post-secondary education support services for youth;
- Services for adoption and guardianship support;
- Adoption and Guardianship Assistance

Each fiscal year, OCS continues to update the web-based resource listing of all of the OCS- funded grants available including the communities the grantees serve in order to assist OCS workers in linking families and children with the services to meet their individualized needs (located at: <http://dhss.alaska.gov/ocs/Documents/GrantMap/default.htm>)

STEPHANIE TUBBS JONES CHILD WELFARE SERVICES PROGRAM AND THE PROMOTING SAFE AND STABLE FAMILIES PROGRAM

All title IV-B funding received is awarded through grants and/or contracts managed through OCS. No title IV-B subpart 1 or 2 funding is allocated to support planning and service coordination. 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 7:

Table 7: 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 State of

Alaska accounting system, and staff turnover in our fiscal unit. To address the increased utilization of Time-Limited Family Reunification (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 8: Title IV-B, Subpart 2 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%

2017 Update: OCS has continued with the efforts reported in last year’s APSR and plans to more closely align percentages to the four categories with the intent of the title IV-B, subpart 2 funding in the coming year. The estimated number of individuals and families to be served in the coming year is expected to increase in all areas. OCS is continuing its efforts to increase staff and stakeholder knowledge of grant services in Alaska; with better information about available services, OCS expects that service use will continue to increase.

OCS has continued with the efforts reported in last year’s APSR and plans to more closely align percentages to the four categories with the intent of the Title IV-B, subpart 2 funding in the coming year. The estimated number of individuals and families to be served in the coming year is expected to increase in all areas. OCS is continuing its efforts to increase staff and stakeholder knowledge of grant services in Alaska; with better information about available services, OCS expects that service use will continue to increase. With the increase in the number of children in out-of-home care, a priority for family reunification services use with the funding is needed. Alaska has existing funding sources for Adoption Promotion and Support and Family Support, for that reason Alaska’s limited Title IV-B, subparts 1 and 2 funding is needed primarily for Family Preservation and Family Reunification services. Family Support grants are funded primarily with Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention funds, which have increased in recent years.

With the increase in the number of children in out-of-home care, a priority for family reunification services with the funding is needed. Alaska has existing funding sources for Adoption Promotion and Support and Family Support, for that reason Alaska’s limited title IV-B, subparts 1 and 2 funding is needed primarily for Family Preservation and Family Reunification services. Family Support grants are funded primarily with Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention funds which have increased in recent years.

The chart below provides a percentage breakdown of title IV-B, subpart 2 funds in allowable categories, as OCS intends to utilize funds in FY 2018:

Table 9: Title IV-B, Subpart 2 Allocation for FY 2018

Service Type	Percent Allocated
Family Support	5%
Community Service Option 1 (FP)	20%
Community Service Option 2 (TLFR)	65%
Adoption Promotion	10%

2018 Update: OCS continues to prioritize funding family reunification services with IV-B, subpart II funding due to the high numbers of children in out of home care and caseload sizes. Alaska is currently funding Adoption Support and Promotion services with Title IV-E adoption program savings. Family Support grants are funded with Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention funds which have been adequate to fund Family Support grants in recent years. For these reasons, Alaska’s limited Title IV-B, subparts 1 and 2 funding are needed primarily for Family Preservation and Family Reunification services. The chart below provides a percentage breakdown of Title IV-B, subpart 2 funds in allowable categories, as OCS intends to continue to utilize funds in FY 2019:

Table 10: Title IV-B, Subpart 2 Allocation for FY 2019

Service Type	Percent Allocated
Family Support	5%
Community Service Option 1 (FP)	20%
Community Service Option 2 (TLFR)	65%
Adoption Promotion	10%

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.

2017 Update: In FFY 2016, 122 families and 258 children were served through this program. Grant-funded family preservation services are available in four of five OCS regions. OCS provides grants in Anchorage, Northern (Nome, Fairbanks), SCRO (Homer, Mat-Su) and Southeast (Ketchikan) for family preservation to address the needs of families and individual children and to help create a safe home environment. During the year, the program funding was expanded in Anchorage and Southcentral regions to help meet the increased needs for family preservation in those areas.

2018 Update: In FFY 2017, 112 families and 199 children were served by this program. The family preservation grant was revised for a new grant cycle started July 1, 2018. The updated program is being called “Circles of Support.” The grant continues the integration of the Strengthening Families protective factors and Trauma-informed practices to serving the existing target population. The services funded through the grant are: Family Service Coordination, Service plan implementation and monitoring; assessment of family progress; parent education and support; and transportation services. A referral must be made by the OCS case worker by introducing the family to the service provider through a “warm handoff” process. The child protection case may or may not remain open, depending on risk and safety factors. The services are available in five areas of the state, Wasilla, Anchorage, Fairbanks, Nome and Ketchikan.

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.

2017 Update: In FFY 2016, 214 families and 415 children were served by this program. FSS continues to use the Strengthening Families program, and to provide Trauma-Informed services. In 2016, engagement activities reached 290 additional families. Three of the five OCS regions provide FSS services through grantee agencies, although the services are primarily available in the urban communities. The Western Region and Southeast Region do not have a family support grantee providing these services because an organization in that area either did not propose to provide the services or the proposal was not awarded. There have been no waitlists reported for family support. These services are currently funded primarily through the use of Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention (CBCAP) funding.

2018 Update: In FFY 2017, 252 families and 448 children were reached by family support services funded by the Community Based Child Abuse Prevention federal grant. An additional 290 parents were involved in engagement activities and parenting classes. Training on the Strengthening Families Framework and data tracking was offered at a grantee meeting in spring 2017. Family support services are available in Anchorage, Nome, Kenai, Fairbanks, Homer and Wasilla.

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.

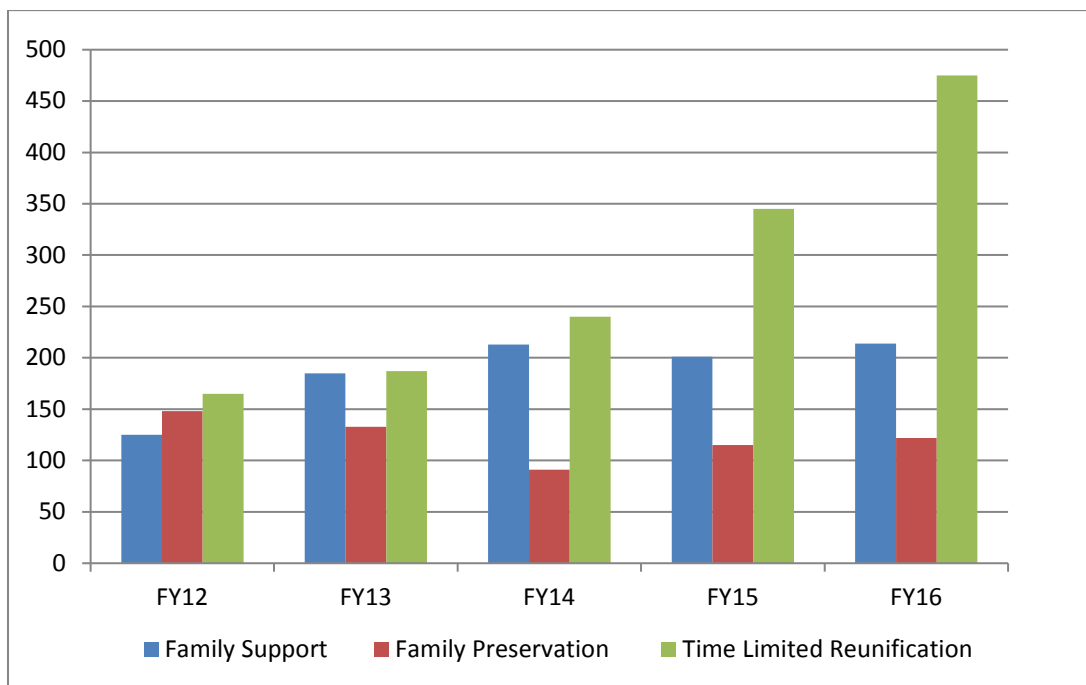
The allocation of title IV-B, subpart 2 funding to family support was reduced to 5% in 2013 due to an increase in the Community-based Child Abuse Prevention (CBCAP) funding. As the number of children in out-of-home placement continues to increase, the need for increased TLFR services will continue.

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.

2017 Update: In FFY 2016, 471 families and 745 children were served by the TLFR & FCSC programs. As the number of children in out-of-home placement has continued to increase, the need for TLFR services will continue. In Table 11 below, the green bar illustrates the sharp increase in the use of these services by OCS-referred families. Due to the increased needs, title IV-B subpart 1 and 2 funding has been shifted to try to better meet the current needs.

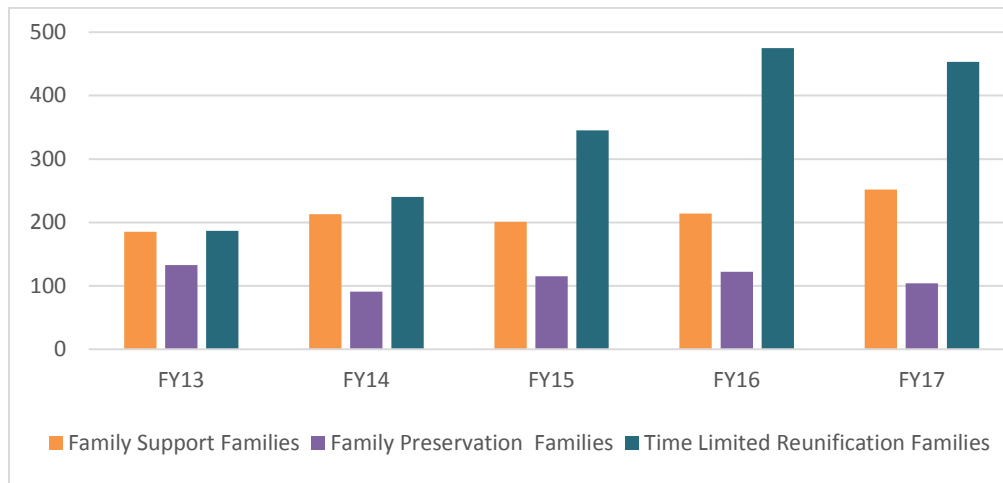
Table 11: Title IV-B subpart 1 and 2, Families Served



Source: OCS Grantee State Fiscal Year-end Reports

2018 Update: In FFY 2017, 471 families and 745 children were served by the time limited family reunification program. As the number of children in out-of-home placement has continued to increase, the demand for the services remain high. There was a new solicitation year for the grant: seven grants were awarded for SFY18. Two formerly unserved areas of Alaska were awarded in Utqiagvik (formerly known as Barrow), and Prince of Wales Island. The other areas of the state served by this grant are Anchorage, Fairbanks, Wasilla, Nome and Ketchikan.

Table 12: Numbers of Families Served by OCS Grant Programs



Source: OCS Grantee State Fiscal Year FY17 Year-end Reports

Adoption Promotion and Support Services

The OCS continues to provide “Services for Adoption Support” through a grant with the Alaska Center for Resource Families (ACRF). The grant was established to provide seamless continuation of support for adoptive and guardianship families 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.

2017 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 –509 classes offered
- Self-study course –1719 available
- Telephonic or webinar classes - 249 individuals attended

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

- Recruitment & retention services provided to 39 families
- Case management services provided to 202 families
- Information and Resource referrals provided to 395 families
- Support services provided to 178 families

Additionally, the Preparing Families for Special Needs Adoption project provides intensive preparation and training to approximately ten families per year who are interested in adopting children with special needs from foster care. Since the inception of the program in 2010 through June 2016, the program has trained and prepared 60 families for adopting special needs children. Since the program began 35 children were placed with families who completed this program; 25 children have finalized adoptions through this process.

2018 Update: The Alaska Center for Resource Families (ACRF) continues to develop, update and provide trainings for Resource Families in order to promote adoption. Recent trainings offered by ACRF include: Adopting Through OCS, Adoption 101 / Motivations for Adoption Combo, After the Adoption: Post Adoption Supports, Planning Ahead for When the Adoption Subsidy Ends, Building Families Through Adoption, Adoption Information Session, and Trust Based Relational Intervention Training (TBRI). During the past year, the trainings were held in the following formats:

- Face to face classes –427 classes offered
- Self-study course –1720 available
- Telephonic or webinar classes - 357 individuals attended

Post adoption/guardianship support services are being provided to families regardless of how or from where a child was adopted. Since July 2017, family specific support services were delivered 1179 adoptive and guardianship families. Additionally, the Preparing Families for Special Needs Adoption project continues to provide intensive preparation, training and post-adoption support to approximately ten families per year who are interested in adopting children in foster care who have special needs. Since the inception of the program in 2010, 28 children from around the state have finalized adoptions with families who have graduated from the program.

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.
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:* 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.

2017 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. Currently, there are 771 youth who are eligible for OCS' Independent Living services.

1. Independent Living is now fully staffed with seven Regional Independent Living Specialists across the state to provide IL services, resources and opportunities to foster youth and alumni: two in Anchorage, two in Southcentral, one in Southeast, one in Northern, and one in Western. The IL Program manages two grants, one contract and two 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. The Independent Living Program partners with a number of agencies to provide enhanced services to IL youth. FFCA is contracted to provide quarterly youth retreats and is an essential partner to developing youth-focused policies and material. During the past year, FFCA provided three retreats, in May, August and November, with increased youth participation; 101 foster youth and alumni attended the retreats. This participation and collaboration lead to the finalization of the Foster Youth Bill of Rights brochure.
3. OCS has also partnered with grantee Big Brothers, Big Sisters to provide enhanced mentorship opportunities. Big Brothers Big Sisters matches caring adult mentors with youth in the foster care system to help youth succeed in life. This past year 42 youth were referred and 17 were matched with an adult mentor. Matches can do many things together, like going to a movie, getting a burger, learning to drive, working on a resume or homework, or going hiking, just to name a few.
4. Recently OCS IL partnered with grantee Covenant House to provide a community Sex Trafficking Training. This training provided the chance to learn about how sex trafficking is affecting our communities. The training focused on how each individual and professional may help curtail the growth of this pandemic by being aware, by asking the right questions, and at times, by simply being there for the children served. This training has been provided in Fairbanks, Anchorage and Bethel, with hopes of bringing it to Juneau in the near future.

5. This past year the IL program organized and facilitated a 3-day Career Conference dedicated to providing youth with vocational and technical training exploration. This conference was a great opportunity for youth to gain hands-on experience various fields, to support their future career and education goal setting; last fall 24 foster youth and alumni to provide hands on employment and training information from Job Corps, Northern Training Institute and other various mentorship and recruitment opportunities.
6. In addition to providing daily and emergency housing, education and employment assistance, Independent Living staff conducted multiple Life Skills classes for IL youth. These classes are a chance for youth to connect with each other, learn and practice basic skill necessary for adult success. IL staff is dedicated to connecting youth with a network of providers and experiences, inviting experts and training staff to present to the classes. Many of the contractors, grantees and community partners present valuable information and skill development opportunities the areas of health and financial education, employment and rental readiness, and career and post-secondary education exploration to the class. In 2017, approximately 511 youth attended classes statewide.
7. The Independent Living program is also focused on strengthening the relationship with Tribal providers. The program hosts quarterly teleconferences with Tribal providers, providing direct programmatic connections and technical assistance to deliver IL services and Chafee support to eligible youth. In the past year, regular attendance and direct referrals continues to increase. The first teleconference had one attendee with no familiarity with the IL program. A year later, the most recent had nine attendees and all had knowledge of the program and referrals of youth to participate.

2018 Update: OCS' IL program continues to serve all Alaska youth ages 16 years and older who were in care on or after their 16th birthday up and up to age 21. Alaska has seen an increase in the population of eligible youth from 594 in 2015 to 796 today.

1. The Independent Living Program continues to employ seven Regional Independent Living Specialists staff across the state to provide direct IL services, resources and opportunities to foster youth and alumni. The IL Program Coordinator manages two grants, one contract and two business agreements with organizations who deliver services to IL eligible youth.
2. OCS updated and renewed the Foster Youth Independence Retreats contract with the Facing Foster Care in Alaska (FFCA) organization. The updated contract requires two retreats to be held in the Anchorage area and one career focused retreat to be held in the Mat-Su Valley. The career retreat hosted 33 youth from across the state to participate in three days of hands-on employment and training experiences from across a broad range of vocations. In addition, FFCA organized and facilitated two retreats located in Anchorage. These retreats had record setting attendance of 50 current and former foster youth. Additionally, FFCA worked with the Anchorage School District (ASD), to ensure that the student participants from that school district, would receive high school elective credits for their retreat attendance. FFCA plans to extend this cooperative effort with other Alaska school districts to extend this benefit to students participating in retreats. Further, OCS and FFCA have strategically designed retreats and conference topics to correlate with the NYTD Services, thereby ensuring youth have multiple opportunities to develop life skills through direct and hands-on experiences.
3. The partnership between the Child Welfare Academy (CWA) and the OCS IL Program has improved access to higher education and increased college completion rates for foster youth throughout the state. The OCS IL Program again partnered with the CWA to host the annual Post-Secondary Education Conference. Attendance was high with 27 youth participants from all over Alaska. The conference goal is to promote awareness and to provide experiences to show youth what college life is all about. During the conference, youth shared their dreams of becoming engineers, nurses, artists, and social workers. Youth slept in the University of Alaska, Anchorage dorms, ate in the commons, and sat in college classrooms. Youth heard from college advisors, professors, financial aid officials, campus support programs, and gained first-hand knowledge of student life. Each year, the conference increases youth's readiness to reach their goals, and prepare for their futures.
4. In addition to providing emergency housing, education and employment assistance, Independent Living staff conducted multiple Life Skills classes for approximately 530 youth statewide. This year, Life Skills classes included field trips to explore the Alyeska Ski area, Bodenbug Butte hiking area in Southcentral Alaska, Alaska nature preserves, and Alaska Vocational Technical Center in the community of Seward, and the Onward and Upward school

for adventure-based learning in Wasilla. Other classes offered valuable information and skill development opportunities the areas of health and financial education, employment and rental readiness, and career and post-secondary education exploration.

5. The Independent Living program continues to host quarterly teleconferences with Tribal providers, providing direct programmatic connections and technical assistance to deliver IL services and Chafee support to eligible youth. In the past year, attendance to the teleconference has consistently increased with many Tribal representatives attending regularly. Additionally, direct referrals from the Tribe to the IL program continue to increase leading to a stronger state/Tribe partnership in supporting older youth in Tribal custody. Regional Independent Living staff have also provided trainings relating to Chafee resources and programming across the state for OCS Protective Services Specialists, Tribal representatives and other community partners in each region.

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.

2017 Update: IL has partnered with the Child Welfare Academy to provide Education and Training Vouchers (ETV) to former foster youth. In the past year 38 UAA students received ETV financial assistance to support their continued academic path. The ETV program also provides an annual Education Conference for former foster youth that are interested in exploring post-secondary education opportunities.

2018 Update: ILP continues to partner with the Child Welfare Academy to provide Education and Training Vouchers (ETV) to former foster youth. In the past year 58 UAA students received ETV financial assistance to support their continued academic path, including a record setting 35 new youth recipients. The ETV program continues to provide an annual Education Conference for former foster youth that are interested in exploring post-secondary education opportunities.

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 Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems (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. This includes expansion of 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 Cafés 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 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 to 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.

2017 Update: OCS continues to fund primary prevention programs with CBCAP funds. This year, OCS conducted a survey to identify potential partners statewide 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. We have worked with existing OCS partners, state agencies and grantees to disseminate materials to increase primary prevention awareness and efforts in areas of the state where there are currently no OCS grantees to deliver primary prevention. OCS has also continued to work with the existing Prevent Child Abuse America, prevention team to disseminate materials on parental resilience, and to distribute the Child Abuse and Prevention Month, Alaska forget-me-not pinwheel pins and posters as well as to promote "Go Blue" day.

The results from the Community/Parent Cafés funded at the end of the previous reporting period were compiled, analyzed, and disseminated. The needs assessment was qualitative in nature, and its quality was high. Participants of the Community Cafés included a broad representation from each community, including interested community members, professionals, leaders and parents of children. The cafés occurred in all five of the OCS service regions and included the communities of Anchorage (providers n=30) (families n=50), Hooper Bay (n=100), Kotzebue (n=40), Sitka (n=15), Sutton (n=15), and Wasilla (n=25). This needs assessment focused on gathering community and parent input on what the priorities are for each area to strengthen families in their communities. There was surprising uniformity in the top priorities across the various cafés conducted in the different regions. Here is a list of the top community needs identified through the Community Cafés:

- Provide services locally;
- Connect families with someone to help them access services;
- Encourage workplaces and employers to be flexible and understanding;
- Connect families with someone to help them access services;
- Host community gatherings and events;
- Share cultural traditions, language, stories and skills;
- Hands-on, in-home coaching for new parents;
- Engage elders and extended family to support new parents;
- Help parents tend to their own personal and emotional needs;
- Help parents provide an environment for their children that is nurturing and loving.

A link to the summary report is on the OCS website and has been shared with state and community partners, particularly hosts and participants. http://dhss.alaska.gov/ocs/Documents/Publications/pdf/CommunityCafeReport_2016.pdf Feedback will be integrated with OCS ongoing efforts in systems improvements and target family strengthening services needed by parents and families.

2018 Update: OCS continues to fund primary prevention programs with CBCAP funds. In this continuation year, Family Support Services (FSS) grantees served 252 families with direct support, and 500 families in engagement activities. FSS grantees funded through CBCAP are co-located within agencies that are already providing services to children or families. FSS providers are co-located in Early Childhood providers, child mental health providers, Family Resource Centers, Tribal Organizations, and Domestic Violence Shelters. These agencies are funded by multiple funding sources, which allows them to more efficiently deliver services, allowing for more families and children to access services.

Based on an identification of community need for additional evidence based parenting education, a contract for Parent Support and Education was solicited and awarded in Fairbanks. We are examining a change in the way CBCAP funds are granted as we continue to integrate the findings of the cafes, and in particular the need to deliver services locally.

For April Child Abuse Prevention Month, OCS partnered with the Alaska Children's Trust, and The Council on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault, to disseminate 3,000 prevention month Alaska pinwheel pins; and strengthening families printed materials were disseminated, to over 100 agencies statewide. Public service announcements were aired in Anchorage, Southcentral Alaska, Juneau and Fairbanks, with an estimated reach of 200,000 individuals, or roughly 1/3 of our state population.



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 (RCW) 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 RCW 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 10 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.

2017 Update: Alaska recognizes that cultural and racial barriers exist within the delivery of services to minority populations in Alaska. The OCS RCW grants are provided to rural organizations to help fill gaps in formal service provision in specific rural communities. In SFY16, the grantees were all Tribal agencies or organizations who provided services, primarily to Alaska Native families, including, facilitate/monitor/update Tribal In-Home Safety or Case Plan, make referrals/help complete applications for services, one-on-one parenting guidance/support, engage/take/teach parents and children about cultural activities (subsistence, dance, art), relative searches, relative placement support and foster parent recruitment.

In SFY 16, 64 rural families were served by this program which is a significant decrease from the year before. Narrative reports from RCW grantees and verbal reports from OCS workers indicate that some of the factors related to relatively low numbers served by the RCW grant has to do with a variety of factors, to include: 1) low caseload sizes of RCW workers to account for the amount of travel they have to do to meet with rural families; 2) communication difficulties in the referral process; 3) staff turnover, both for OCS workers who make the referrals and for RCW workers who perform the service provision. Data collection has not focused on whether the service provision for RCW by Tribal entities has improved outcomes for the Alaska Native population served in the rural areas.

Source data from the RCW grantee and ORCA data reports indicate that the RCW grants are serving nearly 19% of the Alaska Native / American Indian children who are placed in out-of-home care and residing in rural Alaska communities. This type of service provision in collaboration with Tribes and Tribal organizations is an important step in meeting the cultural needs children or families in these rural areas.

2018 Update: The RCW grants continue to be provided to rural organizations to help fill gaps in formal service provision in specific rural communities and primarily to Alaska Native families. In SFY17, the grantees were Tribal agencies or organizations who provided services including; assisting OCS with Safety plans and case plans, making referrals, one-on-one parenting support, teach parents and children about cultural activities, relative searches, relative placement support and foster parent recruitment. In SFY 2017, 70 rural families were served by this program. This is a slight increase from the previous year.

In an effort to improve program evaluation and outcome measurement, the grant was revised to narrow and better define the scope of services to be provided and a quarterly reporting tool was created to be concise and focused on a few essential measurements which will provide indicators of program effectiveness. Revised reporting includes a few key indicators for each of the services such as the number of case worker visits provided, and assessment results indicating whether parents are demonstrating improvement in parenting capacity or protective factors. The revised grant was awarded to FY18 grantees in July of 2017, which included one non-tribal organization in the rural area of Prince of Wales Island where there had not previously been a grantee. The services currently required by the grant are monthly caseworker visits with children; case plan support and service coordination; relative searches and locating other ICWA preference placements; and documentation of services provided. Within 30 days of notification of award all grantees were trained in the standardized referral, documentation and program standards. The OCS grant manager continues to provide training and technical assistance as well as coordination with the field offices in order to help ensure utilization.

Increased training and the specialization of staff in various areas of service delivery promote individualized service delivery and may also help retain staff. OCS has implemented increased training and technical assistance for its family programs in order to promote the individualization of services. In particular, the Rural Child Welfare grantees have been trained on caseworker visits and the other grant services alongside OCS workers in the area. This has increased partnerships while highlighting how the grant can be used in different ways to meet client needs. Group technical assistance calls and individual appointments target specific problems that can be solved in a group setting to improve services. Grantee trainings and OCS trainings were offered via WebEx, in order to make this assistance available without the need for travel.

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 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.

2017 Update: The Western Region Support, Development and Recruitment (WRO SDR) workgroup continues to meet every other month and is comprised of OCS and DBH staff, tribal partners, community partners such as: YKHC and Alaska Child and Family Services. The workgroup focuses on six core initiatives including: assessing and improving the availability of community based resources for families, increasing supports to relative and licensed foster parents, establishing therapeutic foster homes, incorporating cultural activities /traditional helpers in treatment roles and explore the development of a residential facility for adolescent girls. During SFY17, the WRO SDR workgroup accomplished the following items:

- Four emergency shelter care homes were licensed in order to assist with the placement of children coming into care under emergent situations.
- The Alaska Center for Resource Families in partnership with AK Child and Family and OCS conducted a 2-day training for WRO resource families May 15-16. Topics included; professional parents, skill teaching, conflict resolution and understanding child development and behaviors.
- Foster care recruitment advertising at local movie theater during the months of May and June 2017.
- Development of a WRO SDR Work Plan to better track progress towards the 6 identified initiatives and establishes accountability for workgroup tasks needing to be completed.

2018 Update: The Western Region Support, Development and Recruitment Work Group continues to meet on a quarterly basis. The work group is comprised of staff from the Western Region OCS Management, Licensing Supervisor, ICWA Specialist, Department of Behavioral Health and OCS State Office, as well as community partners to include; Yukon Kuskokwim Health Corporation, Alaska Child and Family, Alaska Center for Resource Families, Association of Village Council of Presidents and Orutsaramiut Native Council.

During SFY 18 the work group has accomplished the following items:

- Continued licensure of two emergency shelter care homes to assist with short term placements needed for youth who come into custody under emergency conditions. Emergency shelter care foster homes provide placement stability by preventing foster youth from being placed in multiple foster homes, over capacity foster homes, as well as possibly being placed out of region.
- On-going support for licensed and unlicensed resource families via training opportunities provided by the Alaska Center for Resource Families including, limited financial assistance to purchase life/fire and safety items from local hardware store in Bethel for items such as; smoke detectors, fire extinguisher and carbon dioxide detectors.
- Continued support for the Emergency Relief Support Program (ERS) implemented in the Western Region in August 2016. The ERS program provides temporary financial assistance for placements of children in an unlicensed relative caregiver home for up to three months while the family pursues foster care licensure or ATAP/TANF. The ERS program has assisted with the increase in the number of placements with unlicensed relatives, as well as contributed to the decrease in the number of placement moves for children in care.
- Renewed support from Alaska Child and Family to identify existing therapeutic services, resource families and infrastructure to implement Therapeutic Foster Care (TFC) in the Western Region including travel to rural communities such as, Aniak to meet with school district staff, ICWA and Tribal Council Members and licensed foster parents.

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.

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 Alaskans 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.

2017 Update: Alaska Native children age birth to five years makes up 9.5% of the general population of children in Alaska. However, in 2016 this population made up 28.7% of children with a substantiated allegation of maltreatment. For this reason Alaska works very closely with Tribal partners to enhance the support and services available to Alaska Native families and children. Please see Section 5 of this document for details regarding efforts currently being made to improve outcomes for Alaska Native children. The data below demonstrates the changes to the population at greatest risk over the past three years:

Table 13: Population at Greatest Risk of Maltreatment

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		
		2016	2015	2014	2016	2015	2014	2016	2015	2014
Ages 0-5	Native	9.5%	9.6%	8.3%	28.7%	31.0%	31.1%	4.9%	4.3%	3.8%
Ages 0-5	Non-Native	24.5%	24.6%	26.6%	18.6%	16.1%	12.7%	1.2%	0.9%	0.5%
Ages 6-10	Native	7.8%	7.6%	6.4%	18.7%	18.9%	21.0%	4.0%	3.3%	3.4%
Ages 6-10	Non-Native	20.8%	20.6%	21.5%	10.7%	10.6%	9.5%	0.9%	0.7%	0.5%

Ages 11-15	Native	7.0%	7.1%	6.2%	11.9%	11.9%	13.9%	2.8%	2.2%	2.3%
Ages 11-15	Non-Native	19.9%	19.9%	20.6%	6.7%	6.8%	6.3%	0.5%	0.4%	0.3%
Ages 16-17	Native	2.8%	2.7%	2.4%	2.8%	3.1%	4.3%	1.7%	1.5%	1.9%
Ages 16-17	Non-Native	7.8%	7.9%	8.0%	1.9%	1.5%	1.1%	0.4%	0.2%	0.1%

Source: SOA Online Resources for Children in Alaska (ORCA) and SOA Department of Labor 2013, 2014, & 2015 Population Estimate

2018 Update: Alaska Native children, age birth to five years continue to be the population at greatest risk of maltreatment. This group of children makes up 9.6% of the general population of children in Alaska, but makes up 26.4% of the substantiated protective services reports. Further, 4.2% of Alaska Native children in this age group experienced substantiated maltreatment in 2017 compared to only 1% of their non-native counterparts.

OCS has continued work on the DHSS 2016-2020 Strategic Plan to Transform Child Welfare Outcomes for Alaska Native Children as described elsewhere in this report.

OCS has also recognized a broader category of children at greater risk of harm, children under age one with three or more prior PSRs and/or prior out-of-home placement of children in the household (aka High Risk Infants) and emphasized services for these children. ORCA reports have been modified to allow quick identification of these children and managers instructed to prioritize this population.

Table 14: 2017 Maltreatment Data Comparison

2017 Maltreatment Data Compared to 2016 Population Estimates				
Age Range	Child Race	% of AK Ages 0 - 17	% of Total children ages 0 to 17 with a substantiation	% of age group maltreated
Ages 0 - 5	Native	9.6%	26.4%	4.2%
	Non Native	24.1%	15.7%	1.0%
Ages 6 - 10	Native	7.9%	19.2%	3.7%
	Non Native	20.8%	11.2%	0.8%
Ages 11 - 15	Native	7.0%	13.7%	3.0%
	Non Native	19.8%	8.0%	0.6%
Ages 16 - 17	Native	2.8%	3.5%	1.9%
	Non Native	7.9%	2.2%	0.4%

Sources: SOA Online Resources for Children in Alaska (ORCA) and SOA Department of Labor 2016 Population Estimates

OCS has continued its Supervisory Coaching program designed to enhance supervisory application of the practice model and expanded the program to the Protective Services Manager 1 level. In addition, a Protective Services Specialist Mentoring program was started this year to further enhance front-line staff training and practice model application.

In collaboration with the Division of Public Health, High Risk Infants and Safe Sleep Practices training is currently being provided for all OCS child protection and community care licensing staff, tribal representatives and other local partners such as medical providers to increase awareness of the greater risk to this population and provide information of the most current safe sleep recommendations.

Birth Match, the process identifying high risk newborn children pre-PSR by linking OCS and DPA data, was explored but placed on hold at this time due to the small number of children who may be protected preemptively using this method. Further review may occur in the future.

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.

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

2016 Update: OCS is actively working to improve outcomes for children under the age of five. OCS 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.

2017 Update: OCS continues to focus heavily on work related to high-risk infants. This includes managers utilizing strategies to emphasize the vulnerability and high priority for infants. OCS Managers continue to review and track cases involving infants when there are multiple reports or prior removals. Additionally, the work regarding permanency for children in care also continues. 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 is 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 SDS. 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. The Aim Statement for the Alaska Early Childhood Comprehensive System Project is by January 2018 families will have access to a centralized call center that will serve as a resource for appropriate linkage to needed services through the launch of the Help Me Grow resource and referral system.

2018 Update: Description of the activities taken to reduce the length of time children in care under age five are without a permanent family (ACYF-CB-PI-18-06).

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

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

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

Permanency efforts have continued for all children with special emphasis on select populations including children age 0-5 in out-of-home care more than twenty-four months and in relative placement greater than six months. This effort includes staff training on concurrent planning and the utilization of guardianships for kinship placements as an acceptable permanency option, especially for ICWA cases. The table below illustrates that total percent of children in a permanent placement by the age of five has increased significant in the last three years, from 41% in SFY 2015 to 57% in SFY18.

Table 15: Count of Permanent Placement by Length of Time in Care

Count of Potentially Permanent Placements											
Months in Care		< 1 month	1-2 months	3-6 months	7-12 months	13-18 months	19-24 months	25-36 months	37 – 48 months	49 + months	Total
In Permanent Placement	2015	5	24	78	128	69	60	55	9	1	429
	2016	16	25	51	115	108	69	64	14	1	463
	2017	9	21	72	118	122	78	90	48	2	560
	2018	3	27	74	127	122	91	87	31	4	566
Not in Permanent Placement	2015	44	98	146	149	105	43	31	2	-	618
	2016	38	60	132	152	116	68	36	3	-	605
	2017	42	70	118	139	90	42	46	10	1	558
	2018	43	66	83	93	55	46	30	7	3	426
% in Permanent Placement	2015	10.2%	19.7%	34.8%	46.2%	39.7%	58.3%	64.0%	81.8%	100.0%	41.0%
	2016	29.6%	29.4%	27.9%	43.1%	48.2%	50.4%	64.0%	82.4%	100.0%	43.4%
	2017	17.6%	23.1%	37.9%	45.9%	57.5%	65.0%	66.2%	82.8%	66.7%	50.1%

	2018	6.5%	29.0%	47.1%	57.7%	68.9%	66.4%	74.4%	81.6%	57.1%	57.1%
Total	2015	49	122	224	277	174	103	86	11	1	1,047
	2016	54	85	183	267	224	137	100	17	1	1,068
	2017	51	91	190	257	212	120	136	58	3	1,118
	2018	46	93	157	220	177	137	117	38	7	992

Source: SOA Online Resources for Children in Alaska (ORCA) Report Perm. Status of OOH Children Under 5

Activities taken to address the developmental needs of all vulnerable children under five years of age (ACYF-CB-PI-18-06).

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

DHSS is the state government agency under which the Office of Children’s Services is administered and it is also the agency that houses many other divisions with programs that fund and address the developmental needs of all vulnerable children under five years of age. These activities and programs include:

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

In accordance with CAPTA, ILP complies with federally required referrals from the State agency (OCS) responsible to substantiated allegations of child abuse. These electronic referral records are automatically retrieved from the ORCA data system every night. These referrals are sent to database that interfaces with all of the ILP providers throughout the State. Approximately 23% of all referrals to the program come from OCS.

Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems. The Women’s Children’s and Family Health (WCFH) section, housed in the Division of Public Health, administers the federally-funded Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems grant for Alaska. This grant aims to integrate and coordinate services for the early childhood population and to improve outcomes in children’s developmental health and family well-being indicators. This work is community-based in nature. The focus of this grant is to increase the use of evidence-based developmental screening. Often, developmental concerns aren’t identified until a child enters school. This project aims to identify those concerns early and connect families with needed supports.

Parents as Teachers. Also under, WCFH is the management and implementation of the Parents as Teachers home visiting grants. PAT is an evidence-based model of home visiting that serves clients during pregnancy and also up until the child is age 5. The focus is on family education and parent support. This model aims to increase parent knowledge of early childhood development and improve parenting, provide early detection of development concerns, prevent child abuse and neglect, and increase school readiness. The model involves personal visits, group connections, child screening, and a resource network. National research has shown that parents enrolled in PAT read more frequently to their children and are more likely to enroll their children in pre-school, both of which are linked to school readiness and achievement.

System Development for Young Children and their Families. The Division of Behavioral Health provides funding, training and technical assistance to Alaska mental health providers in order to support the following services:

- Complex Behaviors Collaborative
- Flexible Funding “Individualized Services Program”
- Alaskan Trauma Informed-Care Statewide training Initiative
- Early Childhood mental health assessment and intervention
- Implementation of Evidenced Based Practices related to: Attachment, Self-Regulation and Competency Development
- Adopted cross walk to allow young children to qualify for behavioral health services: DC 0 – 5 Diagnostic Classification of Mental Health and Developmental Disorders of Infancy and Early Childhood
- Trauma Informed Schools work, consultation on web-based teacher trauma training, etc.

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.

2017 Update: No changes in services during the past year. Services continue as reported last year.

2018 Update: No changes in services during the past year. Services continue as reported last year.

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 Check 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 10 and the Children's Bureau to prepare for the 2017 CFSR. OCS received technical assistance from Region 10 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 training and technical assistance 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 National Indian Child Welfare Association (NICWA) in November 2015 to provide training to OCS managers related to the BIA proposed regulations.
- OCS is partnering with CFP 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 NRC is partnering with OCS to provide technical assistance 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 provided training and technical assistance to partners and grantees in Alaska. Below are examples of the training and technical assistance 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. Training/technical assistance 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

2017 Update: Training and technical assistance continued as listed above. Additionally; as part of teleconferences, grantee staff was referred to online trainings on Strengthening Families, offered by the National Alliance of Children’s Trusts, and on Trauma-Informed Care, offered by the National Clearinghouse of Families and Youth, and the Family and Youth Services Bureau. Ongoing training and technical assistance to family program grantees continues with regularly scheduled teleconferences, connection to online resources, and a one-on-one response to identified challenges or needs.

Family Support, Family Preservation and Time-Limited Reunification grantees attended a two-day grantee meeting and training in Anchorage in April 2017. There were 13 attendees, from Ketchikan, Soldotna, Nome, Anchorage, Wasilla/Palmer, Fairbanks and Anchorage. The training was hosted by a Tribal partner who is also a grantee. The training was focused on the Strengthening Families Model, and was presented by the Child Welfare Academy. Three common threads were woven throughout the curriculum:

1. Protective factors framework;
2. Importance of culture - how culture impacts families as they seek to build protective factors and how our own culture shapes how we individually feel, act and think; and
3. The critical role parents play in strengthening families.

OCS expects the training will help grantees increase their evidence-informed outputs to contribute to the CFSR measures as well as any upcoming PIP. Grantees will be asked to complete the Protective Factors survey or other evidence based evaluation tools when providing services to families, in order to report on service delivery outcomes. The second half-day of the grantee meeting was facilitated by Service Array staff and focused on shared successes and challenges and gathered input on quarterly reporting forms.

The following grantee agencies received onsite visits and reviews:

- Alaska Family Services- Palmer
- Rural CAP- Anchorage
- Central Council Tlingit Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska- Juneau

In SFY18, OCS plans to provide training and technical assistance to the Family Support, Family Preservation and Time Limited Family Reunification grantees regarding enhancing evaluation of the programs. OCS will also ensure appropriate training for recipients of the Rural Child Welfare grant, to help ensure quality of service delivery. The CWA also continues to provide regular training and technical assistance to the state’s Child Advocacy Centers, with a goal of assisting centers with becoming or maintaining their national accreditation as well as effectively meeting the regional and local needs of the children and families they serve.

OCS has revised its quarterly grantee reporting forms which will be in effect for SFY18. The quarterly reports collected from grantees have been modified to gather data to help determine not only how many children and families are being served, but whether the services are effective or efficient. It is expected that data from these reporting forms will be used to determine if the services provided are meeting the needs of the target population or whether they should be discontinued or modified. The Service Array section also plans to conduct a formal needs assessment, working with OCS managers and stakeholders to define what grant programs are needed, which are functioning and which need to be modified.

2018 Update: Training and technical assistance continued as listed above. Ongoing training and technical assistance to family program and child advocacy center grantees continues with regularly scheduled teleconferences, webinar style trainings, connection to online resources, and a one-on-one response to identified challenges or needs. The Child Welfare Academy (CWA) provides training and technical assistance services through business agreement with OCS, to support existing OCS funded programs and partner agencies. The CWA has helped with providing support for the Tribal Compact work by

developing and delivering a training to compacted Tribes on conducting relative searches, which is the first service being provided under the Compact. The CWA has also provided a great deal of training and technical assistance to the state's Child Advocacy Centers, including:

- Multi-disciplinary Team training was conducted in collaboration with the Alaska Children's Alliance in Bethel.
- Onsite technical assistance and program manager training was provided to the new CACs in Kotzebue, in Utqiagvik (formerly Barrow) and OCS partner agency St. Paul which provides CAC services.
- Onsite technical assistance and support was provided to CACs in Juneau and Fairbanks.

In SFY19, OCS plans to provide training and technical assistance to the Family Support, Family Preservation and Time Limited Family Reunification grantees with a focus on coordination with OCS field office to ensure that the services are being utilized as they are intended and that OCS staff will be a part of evaluating the services provided in order to help ensure program quality and growth. OCS will also continue ongoing training for recipients of the Rural Child Welfare (RCW) grant, to help ensure that RCW workers are involved in case planning and providing caseworker visits that are of the same quality that OCS workers are expected to provide. The CWA also continues to provide regular training and technical assistance to the state's Child Advocacy Centers, with a goal of assisting centers with becoming or maintaining their national accreditation as well as effectively meeting the regional and local needs of the children and families they serve.

In SFY18, training and technical assistance was provided to Tribes who have existing Title IV-E Administrative and Short-Term Training and Maintenance Agreements. Training included face-to-face meetings, teleconferences, work sessions, and jointly-developed IV-E training sessions that were tailored to the Tribes' needs and requests.

- In June of 2017, OCS hosted a Tribal Title IV-E Claiming Audio with independent consultant, Don Schmid, to discuss non-reimbursement for services provided to Tribal children in another state's custody.
- In June of 2017, OCS collaborated with both Tribal Title IV-E Maintenance Partners, Tanana Chiefs Conference (TCC) and Central Council Tlingit & Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska (CCTHITA) to develop IV-E training materials to present to Alaska Tribal Child Welfare Compact Co-Signers during Compact Negotiations.
- In July of 2017, OCS presented a half-day IV-B and IV-E presentation to Compact Co-Signers to share information regarding building capacity and program infrastructure to support Tribal citizens. The difference between an Administrative and Short-Term Training Agreement, a Maintenance Agreement, and a Direct Agreement was discussed.
- The Association Village of Council Presidents (AVCP) received on-site IV-E training in December of 2017 related to Title IV-B, Title IV-E, working in tandem with the Rural Child Welfare grant initiatives to support Tribal families, maximizing federal reimbursement, and the time study process.
- In January of 2018, Maniilaq Association received on-site IV-E training and technical assistance, focusing on evaluating existing program infrastructure, maximizing federal IV-E reimbursement, and potentially developing a IV-E program directly with the federal government.
- In January of 2018, the OCS Adoption Unit provided technical assistance to TCC regarding independent Tribal adoption subsidies.
- In February of 2018, the Aleutian Pribilof Islands Association (APIA) and Cook Inlet Tribal Council (CITC) received Tribal Title IV-E Site Reviews and in-person technical assistance.
- Throughout the year (June of 2017, October of 2017, March of 2018, April of 2018, May of 2018), OCS collaborated individually and jointly with TCC and CCTHITA to develop casework processes and to examine program eligibility guidelines for participants in the Tribal Title IV-E Maintenance Program.

In SYF19, OCS is scheduled to conduct Tribal Title IV-E Site Reviews at AVCP and Orutsararmiut Native Council (ONC). OCS also intends to host a Title IV-B & IV-E Workshop (with Region X) for Compact Co-Signers, to provide training and technical assistance on the Title IV-E Adoption Subsidies for Independent Adoptions, to host a Foster Care Licensing Summit, and to work with CCTHITA to refine existing Tribal court orders in order to maximize federal claims.

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 10 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.

2017 Update: The National Child Welfare Workforce Institute (NCWWI) delivered the Leadership for Middle Managers (LAMM) training and coaching program to OCS manager in late January 2017. The workgroups formed from this partnership are around recruitment of line staff, competency based assessment of line staff, and the organizational culture and retention of staff. These groups are just beginning to apply what they learned in January and looking to make positive practice changes in these important areas. The LAMM also has a six month coaching component that each participant is involved in. These change initiatives are long term practice changes and will take a few years to implement and well as evaluate effectiveness.

2018 Update: During FY 18, OCS received Technical Assistance related to the Program Improvement Plan development through The Center for States. This technical assistance is expected to continue through FY 19. OCS is also utilizing Technical Assistance and support through the National Child Welfare Workforce Institute (NCCWI), related to workforce and training development. This work, too, will continue in FY 19.

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 Managers meetings focus on data related to safety, permanency and well-being.

2017 Update: The OCS Research Unit has over 75 on-demand reports for use by OCS staff. Numerous additional reports are available and manually sent to staff and other OCS stakeholders each week or upon request. New reports are being developed for data validation purposes that will identify data conflicts within the database in support of a staff cleanup effort intended to improve data quality and ensure accurate data for reporting. During the last year the Research Unit collaborated with Federal partners on testing and code revisions to our NCANDS and AFCARS Federal reports. Numerous updates have been made to the federal reports that will improve the accuracy and quality of Alaska’s Foster Care, Adoption, and Child Maltreatment data.

The Quality Assurance Unit has continued to provide regularly scheduled QA reviews for OCS on a statewide basis. Details of the QA case review process is outlined in more detail in Section 2 of this report and includes a summary of the CY 2016 data from completed QA reviews.

OCS continues to maintain a SACWIS data system, called ORCA. During this past fiscal year, OCS ORCA staff have been assessing and evaluating whether or not OCS will become a CCWIS system. OCS has until August 1, 2018 to make a decision about CCWIS.

2018 Update: OCS continues to improve Alaska's AFCARS report data by working with the Children's Bureau on a semi-annual AFCARS Improvement Plan (AIP). OCS completed a gap assessment for the AFCARS elements described in a 2016 ruling (AFCARS 2.0) scheduled for compliance on 10/1/2019. Implementation of any changes needed for AFCARS 2.0 is on hold while the CB is assessing comments solicited regarding streamlining the AFCARS data elements, removing any undue burden related to reporting AFCARS, and delaying the compliance date from 10/1/2019 to 10/2/2021.

OCS evaluated the CCWIS regulations and completed a cost-benefit analysis of transitioning from a SACWIS system to a CCWIS. OCS intends to declare ORCA a transitioning CCWIS system by the August 1, 2018 deadline. ORCA staff worked with the General Services Administration (18F) on road mapping activities for modernization and transitioning the CCWIS. 18F completed a code review in order to recommend a migration approach which includes an encasement strategy so that the front end can gradually be rewritten in a user friendly, modern environment free of legacy entanglements.

The OCS Research Unit updated the division's public web reports to simplify comparison of data over time based on customer feedback. Efforts have also begun on a worker dashboard to provide caseworkers with access to charts identifying both completed and outstanding workload items needing to be completed during the month. The addition of a new Research Analyst with previous caseworker experience is helping to bridge the gap between central office research staff and workers in the field.

The Quality Assurance Unit has continued to provide regularly scheduled QA reviews for OCS on a statewide basis.

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. The Tribal Partners that participate in TSAT are:

- Lou Johnson, BBNA
- Mary Johnson, TCC
- Francine Eddy Jones, CCTHITA
- Cheryl Offt, AVCP
- Lola Stepetin, 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)

2017 Update: OCS continues to work closely with Tribes in Alaska via the Tribal State Advisory Team, Tribal State Collaboration Group, Tribal State Strategic Plan, and Regional Tribal State teams.

In May of 2016, the Tribal State Strategic Plan “Transforming Child Welfare Outcomes for Alaska Native Children 2016-2020” was finalized. Shortly thereafter, priority workgroups were formed and work plans were developed. In October of 2016, a Steering Committee was established to prioritize and oversee the plan’s implementation. The committee, which includes Tribal members, convened in January 2017 for a two-day work session to ensure implementation fidelity. The following goals were selected for 2017:

- Truth, Racial Healing, and Transformation
- Tribal Self Governance
- Tribal Consultation
- Messaging/Education

Tribal representatives, along with OCS staff and key stakeholders participate in the six strategic priority workgroups: Respectful Government-to-Government Collaboration & Partnership, Self-Governance, Embrace & Implement the Spirit of ICWA, State Government Alignment, Community Engagement and Culturally Specific Services & Supports. There are over 75 individuals participating in these priority work groups.

Tribal members are also included in the OCS Executive Steering Committee, Policy Group, and have been immersed in the planning to meet the requirements of Public Law 113-183. Input from Tribal partners was gathered while developing the CFSP and APSR efforts. Additionally, Tribal members participated in the Child & Family Services Review.

Commissioner Davidson will be hosting a Tribal Consultation and Listening Session in November of 2017 to gather input directly from Tribes, Tribal Organizations, and Tribal Health Care Providers about ways to streamline services and improve collaboration with the Department of Health & Social Services.

2018 Update: OCS continues to work closely with Tribes in Alaska via the Tribal State Advisory Team, Tribal State Collaboration Group, Tribal State Strategic Plan, and Regional Tribal State teams. The following are key highlights from the past year.

- The Alaska Tribal Child Welfare Compact was signed October 17, 2017 at the Alaska Federal Natives Conference in Anchorage. This compact creates the opportunity to truly transform outcomes for native children as well as how services are provided to children and families.
- Tribes and Tribal Organizations (Co-Signers) have signed the first Support Services Funding Agreement (SSFA) in March 2018 and are currently in the process of implementing Diligent Relative Searches. Work continues on negotiations for SFY19 with two more SSFAs for the next year.
- The Department of Health and Social Services hosted the first annual departmental Tribal Consultations. Alaska’s 229 Tribes were invited as well as Tribal Organizations and Tribal Health providers. Work is underway to develop a departmental wide Tribal Consultation policy.
- The Culturally Specific Services and Supports strategic priority work group is rolling out a services guide to aid staff and other child welfare providers to identify formal and informal culturally appropriate services that can be delivered in the child’s home community by the Tribe and other natural supports to promote health and wellness.

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 104.

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 104.

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 Third 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 July 1, 2016. Additionally, Tribal State Advisory Team members will continue to be invited to participate in quarterly CFSP focused conference calls.

2017 Update: Tribal State Advisory Team Members participate in a monthly teleconference and meet face-to-face on an annual basis. Much of their work drives the regional and statewide collaboration efforts with Tribes.

The Tribal-State Data Group met in August of 2016 with a research consultant from Casey Family Programs who provided technical assistance to assist in selection of the data indicators that could be represented on one page. Since then, the Data Indicators have been tailored to include statewide data trends and data specific to each region. These indicators are included as attachments and focus on the following categories: racial disproportionality, maltreatment, repeat maltreatment, extended relative placements, out-of-preference placements, ICWA foster homes, transfers to Tribal jurisdiction, Tribal interventions, reunification and other permanency outcomes.

The Annual Tribal State Collaboration Meeting occurred in May of 2017, where Tribal and state leaders gathered to share program updates, discuss collaboration efforts, examine trends in Data Indicators, reflection implementing the ICWA Regulations that took effect December of 2016, and to talk about upcoming initiatives that will provide more opportunities for collaboration.

The state obtained permission for a sole source contract to hire a negotiator funded by both the Tribes and the state to explore Tribal Self-Governance as it relates to service delivery to children and families. The first meeting took place in April of 2017, and meetings will continue through October of 2017.

Since Casey Family Programs ended technical support to the Knowing Who You Are (KWYA) curriculum in 2015, the KWYA Steering Committee and Curriculum Group assumed the responsibility of updating the curriculum which provided the opportunity to make Alaska specific adaptations. KWYA provides a framework for participants to identify and explore racial and ethnic identity and to understand how one's race and ethnicity impacts both personal and professional interactions. KWYA leaders have implemented the updated curriculum with great success the program is well received and continues to be

supported by the Tribal State Collaboration Group. The statewide KWYA team continues to facilitate 12 workshops each year around the state for Tribal and state employees as well as build community partnerships by inviting other agencies and service providers to attend workshops. The statewide network is looking to build the internal infrastructure by offering a Facilitator Training to increase the facilitator pool and offer the content to more people.

2018 Update:

OCS continues with its numerous collaborative efforts with Tribes. Much of the work in 2017 was focused on Tribal Self-Governance which led to the signing of the Alaska Tribal Child Welfare Compact in October 2017. Another milestone was the First Annual Tribal Consultation between the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS) and Tribes that took place on November 7-8, 2017. Invitees included all 229 Tribes, all CEO/Presidents of Tribal Non-Profits, and all CEO/Presidents of Tribal Health Organizations. Policy is being drafted for future consultations by a workgroup of Tribal and State leaders.

The Transforming Child Welfare Strategic Plan Steering Committee had an in-person meeting on April 4, 2018 to discuss progress being made in each of the plan's six strategic priorities. In addition to the Compact and Tribal Consultation, other highlights include the Cultural Services Resource Guide that will include culturally specific services that social workers can use for case planning.

In March 2017, OCS received permission to have Tribal representatives participate on hiring panels for the majority of job classes/positions. One of the items the Embrace & Implement the Spirit of ICWA workgroup is focusing on is updating the bank of interview questions used for hiring to assist in hiring staff that value and respect the government-to-government collaboration with Tribes.

The Tribal State Advisory Team met face-to-face April 5, 2018 and decided to change the recurrence of our teleconferences to every 4 months due to the demands of implementing the Compact and related Support, Services, and Funding Agreements. The annual Regional Tribal State Collaboration Group meetings continue to be effective. The Annual Statewide Tribal State Collaboration Meeting is being planned for fall 2018.

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.

2017 Update: The Tribal License Foster Care group continued to meet over the past year to incorporate new federal legislation into licensing standards. The Second Edition of the Alaska Tribal Foster Care Standards has been issued and disseminated, and training for Tribal ICWA workers will take place in October of 2017. As a result of these efforts, there are currently over 100 Tribal licensed foster homes in the state of Alaska.

Additionally, the state has been collaborating with Tribes to develop a process whereby OCS can place state custody children in Tribal licensed foster homes. It is anticipated that this effort this will have a direct impact on Data Indicator trends, specifically the number of children in out-of-preference placements.

Over the past year, Central Council Tlingit & Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska and Tanana Chiefs Conference have begun implementation of their Tribal Title IV-E Maintenance agreement with three cases in the program. The state reimburses these Tribal partners 100% of the foster care payment while the Tribes have full placement and care authority for the children. OCS is working on expanding this program with other Tribes in Alaska.

2018 Update: The Tribal License Foster Care group continued to meet regarding new federal legislation related to licensing standards. The Second Edition of the Alaska Tribal Foster Care Standards was issued and a training for Tribal ICWA workers is scheduled to take place in the fall of 2018. Additionally, the state continues to collaborate with Tribes to develop a process whereby OCS can place state custody children in Tribal licensed foster homes.

Over the course of the year, Central Council Tlingit & Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska began receiving reimbursement payments for children in their Tribal Title IV-E Maintenance Program, and OCS continues to work on expanding the program to include other Tribes in Alaska.

In April of 2017, OCS embarked on a negotiation process with several Tribes and Tribal Organizations. The Tribes and Tribal Organizations shared expenses with OCS to hire a neutral facilitator and a number of face-to-face meetings were held over the course of the year to develop the Alaska Tribal Child Welfare Compact. The following 18 Co-Signers signed the Compact at the Alaska Federation of Natives Conference on October 19, 2017, and collectively represent 163 Tribes:

- Aleutian Pribilof Islands Association (APIA)
- Arctic Slope Native Association (ASNA)
- Association of Village Council Presidents (AVCP)
- Bristol Bay Native Association (BBNA)
- Central Council Tlingit & Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska (CCTHITA)
- Cheesh'na Tribal Council
- Chugachmiut
- Cook Inlet Tribal Council (CITC)
- Copper River Native Association (CRNA)
- Native Village of Eyak
- Kawerak, Inc.
- Kenaitze Indian Tribe
- Maniilaq Association
- Mentasta Traditional Council
- Nome Eskimo Community (NEC)
- Aleut Community of St. Paul Island
- Sun'aq Tribe of Kodiak
- Tanana Chiefs Conference (TCC)

The Alaska Tribal Child Welfare Compact will be augmented by Support Services Funding Agreements (SSFAs) to include the following services:

- Intake decisions on Protective Services Reports (PSR's)
- Diligent relative search and ICWA preference search
- Initial assessments & investigations
- In-home case management
- Safety evaluations for unlicensed relatives and prospective foster parents
- Case worker visits with children, parents, and caregivers
- Initial licensing, renewal, and support
- Family contact
- Out-of-home case management
- Transportation
- Adoption & guardianship home studies

As of April 20, 2018, Co-Signers are now receiving screened in and screened out PSRs, and the Diligent Relative Search and ICWA Preference Search SSFA has been developed and signed by 16 of the 18 Co-Signers. 2 of the 16 SSFA Co-Signers are ready to receive referrals from OCS to conduct diligent relative searches and ICWA preference searches for their Tribal citizens and introductory training is under development in partnership with the Child Welfare Academy.

OCS intends to collaborate with Tribal partners to compose the following SSFAs next: a) Safety Evaluations for Unlicensed Relatives and Prospective Foster Parents. Several Tribes and Tribal Organizations are interested in learning more about the Title IV-E Administrative and Short-Term Training program and potentially signing agreements to help draw down federal funding while implementing SSFAs. Additional Tribes and Tribal Organizations are invited to participate in the next negotiation cycle that is scheduled to take place in calendar year 2019.

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. This data is reviewed regularly to track compliance with ICWA. Additional examples of the efforts regarding this are described on the following pages.

2017 Update: OCS continues to work closely with Tribal partners to monitor compliance with ICWA. Evaluation of data is ongoing and occurs regularly during Tribal State meetings. In addition, Tribes are provided monthly reports illustrating the children who are affiliated with their Tribe and the placement preference.

Much of the work to increase ICWA compliance includes partnering with the child’s Tribe from the beginning of a case including on all placement decisions, ensuring due diligence to identify relative and other preference placements for Alaska Native and American Indian youth, collaborating with Tribal partners regarding existing out-of-preference placements and potential permanency options, and delivering joint training to OCS staff and Tribal partners. Additional examples of the efforts regarding this topic are described on the following pages.

2018 Update: The Tribal-State Data Group is hoping to meet soon to identify if additional data indicators should be tracked. The current Data Indicators focus on the racial disproportionality, maltreatment, repeat maltreatment, extended family placements, out-of-preference placements, ICWA foster homes, transfers to Tribal jurisdiction, Tribal interventions, reunification and other permanency outcomes. These indicators have been tailored to include statewide data trends and data specific to each region.

Through conducting out-of-preference placement meetings, the Regional ICWA Specialists have been working diligently on identifying and placing children in ICWA preference placements. This diligence has led to an increase in Alaska Native/American Indian children being placed in first preference placement with extended family. As of April 6, 2018, 54% of all AN/AI children in out of home placement were with extended family.

Through the Contested ICWA Matter Memo process that the assigned AAG completes if OCS and the Tribe are in disagreement, issues with ICWA Compliance are brought to the leadership level for review in hopes of reaching resolution.

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.
4.A.1 Continue to meet with Tribal State Collaboration Group (TSCG) 3 times per year.
2015 Update: 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.
2016 Update: 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”.
2017 Update: Regional Tribal State meetings are further discussed earlier in this section, under the heading “Collaboration and Coordination”. An annual all state TSCG meeting was held in Anchorage May 3-4. Members expressed interest in meeting on a biannual basis in the future.
2018 Update: The annual Regional Tribal State Collaboration Group meetings continue to be effective. Southcentral Region held their 4 th annual TSCG meeting April 2017 in Kodiak. Southeast held their annual TSCG meeting August 2017 in Juneau. Western Region held their annual TSCG meeting in September 2017 in Bethel which included a discussion of historical trauma and adverse childhood experiences. Northern Region hosted their annual TSCG meeting November 2017 in Nome. Anchorage held their annual TSCG meeting in March 2017 which was hosted by First Alaskans Institute who facilitated an Advancing Native Dialogue on Racial Equity conversation. The Annual Statewide Tribal State Collaboration Meeting is being planned for Fall 2018.

4.A.2 OCS will engage in mutual updates on the CFSP with Tribal partners across the state.
2015 Update: The CFSP/APSR was discussed at the May 2015 Tribal State meeting. Opportunities to provide feedback were provided at May teleconferences.
2016 Update: 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.
2017 Update: Regional Tribal State meetings are further discussed earlier in this section, under the heading “Collaboration and Coordination”. An annual all state TSCG meeting was held in Anchorage May 3-4. Members expressed interest in meeting on a biannual basis in the future.
2018 Update: Quarterly teleconferences specific to the CFSP were implemented to gather input and assistance from our Tribal partners.
4.A.3 OCS Leadership will support the development and sustainability of Regional Disproportionality Teams.
2015 Update: Regional TS meetings provide the opportunity for Regional Disproportionality Teams to become an ongoing workgroup, in which Tribes, OCS, and community partners will collaborate.
2016 Update: The Anchorage Region has an active Regional Disproportionality Team. The team meets monthly. Their vision and goals are as follows:
2016 Team Goals:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruit new ICWA homes • Retain the current ICWA homes to take other native children. • Identify and implement strategies to support our ICWA homes. • Replicate the efforts the AK native family services unit throughout other units.
The vision statement: Enhancing Tribal partnerships and Family Wellness: Engage, Educate, Empower.
2017 Update: The second edition of the Alaska Tribal Foster Care Standards was disseminated at the Tribal State Collaboration Group meeting in May 2017 and training is scheduled to occur October 3-5, 2017. According to recent data (see attached), disproportionality rates have fluctuated statewide from 60.3% in 2014, to 56.7% in 2015, to 57.0% in 2016. Please note: this slight increase could be due to identifying and entering the race of children who are in state custody previously documented as unknown race. Over the last year the number of ICWA foster homes increased by over 40.
2018 Update: Regional Disproportionality teams have been absorbed by Regional Tribal State Teleconferences & in person meetings. Item discontinued.
4.A.4 OCS will work with Tribes across the state to strengthen relationships, coordinate services and explore opportunities to engage in authentic partnerships.
2015 Update: 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.
2016 Update: 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.
2017 Update: No changes in the past year. OCS invites Tribal partners to trainings, provides Rural Child Welfare grants to five Tribal grantees, and has participated in the development of Title IV-E maintenances agreements with two Tribal consortia. OCS is partnering with Metlakatla Indian Community and Arctic Slope Native Association to explore the possibility of implementing administration and short term training agreements.
2018 Update: No changes in the past year. OCS continues to network with additional Tribes and Tribal Organizations who are interested in pursuing IV-E agreements. This year, OCS collaborated with Kenaitze Indian Tribe and Tanana Chiefs Conference to establish Title IV-E adoption subsidies for independent Tribal adoptions. Additionally, OCS worked closely with and engaged in authentic partnerships with Tribes and Tribal Organizations throughout the process of developing the Alaska Tribal Child Welfare Compact and Support Services Funding Agreements.
4.A.5 Continue Tribal State Co-Chair meetings on a bi-monthly basis.
2015 Update: 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>2016 Update: 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>2017 Update: The TSAT meets by teleconference the second Thursday of each month.</p>
<p>2018 Update: The Tribal State Advisory Team has decided to change the reoccurrence of our teleconferences to every 4 months due to the demands of implementing the Compact and related Support, Services, and Funding Agreements.</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 Update: 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 Update: 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>2017 Update: Over the last year regional TSCG meetings have occurred in Juneau, Anchorage and Kodiak. Tribal and OCS representatives attended from surrounding villages and communities. The Statewide ICWA Coordinator also attended the NICWA Conference in April with a team consisting of Tribal Partners and Tribal advocates presented a workshop on Transforming Child Welfare Outcomes for Alaska Native Children: The Collaborative Development of a Strategic Plan. In addition, OCS recently began meeting with several Tribal partners regarding self-governance and meetings will continue through September. The Listening Session/Tribal Consultation scheduled for November 2017 will also be a great opportunity to communicate and engage with all Tribes throughout Alaska.</p>
<p>2018 Update: Over the last year regional TSCG meetings have occurred in Juneau, Nome, Fairbanks and _____ . Tribal and OCS representatives attended from surrounding villages and communities. The Commissioner, Tribal Partners, along with attorneys from Alaska’s Department of Law and Native Rights Fund presented Alaska’s Tribal Child Welfare Compact at the NICWA Conference held in April. In addition, over the last year DHSS negotiated with 18 Tribes/Tribal Organizations a Tribal Child Welfare Compact; many of which did not attend the Tribal State Collaboration Group meetings. As mentioned above, DHSS held a Tribal Consultation in November 2017 with all Tribes throughout Alaska.</p>
<p>4.A.7 Increase number of Tribal title IV-E agreements with Tribes/Tribal Organizations</p>
<p>2015 Update: 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 Update: 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>2017 Update: OCS is continually reaching out to Tribes/Tribal Entities across the state to increase partnerships and possible additional maintenance agreements. OCS is partnering with Metlakatla Indian Community and Arctic Slope Native Association to explore the possibility of implementing administration and short term training agreements.</p>
<p>2018 Update: OCS is working with the Department of Law to amend existing Title IV-E Agreements, specifically the sovereign immunity sections, to align with the insurance and liability language within the Alaska Tribal Child Welfare Compact. OCS has offered general IV-E training to Compacting Co-Signers and continues to network with additional Tribes and Tribal Organizations who are interested in pursuing IV-E agreements.</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 Update: 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>

2016 Update: 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. 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.

2017 Update: Intensive technical assistance continues with the Central Council Tlingit & Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska, who successfully transferred jurisdiction of two child welfare cases over the past year. OCS partners regularly with ORCA Help and CCTHITA to develop a process and protocol for successfully reissuing maintenance payments. OCS continues to partner with Tanana Chiefs Conference who also transferred jurisdiction of one child welfare case. Additionally, OCS has been providing intensive technical assistance to Orutsararmuit Native Council (ONC) to help them navigate their administrative and short-term training agreement reimbursements.

2018 Update: Technical assistance continues to be provided to all Tribes via teleconference with two in-person site reviews conducted for Aleutian Pribilof Islands Association and Cook Inlet Tribal Council. Telephonic trainings related to Title IV-E were provided to all Co-Signers of the Tribal Child Welfare Compact. In addition, training was held in Kotzebue for Maniilaq Association as they move forward in development of the Tribal IV-E direct plan.

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.

2015 Update: 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.

2016 Update: CCTHITA 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.

2017 Update: The State has been working closely with CCTHITA since they signed a Maintenance Agreement in March 2016. Regular technical assistance is provided to assist in developing and maintaining their infrastructure by re-evaluating cost pools to maximize federal funding reimbursement. The state plans to visit the Arctic Slope Native Association and with Metlakatla Indian Community to present information related to accessing Title IV-E Maintenance funds and administrative funding to provide services to children and families.

2018 Update: CCTHITA has been receiving monthly IV-E foster care payments for children in their maintenance program for FY17 and FY18. There are currently two children in CCTHITA's maintenance program, both of whom are moving towards permanency. OCS continues to collaborate with CCTHITA and TCC regarding program implementation and technical assistance. Additionally, OCS met with Maniilaq Association in January of 2018 to examine their program infrastructure and to discuss the option to pursue a Direct program with the Federal government versus a IV-E Maintenance program with the State. OCS has also been in touch with Kawerak, Inc. regarding their interest in establishing a IV-E Maintenance program.

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.

2015 Update: 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>2016 Update: 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>2017 Update: A presentation and discussion on Chafee funding occurred at the Southcentral Region Tribal State meeting in Kodiak April, 2017. Quarterly teleconferences continue and the dates are listed on the OCS ICWA webpage along with all the forms required to access funding.</p>
<p>2018 Update: Chafee funding was discussed with Tribal Partners during the 2017 Compact negotiation process. All the forms required to access funding are posted on the OCS ICWA webpage.</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 Update: OCS staff was trained on how to make referrals to Rural Child Welfare Services Program in their area.</p>
<p>2016 Update: 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>2017 Update: A comprehensive needs assessment was completed in fall 2016, with the goal of continuing to improve the provision of Rural Child Welfare Services. Due to this assessment, Tribal workers are using the same Caseworker Visit documentation as OCS, and both ongoing program documentation and reporting have been streamlined, and the Strengthening Families Framework integrated, to continue towards standardization and streamlining of service referral and provision.</p>
<p>2018 Update: A competitive grant solicitation for Rural Child Welfare services was held in March 2017, and an additional grantee was funded. The strengthening families framework was integrated into the request for proposal. The services solicited were: Monthly Quality Caseworker visits with Children; Case Plan Support and Service Coordination; Relative Searches and locating other ICWA preference placements; and documentation of services provided. Programs were solicited and funded in all OCS regions except Anchorage, which is by definition not rural. Within 30 days of notification of award all grantees were trained in the standardized referral, documentation and program standards.</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 Update: 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 two page consolidated FAQs are currently being developed.</p>
<p>2016 Update: 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>2017 Update: To date, 138 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 posted on the OCS ICWA webpage.</p>
<p>2018 Update: To date, 149 Tribes/Tribal Organizations have signed the Tribal Agreement of Confidentiality. In addition to providing information to the child’s Tribe in the Initial Assessment/pre-filing phase, this agreement is now being used for Tribes who wish to receive both screen-in and screen-out Protective Services Report after the Intake screening decision is made.</p>
<p>4.A.13 Work with ORCA Project Manager to determine feasibility of providing Tribes access to AK OCS ORCA.</p>
<p>2015 Update: ORCA reports and data are available to Tribes with a maintenance agreement.</p>
<p>2016 Update: No changes in the past year. ORCA reports and data continue to be available to Tribes with a maintenance agreement.</p>
<p>2017 Update: No changes in the past year. ORCA reports and data continue to be available to Tribes with a maintenance agreement.</p>
<p>2018 Update: Access to ORCA has been made available to the Co-Signers of the Alaska Tribal Child Welfare Compact who have also entered into a Support Services Funding Agreement. Currently 16 Tribes/Tribal Organizations have been approved access.</p>

4.A.14 Conduct critical review of 20 year old Tribal State ICWA Agreement.
2015 Update: Will be reviewed in the coming year.
2016 Update: This work has yet to begin and remains an important priority. TSAT will determine whether to keep this item in the plan or not.
2017 Update: The topic was identified as a tactic under the “Respectful Government to Government Collaboration and Partnership” work group. A sub group of this priority reviewed and determined that it is not necessary to update the agreement. 4.A.14 is discontinued.
2018 Update: This action item has been discontinued.
4.A.15 Develop ICWA Reference Guides for everyday use by state and Tribal workers.
2015 Update: Will be reviewed by Tribal State Advisory Team in the coming year to determine if action is needed.
2016 Update: OCS, in conjunction with the Child Welfare Academy, is working on a draft desk guide that would be provided at new worker training.
2017 Update: The Child Welfare Academy is now providing an ICWA Desk Guide at ICWA II Training. This document will eventually be provided at SKILS/new worker training.
2018 Update: This action item has been completed.
4.A.16 Keep OCS ICWA webpage updated to allow easy access to all pertinent TSCG efforts and ICWA information.
2015 Update: New confidentiality agreements are posted when received. The web page will be updated in 2015.
2016 Update: 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.
2017 Update: The 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. OCS plans to add a link to the second edition of the Alaska Tribal Foster Care Standards.
2018 Update: Webpage is updated to reflect an updated list of Tribes/Tribal Organizations who have signed the Tribal Agreement of Confidentiality, contact information for OCS ICWA Staff, as well as links to publications such as the Alaska Tribal Child Welfare Compact.
4.A.17 Continue to seek Tribal participation in on-site QA reviews and other CQI related activities.
2015 Update: 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.
2016 Update: 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.
2017 Update: No changes in the past year. It is common practice for Tribal partners to participate in Quality Assurance Reviews. Several Tribal partners participated in the Child & Family Services Review as reviewers.
2018 Update: No changes in the past year. It is common practice for Tribal partners to participate in Quality Assurance Reviews. Several Tribal partners participated in the May 2018 Child & Family Services Review as reviewers and have been invited to all CFSR / PIP Meetings held in 2017 and 2018.
4.A.18 Conduct ongoing OCS ICWA team teleconferences, which includes the Tribes and others as needed.
2015 Update: OCS ICWA Specialists have monthly teleconferences. Topics over the last year included: <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 Update: The OCS ICWA Specialists continue to have monthly teleconferences which are primarily focused on many of the same items listed above.</p>
<p>2017 Update: OCS ICWA Specialists continue to have monthly teleconferences which are primarily focused on many of the same items listed above. Regional ICWA Specialists and the Statewide ICWA Program Coordinator provides case consultation and advocate for the paradigm shift of compliance driven to a values driven approach in embracing the spirit of ICWA.</p> <p>This work includes examining due diligence to identify extended family and other preference placements for Alaska Native and American Indian youth, collaborating with Tribal partners regarding existing out-of-preference placements and potential permanency options, and delivering joint training to OCS staff and Tribal partners.</p>
<p>2018 Update: The OCS ICWA Specialists continue to have monthly teleconferences where a variety of topics are discussed including conducting diligent relative searches, applying for Certificate Degree of Indian Blood, suggestions to improve the ORCA ICWA tab and other ORCA functions, ORCA data clean-up, Proxy for immediate and permanent placement, ICWA training, qualified expert witness, active efforts, and checking in regarding how staff are doing at embracing the spirit and values of ICWA. Recently the ICWA Specialists were interviewed for an Alaska specific ICWA video that we plan to show to staff during ICWA Training.</p>
<p>4.A.19 Ensure placement preference data for Native children entered in ORCA is accurate.</p>
<p>2015 Update: Over 95% of records have a placement preference. ORCA is being modified to ensure a higher level of accuracy in preferences.</p>
<p>2016 Update: 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 eight records were missing documentation out of 1,572; therefore, 99.5% records have placement documented.</p>
<p>2017 Update: Regional ICWA Specialists have been persistent in inputting data regarding placement preferences for Alaska Native children and they have been facilitating training with field staff regarding what constitutes a diligent extended family/preference placement search. ICWA Specialists have been designated as the OCS point of contact to communicate with Tribes regarding permanency for children in out-of-preference placements, what the Tribe's position is and to document these positions accurately in ORCA.</p>
<p>2018 Update: According to ORCA report RR000163, 4/23/2018, Native Placement Preference tab, only six records were missing documentation out of 1,769; therefore, 99.7% records have placement documented. 55% are in first preference placement, 5% in second preference, 9% in third preference, 2% in fourth preference, and 30% in out-of-preference placement.</p>
<p>4.A.20 Increase placement preferences for Native children in out of home care.</p>
<p>2015 Update: 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 Update: Despite efforts to increase placement preferences for Alaska Native children, the percent remains under 42% for 2015. These percentages 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>2017 Update: As a result of focusing on diligent relative searches and having more Tribal licensed foster homes, 48% of Alaska Native children were placed in relative placements in 2016. Concurrently, the percentage of out-of-preference placements decreased from 36% in 2015 to 29% in 2016.</p>
<p>2018 Update: As a result of focusing on diligent relative searches and having more Tribal licensed foster homes, 48% of Alaska Native children were placed in relative placements in 2016, increasing to 55% in 2018. Concurrently, the percentage of out-of-preference placements decreased from 29.2 in 2016 to 28.6 % in 2017.</p>

4.A.21 Increase number of licensed Native foster homes and implement a process for verifying that foster parents are Native.
2015 Update: 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.
2016 Update: This item was combined with 4.A.20
2017 Update: This item was combined with 4.A.20. Item discontinued.
2018 Update: This action item has been discontinued.
4.A.22 Provide on-going ORCA data as requested by Tribes.
2015 Update: 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.
2016 Update: 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.
2017 Update: OCS continues to provide Tribes with specific out-of-home placement data on a monthly basis. In addition, the OCS Research Team will work to provide updated information on the website to include disproportionality data.
2018 Update: OCS continues to provide Tribes with specific out-of-home placement data on a monthly basis. Tribal State Data Work Group is currently working on the data dashboard for 2017.
4.A.23 Support ICWA related training including KWYA, through grants, Title IV-E, and the Child Welfare Academy.
2015 Update: 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.
2016 Update: 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, Procedures and Forms; this is anticipated to be complete by Fall of 2016 with a training held in October.
2017 Update: The revised KWYA curriculum has been implemented and is well received. The Tribal State Licensing work group issued the second edition of the Alaska Tribal Foster Care standards and are in the process of planning a co-hosted Tribal State training for ICWA workers that is scheduled to take place in October 2017.
2018 Update: During the Compacting process, the Child Welfare Academy (CWA) was identified as an existing support that is available to Tribes and Tribal Organizations. There has been a substantial increase in numbers of Tribal workers who are enrolling for trainings facilitated by the CWA, and OCS is working closely with the CWA to develop training modules for the Diligent Relative Searches and ICWA Preference Searches. Additionally, Tribal partners have continued to participate in KWYA workshops, and several are interested in attending the upcoming KWYA Facilitator Training in February of 2019.
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.
2015 Update: 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>2016 Update: 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>2017 Update: Work continues as listed above with data provided Tribal State Data Indicators Intervention Data.</p>
<p>2018 Update: This action item has been completed.</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 Update: 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 Update: 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>2017 Update: This item was combined with 4.A.24. Item discontinued.</p>
<p>2018 Update: This action item has been discontinued.</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 Update: Several regions have In-Home Family Services units. Rural Child Welfare grantees also provide in-home services to families.</p>
<p>2016 Update: 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>2017 Update: No changes in the past year. OCS continues to use in-home services to prevent the breakup of the Indian family. Rural Child Welfare grantees also provide in-home services to families. It is the hope that OCS will be able to provide Tribes funding to expand service provisions to prevent the break of Alaska Native families.</p>
<p>2018 Update: No changes in the past year. The exploration, development and implementation of in-home services model is long overdue and will likely be included in Alaska's next five year CFSP.</p>
<p>4.A.27 Provide capacity building support to regional disproportionality teams to develop child protection teams in rural communities.</p>
<p>2015 Update: 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 Update: TSAT will determine if this item will continue or be melded into the Strategic Plan efforts.</p>
<p>2017 Update: Regional disproportionality teams have moved into the Regional Tribal State groups. Item discontinued.</p>
<p>2018 Update: This action item has been discontinued.</p>

Discussions with Tribal Partners Specific to CFCIP

OCS facilitates quarterly teleconferences to provide Tribes with information about CFCIP and independent living services available to youth, but also to collaborate on how to improve Tribal access to Chafee services. Tribes have identified that they are not familiar with the Chafee services and OCS has worked to increase participation in quarterly teleconferences to share general information. The teleconferences have been increasingly collaborative opportunities to share resources and conduct detailed referrals for youth to receive Chafee IL support and services. Additional information is further delineated in Section 12 of this report.

Sharing 2018 APSR with Tribes

OCS will provide a copy of the submitted 2018 APSR to Gloria Gorman with the Bureau of Indian Affairs. The report will be disseminated to all Tribal partners through the Tribal listserv as well as the Tribal caucus listserv. The 2018 OCS APSR will be a discussion item on the next State and Tribal Meetings, planned for fall 2018. Additionally, the submitted report will be posted on the public-facing State of Alaska OCS website.

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.

2016 Update: 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 December 15, 2015. 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% 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%. This is a decrease from the previous year and OCS is not in compliance with the requirements.

STANDARD #2: At least 50% of the total number of monthly visits made by caseworkers to children in foster care during a fiscal year must occur in the child's residence. FFY 2015 OCS ORCA data shows that 66% 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.

2017 Update: Alaska received a total of \$34,713 in title IV-B, subpart 2 funding for FFY 2016 to support monthly caseworker visits with children in foster care. The funds were used to pay the travel costs associated with monthly caseworker visits. OCS intends to continue to use 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 December 15, 2016.

1. **STANDARD #1:** The total number of visits made by caseworkers on a monthly basis to children in foster care during a fiscal year must not be less than 95% of the total number of such visits that would occur if each child were visited once every month while in care. FFY 2016 OCS DATA: the total number of visits made by OCS caseworkers on a monthly basis to children in foster care was 73%; this is a decrease from FFY 2015.

- STANDARD #2: At least 50% of the total number of monthly visits made by caseworkers to children in foster care during a fiscal year must occur in the child's residence. FFY 2016 OCS DATA: 63% of the monthly visits by OCS caseworkers to children in foster care occurred in the child's residence. This is a decrease from FFY 2015, but still above the standard.

2018 Update: Alaska received \$33,930.00 in title IV-B, subpart 2 funding for FFY 2017. This money was used to offset the cost for travel required to make monthly case worker visits. States are required to report data on monthly case worker visits with children in foster care by December 15, 2015. OCS submitted the following data on December 12, 2017:

- 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 2017 OCS DATA: the total number of visits made by OCS caseworkers on a monthly basis to children in foster care was 67%; this is a decrease from FFY 2016.

- 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 2017 OCS DATA: **63%** of the monthly visits by OCS caseworkers to children in foster care occurred in the child's residence; this number remains the same as FFY 2016.

Monthly Caseworker Visits Measure

Region	Item 1: Total Children	Item 2: Total Monthly Visits	Item 3: Total Months in Care	Item 4: Total Visits in Child's Residence	% 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	1,565	10,803	13,323	7,001	81%	64%
Northern	749	3,725	6,076	2,239	61%	60%
Southcentral	1,047	4,345	9,351	2,712	46%	62%
Southeast	247	1,709	1,875	1,099	91%	64%
Western	262	1,598	2,229	933	71%	58%
Statewide	3,875	22,203	32,909	14,004	67%	63%
FY 2017						
Anchorage	-1.6%	-2.1%	-0.7%	-4.2%	-1.0%	-2.0%
Northern	12.6%	-12.3%	7.0%	-8.5%	-13.0%	3.0%
Southcentral	4.6%	-3.1%	6.8%	-9.9%	-5.0%	-5.0%
Southeast	-0.4%	-16.3%	-14.9%	-3.0%	-1.0%	9.0%
Western	15.4%	-0.2%	13.8%	-2.2%	-10.0%	-1.0%
Statewide	3.8%	-5.1%	2.8%	-5.7%	-6.0%	0.0%
FY 2016						
Anchorage	1,590	11,033	13,414	7,305	82%	66%
Northern	665	4,247	5,678	2,446	74%	57%
Southcentral	1,001	4,482	8,758	3,009	51%	67%
Southeast	248	2,041	2,202	1,133	92%	55%
Western	227	1,602	1,958	954	81%	59%
Statewide	3,733	23,408	32,014	14,849	73%	63%

Source: State of Alaska (SOA) Online Resources for Children in Alaska (ORCA) Federal Monthly Caseworker Visits Measures, FFY 2016-FFY2017. RR00124

Note: Per practice used from 2011, numbers for Central Office are excluded from the final counts.

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.

2017 Update: OCS continues to work on the CWV compliance, but efforts are not impacting the outcome. This will be an area of focus in the PIP developed as follow up to the CFSR.

2018 Update: OCS continues to work on the CWV compliance, but efforts are not impacting the outcome. Alaska’s performance on Monthly Case Worker Visits continues to fail to meet the national standard. Likewise Alaska’s performance in FFY 2017 dropped compared to FFY 2016. High caseloads and record high staff turnover rates are attributed to these numbers.

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.

2017 Update: The State of Alaska documented a decrease in the MCV performance standard for FFY16. This will be an area of focus in the PIP developed as follow up to the CFSR.

2018 Update: Alaska’s performance on Monthly Case Worker Visits continues to fail to meet the national standard. Likewise Alaska’s performance in FFY 2017 dropped compared to FFY 2016. High caseloads and record high staff turnover rates are attributed to these numbers.

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 September 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.

2017 Update: In FFY 2016, The State of Alaska receives Adoption and Legal Guardianship Incentive Payments. OCS does not anticipate challenges in utilizing these funds. For this past fiscal year, OCS received \$4,724.00 total. The OCS Notice of Grant Award indicated in a note: *“Due to limited availability of funds, and in accordance with the provisions of SEC 473A9(d)(2) of the Social Security Act, this award contains a prorated portion (approximately 21 percent) of the FY 2016 Adoption and Legal Guardianship Incentive Payment Program award to which the State is entitled. As soon as additional funds become available, the balance of the award will be issues.”* OCS has made multiple attempts through the Region 10 office to get clarification on possible additional awards for this fiscal year; however, any additional awards have not been provided to Alaska to date.

2018 Update: Adoption Incentive payments have decreased dramatically from previous years. For FFY17, the State of Alaska received \$7,734 to date in Adoption and Legal Guardianship Incentive payments. The final amount received for FFY16 was \$22,500 which is more than the year-to-date amount of \$4,724 reported in the last update.

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

2017 Update: Alaska will continue to use the ALGI funds as listed in the 2016 update.

2018 Update: Alaska is using the ALGI payments to:

- 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.

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.

2017 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.

2018 Update: Due to the significant annual decrease of funds, OCS is no longer using the funds for adoption promotion activities. In the coming year, OCS will need to utilize other sources of funding to continue the services currently being funded by ALGI.

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 of the 24 field offices are 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.

2017 Update: The CQI Committee continues to encompass the regional managers from the five regions as well as the Division Operations Manager, Child Welfare Administrator, Social Services Program Administrator, and the Quality Assurance Manager. The committee reviews data from the various program components to include Intake, Initial Assessments and Permanency efforts. The data analysis includes information gathered from the ongoing case review system. This comprehensive use of data coupled with qualitative information from the management team facilitates an ongoing process to monitor and change practice.

2018 Update: The OCS Continuous Quality Improvement committee coordinates management activities across the regions through involvement of the five regional managers, the Division Operations Manager, the Social Services Program Administrator, and the Quality Assurance Manager. Monthly meetings are held in which data reports are reviewed and program activities analyzed. CQI is a significant area of focus with the PIP under development and will likely have on-going strategies and key activities within the CFSP. As previously noted, the agency will be working with the Center for States and for Organization Improvement in these efforts.

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 10. 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.

2017 Update: During this past year, OCS has received training and technical assistance to prepare for the Statewide Assessment and Child and Family Services Review. It is anticipated that OCS may request/receive training and technical assistance from the Children's Bureau as a part of the Performance Improvement Plan development and implementation during the next year.

2018 Update: During FY18, OCS received Technical Assistance related to the Program Improvement Plan development through The Center for States. This technical assistance is expected to continue through FY 19. Additionally, OCS is utilizing Technical Assistance and support through the National Child Welfare Workforce Institute (NCCWI), related to workforce and training development. This work will also continue in FY 19.

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. CY2015 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.

2017 Update: The 2017 Statewide Assessment, the OCS Continuous Quality Improvement processes were identified as an area needing improvement. The Statewide Assessment provides detailed information about how the QA/CQI system has been functioning in Alaska.

2018 Update: With very little substantive variation, OCS's QA data from case reviews in calendar year 2017 (Table 2) aligns with the findings from the 2017 CFSR Final Report. Data findings from all sources continue to support OCS's current identified goals and objectives to address agencies top priorities: 1) Assess and Address Risk and Need; 2) Timely & Safe Permanent Homes for Children/Youth; 3) Continuous Quality Improvement. Please see the plan for improvement for more details.

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.

2017 Update: The OCS continues to use the CFSR instrument. The CFSR case reviewers received training in May 2017 in preparation for serving during the 2017 CFSR site review. A total of 149 cases were reviewed in quarter 1 through 4 of the calendar year 2016, of which 66 (44%) were in home cases and 83 (56%) were out of home cases. There were no cases reviewed from Western Region field offices during the four quarters.

2018 Update: 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 wellbeing 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.

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.

2017 Update: There have been no substantive 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.

2018 Update: There have been no substantive 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.

Significant 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 Corner House in 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 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.

2017 Update: There have been no significant changes in the states approved CAPTA plan related to how funds are used to support the program areas.

2018 Update: There have been no significant changes in the states approved CAPTA plan related to how funds are used to support the program areas.

How CAPTA State Grant Funds Were Used to Support the State CAPTA Plan

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.

2017 Update: CAPTA funds supported a variety of projects again this year that focus on training the workforce of the child welfare continuum in Alaska. Through training child protection workers and partner professionals from communities and agencies across the state, Alaska continues to improve the services offered to families, which results in the ability to better protect children through achieving higher quality investigations in conjunction with integrated case management and strong family support. Training offered during this reporting period included: Childfirst® Alaska Forensic Interviewing; Multidisciplinary Child Protection Team Case Review; Strengthening Families; OCS Practice Model; Program Evaluation; Recognizing Child Abuse and Neglect; Mandatory Reporting; Home Visiting; and a variety of grantee technical assistance and program development guidance. Here is a list of specific projects and activities funded by CAPTA during this reporting period:

- Childfirst® Alaska Coordination: The University of Alaska, Child Welfare Academy has had assisted with coordination of yearly trainings. This year, 88 professionals from across the state successfully completed this training and became certified in the Childfirst® Alaska forensic interviewing model.
- Training to Alaska Department of Law attorneys in the Childfirst® Alaska model: This year CAPTA funds supported 2-4 attorneys to attend Childfirst® Alaska training. This is the third consecutive year that CAPTA funds have been utilized for this purpose. In order to ensure that the investment in forensic interview training is fully utilized, it is essential that Alaska's attorneys for child maltreatment cases be familiar with the state's forensic interviewing model to contribute to reducing trauma to the victims and to increase accountability for the perpetrators of abuse. The attorneys who have participated report being better prepared in court when forensic interviews are used as evidence.
- Development and maintenance of ChildFirst® Alaska website: This website went live in April 2016, and continues to be maintained through CAPTA funding. The Childfirst® Alaska website link: <http://childfirstalaska.org/>
- Training and Technical Assistance to OCS Grantees: Training and technical assistance is delivered in part through a business agreement with the UAA CWA. This project continues to support direct training and technical assistance for Alaska's CACs and community based family support programs. In April 2017, the CWA delivered the Strengthening Families™ training to family support, family preservation and family reunification grantees. In May 2017, the project funded a cross-disciplinary collaborative training event organized by OCS, the Alaska Children's Alliance (ACA) and the CWA for CAC program managers. In addition, the CWA travelled to provide face-to-face technical assistance CAC's.
- Child Abuse and Neglect Online Training: In the last year, collaboration between OCS, the Children's Justice Act Task Force and other community partners resulted in the completion of a new online training on how to recognize and respond to child maltreatment. This training serves as an accessible and up-to-date way of educating both the general public and mandatory reporters. This year the public training site was visited over 10,000 times. In addition, approximately 1,000 State employees of the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services took the training on the Departmental Learning Site and received a certificate upon completion. CAPTA funds were used to edit and maintain

the training during this reporting period and to create a version of the training now available on USB Drives. CAPTA funds were also used to develop video PSAs for an upcoming media campaign.

In SFY18, OCS anticipates continued training for frontline child protection, law enforcement and attorneys in the Childfirst® Alaska Forensic Interviewing Model. The Childfirst® Alaska website and the online child abuse and neglect training will be maintained and improved. OCS plans to move forward with a media campaign advertising the availability of the online training and reporting child abuse and neglect through public service announcements, posters and other media that have been developed for that purpose. Technical assistance and training will continue to be offered to OCS grantees, community partners, and multidisciplinary child protection teams to help ensure that they have information to implement best practices and to ensure maximum effectiveness in their interventions.

2018 Update: CAPTA funds continued to support the support training and technical assistance directed towards OCS community partner agencies, grantees, and staff. Training offered during this reporting period included: Childfirst® Alaska Forensic Interviewing; web-based training on child abuse and neglect, including mandatory reporter training; and the Strengthening Families model. In addition, OCS grantees were provided individualized technical assistance and program development guidance. Here is a list of specific projects and activities funded by CAPTA during this reporting period:

- Childfirst® Alaska Coordination: The Child Welfare Academy continued providing assistance with coordination four separate trainings this year including one on the remote Island of St. Paul. Ninety professionals from across the state successfully completed this training and became certified in the Childfirst® Alaska forensic interviewing model.
- Training and Technical Assistance to OCS Grantees and Community Partners: Training and technical assistance is delivered in part through a business agreement with the UAA CWA. This project continues to support direct training and technical assistance for Alaska's CACs and community based family support programs. Significant technical assistance was provided to new CACs in St. Paul, Utqiagvik (formerly Barrow), and Kotzebue, in addition to technical assistance provided to programs that have had significant staff turnover in the past year, including the CACs in Bethel and Wasilla.
- Ongoing child abuse and neglect online training: CAPTA funds were used to maintain and update this training in 2018.
- Child Abuse Media Campaign: CAPTA funds were also utilized to create posters, refrigerator magnets, business cards and USB Drives as part of a statewide media campaign that advertised both the availability of the online training as well as the new toll-free number and e-mail for the recently centralized OCS Intake.

In SFY19, OCS anticipates that these efforts will continue in 2019.

Amendments to CAPTA made by the Comprehensive Addition and Recovery Act 2016

State Policies and Procedures developed to monitor Plans of Care, to determine whether and in what manner local entities are providing referrals to and delivery of appropriate services for substance-exposed infants and affected family members and caregivers

Protective services reports are screened into the intake unit at the Office of Children's Services. A protective service report regarding an infant born exposed to, or withdrawing from a controlled substance would be assessed to determine if additional services are required. The intake unit gathers information from the reported regarding the family demographics, maltreatment, children, caregivers, family, child safety, collateral contact information, and child's Tribal affiliation. The information gathering is essential in assisting the intake worker in evaluating the reported child maltreatment and justifying the screening decision made. The intake worker will screen the family for past history and determine if the report will be screened in for services or screened out.

Protective Services Reports that are screened in are given a priority level and the initial assessment process begins. The initial assessment worker will determine if there is present or impending danger for the infant. If there is, a safety plan would be developed with the family at that time. The safety plan would identify how the infant would remain safe, either in, or outside the home. Within 30 days of the initial assessment a case plan would be developed with the family to assess the infant's physical and mental health and additional services that may be needed for the child or the parent(s). Referrals to outside agencies to assist the infant or family may be made throughout any step from the protective service report to case closure.

The procedure Alaska uses to monitor plans of safe care is the same for the child's case plan. The elements of the plan are reviewed at each visit with the child, family members, and caregivers. Information gained regarding services needed, or issues with the child or family not accessing services would be pursued to find ways to meet the family and child's needs. Whenever a service is required as part of the case plan, feedback from the provider is required through the request for information. This allows the worker to track attendance and progress towards meeting goals.

Multi-disciplinary outreach, consultation and coordination to support implementation

The state of Alaska has participated in trainings provided by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Center for Substance Abuse Treatment and the Administration on Children, Youth and Families, Children's Bureau, Office on Child Abuse and Neglect, in partnership with the National Center on Substance Abuse and Child Welfare.

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

2016 Update: Alaska Statute 47.17.024 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.

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.

2017 Update: Since the 2016 update, OCS has had further discussions with DOL well as the Alaska Chief Medical Officer regarding CARA amendments. Additionally, during the 2017 legislative session, a Governor's Bill related to Opioid treatment were introduced that outlined many of the CARA amendments and provisions. This legislation is HB 159/SB 79; the bill has not yet passed the 2017 legislative session and may be held over into the 2018 legislative session. The changes to the child abuse reporting law changes have not yet been included in the existing legislation and it is unlikely that it will be added in future amendments of the legislation, despite efforts by OCS staff to have the language added to the proposed legislation. OCS continues to work with the DHSS Chief Medical Officer and DOL on legislative changes to the mandated reporting law.

2018 Update: In June 2017 HB 159 passed during a special session of the Alaska State Legislature. The legislation included training requirements for practitioners and the ability for individuals to have a Voluntary Nonopioid Directive. The legislation did not include changes to the child abuse reporting laws. As stated in the 2016 update Alaska Statute 47.17.024 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.

Continued efforts to support and address the needs of infants born and identified as being affected by substance abuse or withdrawal symptoms resulting from prenatal drug exposure, or a Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (ACYF-CB-18-06).

In 2017, the State of Alaska Division of Public Health (DPH), Section of Women's, Children's and Family Health (WCFH) launched the Alaska 4P's Plus project. A collaborative project between Alaska Division of Behavioral Health, Office of Children's Services (OCS), health care workers, and birthing centers, this program helps to address the needs of substance-exposed infants and their mothers, including requirements to make appropriate referrals to OCS and other essential services. The project relies on guidance from nationally recognized leaders in perinatal and child health who recommend universal screening of all pregnant women using an evidence-based tool, with brief intervention and referral to treatment when needed.

The project's primary goal is to provide health care workers, especially those in perinatal care settings, with evidence-based tools, skills and processes designed for early detection of infants at risk of or having been exposed to, substances, including alcohol, used by their mothers during pregnancy. Earliest identification of these infants optimizes opportunities for health care workers to plan and provide for immediate and ongoing medical care and interventions for both the infant and their affected family and/or caregivers. Beginning in August 2017, Alaska 4P's Plus partnered with Fairbanks Memorial, Alaska Regional, Mat-Su Regional and Bartlett Regional hospitals to screen all women being admitted for delivery, for all substances. Since that time, the project has screened about 10% of all mothers delivering live births in Alaska, and 42% of all births occurring at the four hospitals. At no cost to the birthing centers or the workers, the project promotes, supports and provides training in skills for:

- evidence-based and universal screening of all pregnant women for all substances
- effective brief interventions for all mothers who screen positive for any substance, and documentation as to whether the intervention was accepted by the mother. Effective brief interventions facilitate a collaborative and therapeutic approach with joint recognition of substance use by both the mother and the health care worker. The 4P's Plus process is titled: "I am concerned..."
- referral for treatment and other essential services as needed
- data collection and reporting of the above for use for resource assessment and development, for each region where participating hospitals provide services

The project has integrated efforts to reduce stigma associated with these issues. One of these is the "I am concerned..." intervention which teaches skills in supportive, fact-based intervening. Other tools include family and patient brochures with numerous resources listed in them:

- "Helping Babies with Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome":
<http://dhss.alaska.gov/dph/wcfh/Documents/perinatal/NAS%20Booklet.pdf>
- "Tobacco, alcohol and marijuana are legal in Alaska. Legal is not the same as safe."
<http://dhss.alaska.gov/dph/wcfh/Documents/perinatal/PregnantDrugUse.pdf>

Alaska 4P's Plus project aims to grow and develop its potential for serving all families with newborns in the State. The Alaska 4P's Plus screening process collects and reports surveillance data, but more importantly, it expands families' access to quality screening, and so optimizes identification of mothers and infants in need of treatment and other services at early intervention points when these services may be more effective for protecting children.

Under the Governor and Dr. Jay Butler's leadership, staff from WCFH, OCS and DBH applied for and were selected to participate in the National Governors Association Preventing Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome (NAS) Learning Lab. A core group of four, including the State Opioid Treatment Authority Representative, are collaborating to develop a State action plan aimed at reducing NAS. The plan heavily focuses on increasing alignment across these agencies, expanding Alaska 4P's Plus and increasing availability of comprehensive treatment services for women who are pregnant and at risk of substance use disorder.

Plans for how Alaska will use the increased CAPTA funding appropriation (ACYF-CB-18-06).

OCS is assessing whether the additional CAPTA funding can be used to support the planning and development of programs and initiatives to help families before they meet OCS intervention criteria. Currently, OCS is exploring the development of a process by which screened out reports can be addressed through the sharing of information with non-Tribal community resources, similar to the process that was put in place with Tribal entities as result of the Tribal Child Welfare Compact. It is hoped that by developing a new approach to support families at risk, including children who have been prenatally exposed to substances, child abuse and neglect will be prevented.

SECTION 12: CHAFEE FOSTER CARE PROGRAM FOR SUCCESSFUL TRANSITION TO ADULTHOOD/INDEPENDENCE PROGRAM (Chafee Program)/EDUCATION & TRAINING VOUCHERS (ETV)

Current state plan and agency activities meet all programmatic objectives and populations of youth eligible to receive services through the John H. Chafee Foster Care Program for Successful Transition to Adulthood and the Educational and Training Voucher (ETV) program. In response to Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA), Alaska will not be making any immediate changes regarding eligibility for services. In SFY19, OCS will assess the possibility of expanding the population of youth who may be eligible for services.

EIGHT PURPOSES OF THE CHAFEE PROGRAM

The Chafee 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.

2017 Update: The past year the independent living program has focused on increasing opportunities for youth to learn and experience skill-building opportunities to support adulthood. To that end, all regions have increased the number of life skills classes and have created opportunities for youth to receive hands-on training. Youth have been able to travel to different parts of the state and tour various vocational and technical training. The opportunities have included: Alaska's Institute of Technology, the Rights of Passage program at Dena'ina House as well as helping youth recover high school credits for graduation with extracurricular activities and inviting community partners to present to the class such as: Identify, Alaska's statewide LGBT organization. The IL program has also worked to increase knowledge and awareness of APPLA policy, conducting webinar trainings for staff and updating the policy with significant stakeholder participation.

2018 Update: The Independent Living Program continues to focus on increasing opportunities for youth to learn new life skills. The program has increased the number of life skills classes available. The Northern region has increased their classes from one time per month to twice monthly. The Southeast region has partnered with Facing Foster Care in Alaska (FFCA) to hold two classes per month with increased capacity for youth attendance and guest speakers throughout the year. This expansion has created opportunities for youth to receive hands-on training such as meal preparation the Zach Gordon Youth Center in Juneau. Efforts are being made to increase participation in the annual career conference and expanding financial support for housing for youth exiting foster care. IL staff have provided a greater number of trainings to OCS staff and Tribal partner agencies to increase awareness and understanding of the IL program and to promote increased youth participation in available IL classes, retreats, and other education and employment support services. This year, staff and professional trainings

were provided in all five regions on how youth can access the Education and Training Voucher; participate in Life Skills classes; and receive housing financial support.

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.

2017 Update: Facing Foster Care in Alaska provided statewide youth leadership retreats in August and November, with 101 foster youth and alumni attending the retreats. This participation and collaboration lead to finalization of the Foster Youth Bill of Rights brochure. The IL program will continue to provide a contract to conduct the retreats and increase to four statewide retreats per year. In October 2016, OCS conducted a career conference for statewide IL foster youth and former foster youth. This conference focused on providing hands-on career and vocational training experience. It was successful and highly attended, and will be included in the future retreat contract.

2018 Update: The Independent Living Program has focused on increasing opportunities for skill-building by adding capacity for youth attendance at retreats and Life Skills classes. In addition to increasing the number of life skills classes this year, more youth are invited to attend these classes where they can have real life experiences to help them consider future goals and career paths. This year, 33 youth participated in three days of hands-on employment and training experience which is an increase from last year's attendance of 24 youth. Regional Independent Living Specialists and the Facing Foster Care in Alaska organization partnered with local education and training agencies to provide the retreat, including Job Corp, a cosmetologist and Northern Industrial Training (NIT). Youth received information about various mentorship and recruitment opportunities, and spent a day at where they were permitted to drive semi-trucks, bulldozers and to use welding tools. Post-event evaluations were provided to the youth which will be helpful when planning future events.

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 11 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.

2017 Update: An education conference for youth was held in June 2016, and was a positive training opportunity for youth interested in exploring post-secondary education. IL continues to partner with the Child Welfare Academy to provide Educational and Training Vouchers (ETV) to foster youth.

2018 Update: The Child Welfare Academy, held its annual youth Education Conference in June 2017. This was a positive training opportunity for 27 youth interested in exploring post-secondary education. The partnership between CWA and the OCS IL Program continues to provide facilitated access to higher education and a rise in college completion rates for foster youth. OCS manages a contract with Facing Foster Care in Alaska to conduct an annual career focused retreat focusing on exploring various technical and vocational opportunities. This year, youth were able to explore the Job Corps program, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation resources, Northern Industrial Training, Cosmetology, and military opportunities.

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.

2017 Update: OCS continues to partner with grantee, Big Brothers Big Sisters (BB/BS) to provide enhanced mentorship opportunities. Big Brothers Big Sisters matches caring adult mentors with youth in foster care to help the youth be successful in life. This past year BB/BS has focused on recruiting adult mentors and enhancing their program in the Southcentral Region by hiring staff to facilitate programming for youth in the Mat-Su Valley. This year they also piloted a successful Thanksgiving Match Activity, in which youth and their mentors gathered to prepare and celebrate the holiday together. In the past year, 42 youth were referred to the mentorship program and 17 were matched with an adult mentor.

2018 Update: OCS continues to partner with grantee, Big Brothers, Big Sisters (BB/BS) to provide enhanced mentorship opportunities in Anchorage and the Mat-Su Valley. This year, BB/BS has focused on growing the program in the Mat-Su Valley area, increasing recruitment of both adult mentors and youth participants. Population specific recruitment has been enhanced to try to reduce the matching waiting period. In the past year, 21 youth were referred to the mentorship program and 11 were matched with an adult mentor. These numbers are down from last year, indicating that efforts should continue to be made to increase the numbers of referrals from OCS staff. BB/BS have been working on recruitment through presentations at IL activities and Life Skills classes, volunteer recruitment fairs, and through staff trainings and meetings at OCS. They have provided fun match activities such as dinners and get-togethers at local amusement centers. This year they hosted a very successful and highly attended 2nd annual Thanksgiving Match Activity, in which youth and their mentors prepared to celebrate the holiday. While BB/BS does not have dedicated staff for older youth mentorship in other areas of the state they have committed to supporting any matches that OCS staff make across the state.

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 eight 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.

2017 Update: There has been significant success with the TBRA program. Statewide, there has been an increase in out of custody youth accessing and maintaining subsidized housing through this program, most significantly in Anchorage. For the first time since conception, the TBRA program has filled all slots reserved for former foster youth and we have developed a waiting list for youth interested. This interest has grown from the IL program’s intentional effort to provide more IL classes that focus on the needs of older former foster youth. TBRA representatives have attended IL classes, presenting their information and helping youth to understand and complete the application process. This past year we have filled all 15 available TBRA slots in Anchorage and have a total of 25 former foster youth engaged with the program, maintaining their housing and positive rent histories. Currently, all statewide vouchers have been utilized.

2018 Update: There has been significant success with the Tenant-Based Rental Assistance (TBRA) program for IL eligible youth who are out of custody and until they are 23 years old. There has been a statewide increase of out of custody youth accessing and maintaining subsidized housing through this program, most significantly in the Anchorage area. OCS youth continue to fill all available vouchers in the program. OCS maintains a waitlist, and works with the Alaska Housing Finance Corporation to refill vouchers upon vacancy. This past year all 15 available TBRA vouchers in Anchorage have been filled and there are now a total of 20 former foster youth engaged with the program, maintaining their housing and positive rent histories. This past year IL staff have become highly skilled at engaging youth to obtain neuropsychiatric assessments and evaluations. This has proven to be pivotal in assessing a youth’s capacity and developing appropriate educational and training opportunities. The IL Specialists identify training and internship opportunities that are of interest of a youth, engaging the youth in their education and employment future. IL staff assist youth in securing employment by partnering with employment agencies such as The Nine Star organization in Anchorage which provides an earned stipend for youth participating in employment training opportunities. IL partners with community agencies such as Nine-Star, Denali Family Services, 4-H, Access Alaska, Restore, Inc. and others to support youth attaining their high school graduation or GED. The Alaska Center for Resource Families offers training space and assistance with ILP classes in Fairbanks and helps to facilitate projects by Facing Foster Care in Alaska such as setting up Facebook support groups for older youth and in encouraging older youth to register and turn out to vote.

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 Education and Training Voucher (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.

2017 Update: As it has proven to be increasingly successful over the past years, the CWA continues to administer the ETV program statewide. The CWA supports youth as they exit high school, obtain their GED or return to apply for post-secondary and vocational training and financial assistance to achieve it. This past year, the CWA has partnered with Nine Star to leverage funding to support youth entering Vocational Technical Programs/and internships. The CWA is also utilizing the University of Alaska’s Financial Literacy staff to better support youth in understanding money management and financial aid. The CWA continues to work closely with the OCS IL program to promote Alaska’s Vocational Training Center and conduct an annual Education Conference for college interested youth. This year we celebrated three fall graduates and one youth who is projected to graduate this spring, with 20 youth total who have completed their degree/certificate program to date.

2018 Update: The Child Welfare Academy (CWA) continues to administer the ETV program statewide. The CWA supports youth as they exit high school, to obtain their GED or to apply for post-secondary and vocational training. They help provide financial assistance to achieve their educational goals. The CWA entered an agreement with Alaska Pacific University to support youth entering the private collage. The CWA is also utilizing the University of Alaska’s Financial Literacy staff to better support youth in understanding money management and financial aid. Foster youth college attendance has increased this year and tuition rates have also significantly increased, which will soon force the discussion of setting participation limits. This year we celebrated 58 enrollees, including 35 new youth, and five graduates for a total of 25 youth who have completed their degree/certificate program to date.

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 meets 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.

2017 Update: Youth who turn age 16 or older while in foster care and out of home placement are eligible for Independent Living Services until they turn 21 years old. During this time, the dedicated IL staff focus on providing skill building opportunities for youth to explore, develop and enhance skills necessary to becoming a successful adult. 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. The IL staff work closely with the OCS staff, youth and their families to insure youth are aware of opportunities and to support the youth's participation. IL staff continuously reaches out to eligible youth to share information about housing and education assistance, career exploration and supports, as well as peer mentoring opportunities.

2018 Update: OCS Independent Living staff and Permanency staff, work together to ensure that both youth and/or their families are aware of the resources which continue to be available to them after they exit care. Youth who are out of custody make up more than half of the eligible program service population or 459 eligible youth. These youth are invited to and attend all of our career, education conferences and youth retreats. These youth often hold leadership roles during these events.

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 September 29, 2015 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.

2017 Update: Maintaining normalcy for youth in foster care is a priority for the Independent Living Program. 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. The IL program has become fully staffed with seven Regional Independent Living Specialists statewide, allowing the program to increase the availability of Life Skills classes. These events are very important as they deliver hands on life skills development opportunities, but they also provide an opportunity for peer mentorship to occur. In addition, the IL program continues to provide additional normalizing resources for youth. These include purchasing letterman jackets for our student athletes, supporting funding for travel to school sport events, helping youth train for and obtain their drivers' permit, and celebrating their success by supporting the purchase of graduation packages.

2018 Update: IL efforts to help maintain normalcy include: purchasing high school letterman jackets; senior photos or prom items, supporting funding for travel for school sporting events, helping youth pay for classes to obtain their drivers' permit, and celebrating their success by supporting the purchase of graduation packages. IL has also worked with high school travel groups to support a youth's school's international educational trip. IL organizes, supervises and transports youth to retreats, and career and educational fairs throughout the state. The IL Specialists identify training and internship opportunities that are of interest of a youth, engaging the youth in their education and employment future. The program supports travel to maintain family and Tribal connections and cultural events.

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 IL Program 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.

2017 Update: The Independent Living Program incorporates CFCIP and ETV programs. The IL Program 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:

- FFCA is a contractor to provide quarterly youth retreats and is an essential partner to developing youth focused policies and material. In 2017, FFCA provided two retreats, in August and November, with increased youth participation; 101 foster youth and alumni attended the retreats. This participation and collaboration lead to the finalization of the Foster Youth Bill of Rights brochure.
- Big Brothers Big Sisters provides enhanced mentorship opportunities. Big Brothers Big Sisters matches caring adult mentors with youth in the foster care system to help youth succeed in life. This past year, 42 youth were referred and 17 were matched with an adult mentor. Matches can do many things together, like going to a movie, getting a burger, learning to drive, working on a resume or homework, or going hiking, to name a few activities. Covenant House provided a community Sex Trafficking Training to both the Western and Southeast regions. This training provided the chance to learn about how sex trafficking is affecting our communities. The training focused on how each individual and professional may help curtail the growth by being aware, by asking the right questions, and by being there for youth.
- The Independent Living program is also focused on strengthening the relationship with tribal providers. The program hosts quarterly teleconferences with tribal providers, providing direct programmatic connections and technical assistance to deliver IL services and Chafee support to eligible youth. In the past year, regular attendance and direct referrals continues to increase. The first teleconference had one attendee with no familiarity with the IL program. A year later, the most recent had nine attendees and all had knowledge of the program and referrals of youth to participate.
- University of Alaska Anchorage (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 UAA systems to identify youth who may need outreach to utilize ETV funding. Collaboration and planning for the annual educational conference occurs annually.
- The Alaska Housing Finance Corporation (AHFC) collaboration continues to provide housing support to youth in transition around the state. In the past year this program has been incredibly successful, filling all slots reserved for IL foster youth, and now maintaining a waiting list.

2018 Update: The IL Program collaborates extensively 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 youth retreats and is an essential partner to developing youth focused policies and material. In 2018, a contract was revised with FFCA to provide two retreats in Anchorage and one in the Mat-Su Valley each year. FFCA organized and facilitated a winter retreat in Anchorage with a record setting 50 youth attending. The Mat-Su retreat was held in the fall and focused on career development and vocational/technical training opportunities.
- Big Brothers Big Sisters matches caring adult mentors with youth in the foster care system to help youth succeed in life. We are now in the fourth year of this collaboration. In the past year, 21 youth were referred and 11 were matched with an adult mentor.
- Covenant House is a grantee who provides emergency shelter services for youth who may otherwise be homeless or lack a safe place to stay. These services include assessing for alcohol and drug use, developing an individual treatment plan to support stabilization and assessment, crisis intervention, family mediation and limited counseling.

- The IL program continues to engage in opportunities to help strengthen the relationship with Tribal providers. In addition to hosting quarterly teleconferences with tribal providers, IL provided direct programmatic connections and technical assistance to deliver IL services and Chafee support to eligible youth. IL staff have increased their individual outreach to Tribal partners and provided staff trainings. Teleconference attendance and direct referrals from Tribal partners continues to increase.
- OCS collaborates with the University of Alaska Anchorage (UAA) Child Welfare Academy (CWA) regarding management of the Education and Training Voucher program. Together, the partnership identifies and verifies eligibility of youth applicants from Alaska and from out of state looking to attend an Alaska University. CWA is adept at utilizing UAA online systems to provide outreach to eligible students. Collaboration and planning for the Statewide IL educational conference occurs annually.
- The Alaska Housing Finance Corporation (AHFC) collaboration continues to provide housing support to youth in transition around the state. In the past year this program has been incredibly successful, filling all slots reserved for IL foster youth, increasing the budget for housing support, and continuing to maintain a waiting list. Several youth have maintained as long-term renters which has supported their exit to long-term stable housing upon expiration of their housing voucher.
- IL staff demonstrated expertise in assessing need for and assisting with application for adult guardianships, conservators and Payees. This process requires collaboration to ensuring older youth receive neuropsychiatric evaluations and that they have all documentation required to assess level of ability and resources that may be available such as SSI, APA, and waiver services available through the Division of Healthcare Services. In partnership with the Division of Senior and Disability Services, IL staff continues supportive efforts until the youth has successfully transitioned into Adult Assisted Living Homes if they cannot live independently.

USE OF FUNDS

2015 Update: 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 10 to address the 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

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.

2017 Update: OCS continues to utilize all funding for FFY 2015. The increased staffing and increased availability of Life Skills classes support the steady expenditure of Chafee funding for youth. In the coming year OCS will continue with the current program delivery activities and the current spending patterns, projecting to spend all allotted funding.

2018 Update: OCS continues to utilize all funding for FFY 2016. We will expend the FFY16 award by 9/30/18. The increased staffing and increased availability of Life Skills classes support the steady expenditure of Chafee funding for youth. We have also made a small increase of funding to available housing resources, in response to increased rents experienced in the renter's marketplace. Another area of concern for future funding is the amount of the Education and Training Voucher (ETV) not projected to meet the increasing demand of youth applicants and the increase in tuition rates. In the coming year OCS will continue with program delivery activities and the spending patterns, projecting to spend all allotted funding.

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 five 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. 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 SFY 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.

2017 Update: The Independent Living program is now fully staffed with seven Regional Independent Living Specialists across the state to provide IL services, resources and opportunities to foster youth and alumni: two in Anchorage, two in Southcentral, one in Southeast, one in Northern, and one in Western. This growth has been critical to support the 771 youth who are eligible for OCS Independent Living services. The focus for the program this past year has been to provide technical assistance to colleagues regarding the use of Another Planned Permanent Living Arrangement (APPLA) and maintain its restricted use as a primary permanency goal. The IL program partnered with Facing Foster Care in Alaska to deliver a webinar mandatory training for staff on this policy, and then working together to update the policy, adding clarity, accountability and provisions to further limit the use of this permanency goal. These activities have led to the reduction of the use of APPLA and increased staff communications and attention to other prioritized permanency goals.

2018 Update: Every aspect of IL programming has experienced significant growth in youth engagement and participation. This was made possible by moving IL classes to larger facilities, and partnering with community and volunteer entities to support IL youth education and employment goals. IL has continued to provide ongoing technical assistance to colleagues regarding the use of Another Planned Permanent Living Arrangement (APPLA) and to maintain its restricted use as a primary permanency goal, reducing the use of this goal by half in the past two years. IL has also begun providing expertise and support for youth, families and caseworkers to navigate the process of adult adoption. To support this IL staff have conducted statewide small and larger scale trainings, written newsletter articles, and participated in the policy development process.

These efforts and success in this area have increased knowledge and importance of continuing to search for permanent connections after the youth has reached the age of 18 and/or have exited foster care. This year Independent Living has supported 5 adult youth through finalization of adoption with their forever family.

In this next year OCS will continue to work on improvements to the system to support older youth who run away from their out of home placement. The program will continue to build capacity to support the increased rate of participation. IL staff will continue to hold quarterly teleconferences with Tribes and implement one face-to-face training on IL per region statewide for OCS, Tribal staff and community partners. Also, OCS will support the BB/BS mentorship program by sending out program information by mail to promote mentoring opportunities to youth and foster parents. IL will begin discussions related to the challenge of supporting increase applications with increasing tuition rates, and limited ETV funding.

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.

2017 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, exploration, and connecting youth with community education and supports through the IL Life Skills classes.

2018 Update: OCS IL staff continue to support youth education and youth advocacy for their self-identity, exploration, and connecting youth with community education and supports. This is conducted through Life Skills classes, providing supportive and inclusive materials and resources, and through individual meetings with the youth as they explore and develop their own thoughts and ideas. The State of Alaska OCS actively practices non-discriminatory and inclusive practices, which are affirmed in the Foster Children's Rights publication.

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 September 17, 2014 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.

2017 Update: The program hosts quarterly teleconferences with Tribal providers; providing direct programmatic connections and technical assistance to deliver IL services and Chafee support to eligible youth. In the past year, regular attendance and direct referrals from tribal partners to the OCS IL program has increased. The first teleconference had one attendee with no familiarity with the IL program. A year later, nine Tribal partners participated in the quarterly teleconference and all had knowledge of the program, with several making referrals of youth to participate. NYTD data is shared during these calls and with our other partner agencies: FFCA, Covenant House, Big Brothers Big Sisters and OCS leadership.

2018 Update: Included in the addition of multiple statewide trainings with partners and Tribal agencies and in teleconferences with Tribal partners, OCS staff provides information about NYTD data collection. Information is shared on how data is collected and how the OCS IL program is designed to meet these requirements. In this past year, the IL program directly and specifically restructured the youth retreat contract to require provisions of skills and experiences to meet those outlined in the NYTD instructions. When the contract was awarded, OCS and FFCA held multiple meetings to discuss retreat development and identifying the skills to be delivered. This will be an ongoing practice. Additionally, NYTD data is shared during monthly and quarterly calls with partner agencies including, Covenant House, FFCA, the Child Welfare Academy, Big Brothers Big Sisters and OCS leadership. This spring, FFCA hosted a Lunch and Learn for the Alaska State Legislature. FFCA met with Legislators and their staff, to share information about their agency and provide detailed information about the state of Alaska's foster youth by disseminating Alaska's NYTD data.

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.

2017 Update: NYTD data is the map from which programmatic success is monitored as well as identifying areas needing improvement. In the past year OCS has focused on enhancing service delivery in the areas of healthcare and education, this year, OCS added a focus of increasing housing education and preventing homelessness for IL eligible youth. The IL Life Skills classes have become a successful vehicle to provide information for these critical areas and have become very well attended. The IL program has shared NYTD data with youth during these classes and provided community agencies as guest speakers to provide focus area education. To that end IL has provided training on the Tenant Based Rental Assistance Program and has been successful at filling all 15 reserved slots in Anchorage. The development of a waiting list for that area has been put into place and has a total of 25 youth housed.

2018 Update: NYTD data is the map from which programmatic success is monitored as well as identifying areas needing improvement. OCS has focused on enhancing service delivery in the areas of healthcare and education. In the upcoming year IL will demonstrate enhanced focus on health and healthcare. The Alaska NYTD snapshot continues to identify youth knowledge about healthcare as an area for improvement. In a recently conducted study of the 21 year old cohort, many of the youth surveyed did not know what their healthcare insurance was, if they had any, or when and where to go if they need medical attention. This identified a specific area IL needs to address and provide skill building activities through IL classes, field trips, and ongoing education. Homelessness continues to be a concern demonstrated through NYTD data, which continues to pose a challenge for Alaska. The Tenant-Based Rental Assistance Program is being actively managed in order to ensure that the program is serving youth at its maximum capacity.

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.

2017 Update: The IL program has been conducting the third cohort of Age 17 surveys. The increased use of social media tools has enhanced IL success at connecting with youth to complete the survey. The data collected 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 as it has in the past.

2018 Update: OCS has defined the schedule and procedure for ensuring a compliant NYTD submission file:

All years – As soon as the reporting period has ended the Research Unit will run a test to determine what is needed for a compliant NYTD submission file. Additionally, a second list of records needing updated in ORCA for non-compliant elements is distributed. The Research Unit will run another test three weeks before the submission is due and a final list of records needing updated in ORCA for non-compliant elements is distributed. Additional tests to determine NYTD compliancy are run upon request or as needed.

Submission files – NYTD file submissions are required by 5/15 (Period A) and 11/15 (Period B) each year. OCS's goal is to have files submitted early on the first business day (5/1 and 11/1) of the month they are due. Baseline years (odd numbered FFY) – On the first business day of each month the Research Unit sends out a list of who needs to be surveyed on an on-going basis, not just for the current month. This on-going list will also identify the status of each survey as being due, completed, or late. All baseline youth identified as requiring an age 17 survey must be surveyed for the NYTD file submission to be compliant and surveys must be completed within a 45 day period after the child's 17th birthday. Along with the final two monthly lists of required age 17 surveys, the Research Unit will also send out a list of records needing updated in ORCA for non-compliant elements.

Follow-up years (even numbered FFY) – Research Unit will send out a list at the beginning of the period to identify age 19 and 21 follow-up surveys needing to be completed during the report period. One-month before the end of the reporting period RU will send out a second list identifying surveys still needing completed before the end of the reporting period along with an initial list of records needing updated in ORCA for non-compliant elements.

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

2015 Update: This specific section title was not included 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 three 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. 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 SFY 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.

2017 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 three 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. This past year leadership attention was focused on increasing knowledge related to the permanency goal of APPLA, limiting its use, and enhancing agency policy to provide clarifying provisions to limit its future use as a primary permanency goal. FFCA representatives and youth are invited to and regularly attend scheduled teleconferences regarding the CFSR.

2018 Update: OCS IL continues to have a strong collaborative relationship with Facing Foster Care in Alaska (FFCA). FFCA is a non-profit organization which serves as Alaska's youth advisory board. This partnership has proven to be highly supportive for older youth. In this past year, through this partnership IL has been able to support youth re-entering care to provide crisis intervention and stabilization. Focus on the goal of adult adoption has been brought forward by youth, with the support of FFCA, to promote adult youth permanency options. In this past year IL has celebrated the success of five adult adoptions with the youth and their new forever family. OCS and FFCA hold regular leadership meetings to enhance the partnership and this provides an avenue for OCS to gather feedback and ideas from youth.

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. In SFY 2016, a formalized agreement with the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation 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 SFY 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 SFY 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.

2017 Update: In FY 17, OCS has continued 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 be conducted in partnership with community stakeholders such as FFCA, GAL/CASAs, Tribal partners, foster parents and individual meetings with youth.

2018 Update: OCS has continued efforts from the past years to involve the public and private sectors in helping adolescents in foster care achieve independence. In this past year the use of ETV in private colleges and vocational training institutions has increased. FFCA in Southeast Alaska has increased Life Skills classes with the support of Juneau Community Foundation. IL staff in the Mat-Su Valley have partnered with Denali Family Services to utilize their facility for Life Skills classes, supporting capacity for increased youth attendance. Also in the Mat-Su Valley, IL has partnered with Onward and Upward to provide adventure-based learning camps for IL eligible youth.

Coordinate Services with Other Federal and State Programs

2015 Update: This specific section title was not included 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 SFY 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.

2017 Update: In SFY 17, OCS continues to partner with the Office of Public Advocacy, Tribal partners, AHFC as mentioned throughout this report. Additionally OCS continues to partner with Covenant House and the Division of Public Health.

2018 Update: OCS continues to enjoy the long-term partnerships with the Office of Public Advocacy, Tribal partners, AHFC as mentioned throughout this report. Additionally OCS continues to partner with Covenant House and the Division of Public Health.

Homeless Prevention

2015 Update: This specific section title was not included 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 AHFC collaboration continues to provide housing support to youth in transition around the state. OCS has a formal partnership for TBRA for youth with the AHFC.

2017 Update: The IL program will continue to work collaboratively with Covenant House of Alaska and Alaska Housing Finance Corporation to increase the available homelessness prevention resources for IL eligible youth.

2018 Update: The IL program continues to work collaboratively with Covenant House of Alaska to support homeless youth or youth who are in crisis. Additionally, resource availability has been increased slightly for Alaska Housing Finance Corporation to allow for higher capacity to support homelessness prevention for IL eligible youth. The IL program has also utilized alternative housing options to support youth such as an Anchorage based agency called ChangePoint, to help support youth who may have experienced sex trafficking in addition to homelessness.

Pregnancy Prevention

2015 Update: This specific section title was not included 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...”

2017 Update: The IL program continues to partner with Division of Public Health as well as regional partners to deliver education, resources and increase awareness of reproductive anatomy, birth control options, and information about sexually transmitted infections focusing on health relationships, medical care and personal hygiene. This is in addition to the ongoing one-on-one conversations IL staff have with youth discussing health choices and how to access help when they need it.

2018 Update: Partnering with Division of Public Health has proven to be helpful to youth receiving education, resources and increase awareness of reproductive anatomy, birth control options, and information about sexually transmitted infections, as well and information about health relationships, medical care and personal hygiene. While sexual education, healthy relationships and pregnancy prevention is regularly conducted in private meetings with the youth and their IL Specialist, it also occurs in Life Skills classes. This is a topic and service area that is regularly delivered by partner agencies during Life Skills classes, and in the next year IL plans to provide an educational training about high risk infants and safe sleeping during a youth retreat.

Training Regarding 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 include: *Fostering young adults: Considerations for resources families; Together- having the conversation;* and *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.

2017 Update: ACRF continues to provide information and training opportunities for foster parents, adoptive parents, and workers to support older youth in the foster care system. ACRF provides 31 self-study trainings regarding youth in foster care and independent living issues and they continue to provide on-site and face to face training to Resource Families who either are already providing care to youth or are interested in providing care to youth.

2018 Update: ACRF continues to provide information and training opportunities for foster parents, adoptive parents, and workers to support older youth in the foster care system. ACRF provides 31 self-study trainings regarding youth in foster care and independent living issues and they continue to provide on-site and face to face training to Resource Families who either are already providing care to youth or are interested in providing care to youth. Highlights of these trainings in the past year included hosting a fostering/parenting teen's conference in April 2017. This conference focused on how to help youth build lasting relationships that stay with them past their 18th birthday as well as understanding trauma and its impact on adolescent and young adult development. ACRF has also hosted training for resource families with an attorney focusing on the legal rights young adults have when they turn 18, and how to help them prepare for what this will look like before they turn 18.

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.

2017 Update: Alaska continues to help build awareness of human sex trafficking around the state. Through an OCS grant, Covenant House has delivered sex trafficking trainings to OCS staff and community partners in the Western and Southeast regions.

2018 Update: Alaska continues to help build awareness of human sex trafficking. IL staff have conducted trainings to field office staff to review sex trafficking screening policy and practice for youth who have run away. These trainings have been focused on locating youth on the run, supporting their transition back into care, and increasing awareness and understanding for staff that youth on the run are highly vulnerable to becoming victims of sexual and human trafficking. Trainings occurred in Anchorage, Juneau, Mat-Su and Fairbanks and OCS newsletter articles have been published on the topic for all staff. In the upcoming year, existing OCS policy will be reviewed to make recommendations on improvements to reporting, locating and supporting youth who were on the run, including conducting an assessment when youth return to care. An OCS grantee, Covenant House plans to deliver another Sex Trafficking training in the Northern region by the end of the year.

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

2017 Update: The Independent Living program is focused on strengthening the relationship with Tribal providers. The program hosts quarterly teleconferences with Tribal providers, providing direct programmatic connections and technical assistance to deliver IL services and Chafee support to eligible youth. In the past year, regular attendance and direct referrals continue to increase. On November 3, 2016, five Tribal entities including Kenaitze Indian Tribe, Ketchikan Indian Community, Tlingit and Haida Central Council, Kawerak and United Native Village of Unalakleet attended a teleconference regarding the IL program. The topic was a general IL introduction, but questions focused on employment opportunities, how IL provides for youth employment, and how IL supports job readiness. Program eligibility and how to connect IL staff to tribal staff were discussed. On February 2, 2017, eight Tribal partners attended the teleconference. Tribal attendees included: Tlingit & Haida Central Council, Kenaitze, Portage Creek/Bristol Bay Native Association, Chilkat Indian Village, Ninilchik, and Sitka Tribe. Questions were specific to program eligibility, resources and services available to older youth. One Tribal representative committed to helping to create an opportunity for IL to provide a presentation during their regional ICWA meetings on May 4, 2017.

2018 Update: Quarterly teleconferences with Tribal providers and regional trainings have proven to be a successful way to engage with Tribal partners. They have provided an avenue to learn more about the needs of Tribal youth, provide information about Chafee and IL resources, and find collaborative solutions to challenges. In the past year, IL has met with more than seven Tribal partners from across the state. This is a significant change from last year when most Tribal participants were only from the Southeast and Southcentral regions.

Describe Concerns Raised by Tribes on Accessing Chafee Services

2016 Update: 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 SFY 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.

2017 Update: OCS facilitates quarterly teleconferences to provide Tribes with information about the Chafee and independent living services available to youth but also to collaborate on how to improve Tribal access to Chafee services. Tribes have identified that they are not familiar with the Chafee services and OCS has worked to increase participation in quarterly teleconferences to share general information. The teleconferences have been increasingly collaborative opportunities to share resources and conduct detailed referrals for youth to receive Chafee IL support and services. The Tribal participants have shared that they want to be more informed when the OCS IL staff are in their area so they can encourage youth in their programs to meet with them to find out more information about the services.

2018 Update: Through increased contact with Tribes, the IL program have learned of myths Tribes have about accessing Chafee resources. One such myth is that a youth must exit Tribal custody and enter OCS custody in order to be eligible. The quarterly teleconferences have provided great opportunities to organize trainings for Tribal workers to learn more about the IL program and Chafee resources. Recently, in the Southeast region, an IL training was held and many Tribal workers attended, also including a CASA representative and a Tribal attorney.

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.

2017 Update: As it has proven to be increasingly successful over the past years, the Child Welfare Academy (CWA) continues to administer the ETV program statewide. The CWA supports youth as they exit high school, obtain their GED or return to apply for post-secondary and vocational training and financial assistance. This past year the CWA has partnered with Nine Star to leverage funding to support youth entering Vocational Technical Programs/and internships. The CWA is also utilizing the University of Alaska's Financial Literacy staff to better support youth in understanding money management and financial aid. The CWA continues to work closely with the OCS IL program to promote Alaska's Vocational Training Center and conduct an annual Education Conference for college interested youth. The ETV program reports there were 38 students receiving the Education and Training Voucher; 19 of which were new recipients, 23 received the Presidential Tuition Waiver, and 15 received OCS Tuition Scholarships. This year we celebrated three fall graduates and one youth who is projected to graduate this Spring, with 20 youth total who have completed their degree/certificate program to date. Additional information regarding ETV funds is available in Section 14 of this document.

2018 Update: The Child Welfare Academy (CWA) continues to successfully administer the ETV program statewide. The Child Welfare Academy recently hosted the annual Post-Secondary Education Conference with the OCS Independent Living Program. More than twenty youth gained first-hand knowledge of what being a college student is all about. Additional information regarding ETV funds is available in Section 14 of this document.

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.

2017 Update: No changes have been made to the administration of the ETV program in the last year.

2018 Update: No changes have been made to the administration of the ETV program in the last year. In the next year we will begin discussions related to the challenge of supporting increase applications with increasing tuition rates, and limited ETV funding.

Unduplicated Number of ETV Awards

Please see Section 14 and Appendix C 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 limiting 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. During the past year, the following accomplishments were made.

- Western Region licensed two emergency shelter homes 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.

2017 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 limiting 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. Accomplishments from the past year include the following:

- Each of the five regional teams in Alaska submitted Recruitment and Retention plans and budgets for Fiscal Year 17. The regional teams are comprised primarily of OCS staff (Licensing Specialists, Protective Services Specialists, ICWA Specialists and Permanency Planning Specialists), community and tribal partners and resource families.
- During SFY 17, the Emergency Relief Support (ERS) Pilot Program was implemented in two additional regions (Western and Northern). The ERS pilot was initiated in Southeast Alaska in March 2016. The ERS program provides support to unlicensed relative families via financial assistance during the first three months of placement of a child in care. Licensing supervisors utilize the contact with the resource families as means of a recruitment effort in order to fully explain the licensing process to families and walk them through the steps of becoming a licensed foster care provider.
- Throughout the fiscal year, events were held around Alaska to focus on recruitment and retention of resource families. In Anchorage, a subsistence celebration was held to honor and support current licensed and unlicensed relative care providers. Recruitment events were also held at the two-day Eklutna Tribal Pow-Wow as well as a bike blessing at the Alaska Native Medical Center. In an effort to recruit resource families who have skill sets to care for children with complex medical needs, a recruitment event was held at the Alaska Maternal Child Health and Immunization Conference. In Fairbanks, Tanana Chiefs Conference in partnership with Casey Family Programs, the Alaska for Center Resource Families and OCS hosted a one-day recruitment and retention event for rural interior resource families and applicants. The focus of the event was to streamline the application process for dually licensing

families with both the tribe and State. Application paperwork assistance was provided along with fingerprinting and training.

- As part of the statewide resource family recruitment, OCS continued to air the “One Child” Public Service Announcement (PSA). The 30-second commercial was filmed in Western Alaska and is narrated by the Department of Health and Social Services Commissioner Valerie Davidson.
- In an effort to identify resource families willing to care for children with complex medical needs, a workgroup was formed during SFY 17, to create a postcard for mailing to medical personnel throughout the State of Alaska. 5,000 postcards were distributed to OCS regional offices for mailing and usage at regional recruitment events.
- In the month of November, each of the Regional Permanency Planning Specialists held events to recognize National Adoption Month.
- During the month of May, resource family appreciation events were held around the state to recognize foster, adoptive, unlicensed and guardianship families providing care to children in custody. In addition, during the month of May each regional office mailed appreciation letter to resource families from the Director of the Office of Children’s Services. The appreciation letter also contained a copy of the newly created Resource Family Bill of Rights.
- During this fiscal year, each of the regional licensing units utilized foster care tangibles as part of the resource family recruitment efforts in their community. Tangibles include: ice scrapers, key chains, pens and tote bags displaying the phrase, “Make a Difference One Child at a Time” as well as a phone number to call if interested in more information regarding foster care. The tangibles were distributed at various recruitment events/presentations in the community such as health fairs, educational summits, cultural activities, sporting and outdoors gatherings, etc.

2018 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 limiting 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 updated SFY18 plan is located in Appendix D and the SFY19 plan will be completed in June of 2018. Accomplishments from the past year include the following:

- Each of the five regional teams in Alaska submitted Recruitment and Retention plans and budgets for FY18. The 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.
- During FY18, the Emergency Relief Support (ERS) program was implemented in one additional region, Anchorage. The ERS program was initiated in Southeast, Western, and Northern regions in 2016. The ERS program provides support to unlicensed relative families via financial assistance during the first three months of placement of a child in care. Licensing supervisors contact the unlicensed families in order to explain the licensing process and as a recruitment effort to increase the likelihood that the family will become fully licensed.
- Events were held around Alaska to focus on recruitment and retention of resource families. In Western Region, a PSA through KYUK radio, and a recruitment table set up at the Cam’ai Dance Festival. State Office placed a recruitment ad in the First Alaska magazine and the Alaska Nurse magazine. Southcentral held recruitment events at the Kodiak, Dillingham and King Salmon Health Fair. Anchorage had a recruitment table at the BIA Tribal Conference and other recruitment events throughout the region.
- In an effort to identify resource families willing to care for children with complex medical needs, a workgroup was formed during SFY 17, to create a postcard for mailing to medical personnel throughout the State of Alaska. In SFY 18 postcards were distributed to OCS regional offices for mailing and usage at regional recruitment events.
- In the month of November, each of the Regional Permanency Specialists held events to recognize National Adoption Month.
- During the month of May, resource family appreciation events were held around the state to recognize foster, adoptive, unlicensed and guardianship families providing care to children in custody. In addition, each regional office mailed appreciation letters from the OCS Director to resource families.
- Each of the regional licensing units utilized foster care tangibles as part of the resource family recruitment efforts in their community. Tangibles include: ice scrapers, key chains, pens and tote bags displaying the phrase, “Make a Difference One Child at a Time” as well as a phone number to call if interested in more information regarding foster care. The tangibles were distributed at various recruitment events/presentations in the community such as health fairs, educational summits, cultural activities, sporting and outdoors gatherings, etc. Additional tangibles will be ordered, such as car magnets, grocery bags, sport bottles, and ink pens.

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. On 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.

2017 Update: In the past year OCS and the HCO committee did a comprehensive review and update to the HCO plan. The committee is led by OCS and includes variety of partners including community medical providers, OCS staff, DBH, DPA, HCS, and Indian Health Services. Through a series of meetings and email discussions, the plan was updated in April 2017.

2018 Update: *Steps taken related to procedures and protocols established to ensure that children in foster care are not inappropriately diagnosed with mental illness, other emotional or behavioral disorders, medically fragile conditions, or developmental disabilities, and placed in settings that are not foster family homes as a result of inappropriate diagnoses (ACYF-CB-PI-18-06):*

- OCS CPS Manual Policies, 6.3.1 Medical, Dental and Vision Care and 6.3.2 Mental Health Care/Administration and Oversight of Psychotropic Medication provide detailed instructions and guidance for how to ensure children in foster care are properly diagnosed and treated for mental, behavioral or developmental disabilities. These policies are available at: <http://dhss.alaska.gov/ocs/Documents/Publications/CPSManual/cps-manual.pdf>
- OCS employs Psychiatric Nurses in every designated service region to provide individual oversight for the care needs of children with complex care needs. Specifically, OCS Psychiatric nurses monitor all children in care who are on one or more psychotropic medications; and help caseworkers navigate the care need for children. Additionally, Alaska continues to have a contract with Seattle Children's Hospital for secondary medication reviews for children on 2 or more psychotropic medications.
- Grand Rounds, an inter-departmental case staffing process coordinated through the DHSS Commissioner's Office, whereby high-level decision makers from the Divisions of Behavioral Health, Juvenile Justice, Senior and Disability Services, Public Assistance, Tribal Medicaid Services discuss complex cases with the aim of breaking down silos between divisions to collaboratively and creatively find solutions related to funding and placement of children in the least restrictive setting.
- The Complex Behavioral Collaborative (CBC) is a program offered through the Division of Behavioral Health that is utilized for children in OCS custody to avoid placements in psychiatric hospitals and secure residential settings. The CBC offers 3rd party treatment plan reviews, consultation and training to providers and family members to assist with keeping individuals with complex needs in the least restrictive setting.
- Placement Review Committees: Regional and Out-of-State Placement committees are used to review requests to place children in any level I-V in-state residential placement or out-of-state locked residential setting. This process ensures a thorough review of a child's placement criteria including the proper diagnosis of mental illness, emotional or behavioral or medical needs.
- OCS policy requires children in custody with complex needs to be assigned to the Alaska Medicaid Coordinated Care Initiative (AMCCI). This program provides care coordination, appointment scheduling and referrals to specialists to ensure children and youth are properly diagnosed and receive care in the most appropriate setting.
- Alaska's HCO plan was last submitted in April 2017 and remains current (see Appendix E). 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. OCS coordinates with the statewide Health Care Services (Medicaid) Pharmacy and MMIS databases to identify all children in care that are on psychotropic medications. These children are flagged and

their cases reviewed by the OCS Regional Psychiatric Nurses, who continue to have an integral role in the behavioral health oversight and management of medical issues for children at OCS.

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. 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: August 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 November 5, 2015. 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 November 23, 2015. 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.

2017 Update: In the past year, the State of Alaska Department of Health and Social Services and OCS responded to the following emergency situations:

- **August 2016 Glenn Highway Flooding:** On August 22, 2016, the Regional OCS office was notified that Glenn Highway 15 Mile was declared state disaster area due to Matanuska river flooding, erosion and possible landslide activity. All foster homes and in-home cases were reviewed to assure safety. No further action was indicated.
- **October 2016 Bethel Active Shooter Incident:** Bethel OCS office received report from the Bethel Police Department of an active shooter in the community at 10:20 am on October 6, 2016. The office initiated a lockdown, which ended mid-afternoon. No staff or clients were affected by the emergency and phones remained operational. The situation was diffused by local law enforcement. No further action was needed.
- **October 2016 Bethel Office Relocation:** due to structural issues with the building, OCS staff were relocated to other office sites. A system is in place to respond to reports of abuse and neglect and services have continued. It is unknown when all Bethel office staff will be located in the same building again.
- **October 2016 Hurricane Matthew Follow-up:** The Emergency Response Coordinator worked with the ICPC Program coordinator to follow-up to October hurricane and flooding in FL, GA and SC. Social workers associated with Alaska cases were contacted in affected states to determine the status of the children. It was determined that all children were safe and the families had emergency plans. No further action was needed.
- **December 2016 Kotzebue Blizzard:** During a significant blizzard in Kotzebue on December 29, 2016, the roof blew off the OCS office building. This incident happened during the night, and disrupted operations of the office for 20 hours. After the storm, operations were restored, and there were no reported injuries and no loss of office contents. The OCS office is located on the ground floor of the building and the sub-roof remained relatively intact. While the building was closed, OCS staff worked from their homes and continued to respond to calls as necessary. No further action was needed.
- **January 2017 Savoonga Storm:** Due to widespread storm damage on January 4, 2017, the Arctic island village of Savoonga was declared a disaster area. Power was disrupted and some displaced families were housed at the school. Foster families in area were contacted and children were determined to be safe. OCS staff maintained close contact with the school where families were housed. No further action was needed.

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. There was minor disruption of OCS office activities in Bethel and Kotzebue, but emergency and on-call staff was able to continue to provide services.

2018 Update: No significant changes have been made to the disaster plan, see Appendix F. Contact information for key staff has been updated, and core group notifications brought current. It was an anomalous year in that there was only one incident “in state” which required an agency emergency response. There were responses to multiple weather disasters and wildfires in the lower 48 where Alaska children were in out-of-state placements.

In the past year, the State of Alaska Department of Health and Social Services and OCS responded to the following emergency situations:

- **August 2017: Ketchikan, Alaska:** Extreme weather, flooding, erosion and possible landslide activity. While several homes and roads were affected, OCS office and homes remained intact and functioning. All foster homes and in-home cases were reviewed to assure safety and no OCS related homes were impacted. No further action was indicated.
- **August 2017: Hurricane and flooding-Texas and Louisiana:** Emergency response initiated by ICPC coordinator and Emergency Response Coordinator due to Hurricane warnings and flooding in TX and LA. Case workers associated with Alaska cases were contacted in affected states to determine the status of the children. Children placed in residential treatment facilities in affected areas were evacuated and relocated to different facilities. The adoption unit contacted all adoptive families living in affected areas to ensure that any system checks for payment of

adoption/guardianship subsidies would reach the families, or if a temporary change needed to occur for a mailing address. Upon follow up after the events, it was determined that all children were safe and the families had implemented emergency plans. No further action was needed.

- **October 2017: California Wildfires Sonoma County:** No affected ICPC Children, CPS offices remain operational.
- **December 11, 2017: California Wildfires Ventura County:** OCS identified that ICPC children were displaced by loss of home in fire. ICPC program worked with Ventura county liaison on needs assessment and response.

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. A committee has been developed to meet regularly to keep this plan updated.

2017 Update: The Supervisor Leadership Council (SLC) and CWA worked closely to update the Staff Development Plan this last year. Some identified changes to the plan include: reviewing new mandatory reporting training, an online course on substance use through SAMHSA, online training on human trafficking, online suicide prevention training, and a webinar on Normalcy and Prudent Parent Standards. A committee has been developed to meet regularly to keep this plan updated.

2018 Update: Updates were made to the Staff Development Plan this year. Some of the additional training topics added included understanding opioids, online training on LGBTQ, and understanding child functioning. This last year our initial training increased from three weeks to five weeks for line staff within their first year of employment. The additional two weeks consist of topic specific information of mental health, substance abuse, and domestic violence. An additional day was add on legal information such as how to testify, working within the courts. Enhanced discussion and instruction on topics such as permanency, quality contacts and case planning, case review process, historical trauma, and resiliency. The current staff development plan is included in Appendix G.

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 six 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 two 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.

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.

2017 Update: The information regarding employee training and OCS staff education and qualification has not changed since the 2016 update. OCS does not have a minimum number of continuing education requirements for staff, but trainings are provided throughout the year to provide ongoing staff development. The minimal qualifications for a protective services specialist I/II is a bachelor’s degree for an accredited institution with a major in a social, behavioral or health science, law, or a related field. 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. The Staff Development Plan (SDP) was updated in December 2016.

2018 Update: The requirement regarding new staff qualifications, employee training and ongoing OCS staff education did not significantly change in the last year. The minimal qualifications for a protective services specialist I/II is a bachelor’s degree for an accredited institution with a major in a social, behavioral or health science, law, or a related field. 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. OCS does not have a minimum number of continuing education requirements for staff, but trainings are provided throughout the year to provide ongoing staff development. In the last year two new trainings have been added to the Staff Development Plan (SDP) for OCS Staff to receive during their first year of training. This includes viewing a webinar on opioids and participating in a LGBTQ online training module. SDP was updated in November 2017 and can be found in Appendix G.

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 below. The data is in regards to protective services manager I &II and protective services specialist I – IV.

Female	Male	Total
214	67	281
76%	24%	100%

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

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)

2015 Age of OCS Protective Services Staff

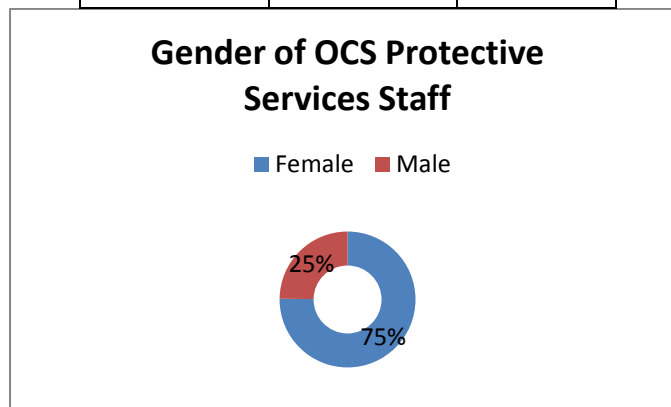
20-29 yrs.	30-39 yrs.	40-49 yrs.	50-59 yrs.	60 yrs. +	Total
47	90	74	45	25	281
17%	32%	26%	16%	9%	100%

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 14-16, below. This data includes information regarding protective services manager I &II and protective services specialist I – IV.

Female	Male	Total
212	70	282
75%	25%	100%



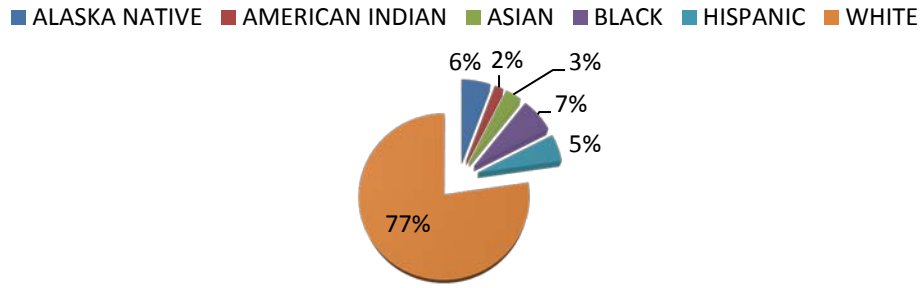
Source: Report by Alaska Department of Administration, Division of Personnel & Labor Relations (3/15/16)

Racial Identification of Staff – Self Report

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)

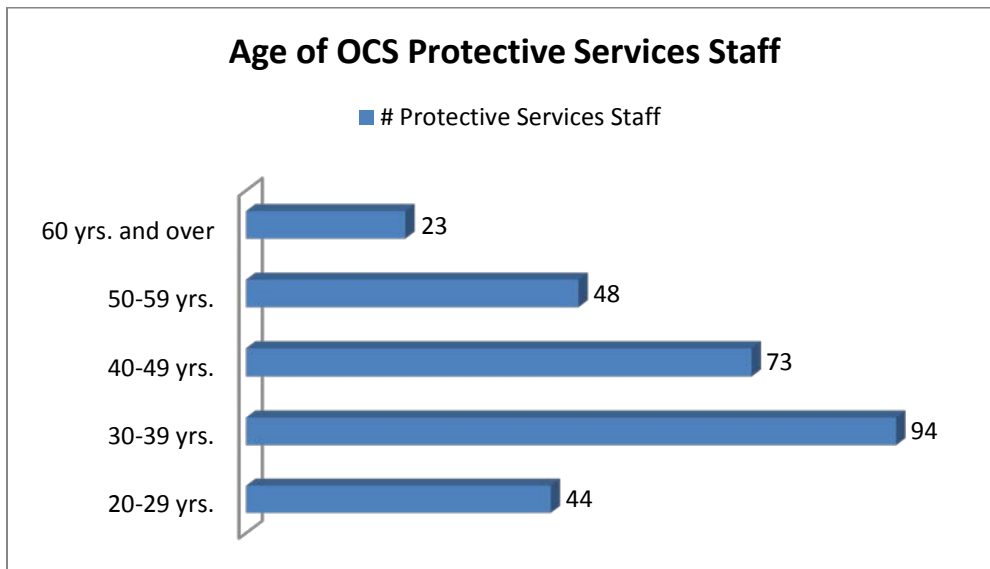
Racial Identification of OCS Protective Services Staff



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

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

2017 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 17-19 below. This data includes information regarding protective services specialist I – IV; protective service managers are not included in this data.

Gender of OCS Protective Services Staff		
Female	Male	Total
185	69	254
73%	27%	100%

Source: Report by Alaska Department of Administration, Division of Personnel & Labor Relations (12.31.16)

Racial Identification of Staff – Self Report						
ALASKA NATIVE	AMERICAN INDIAN	ASIAN	BLACK	HISPANIC	WHITE	Total
16	4	12	20	15	187	254
6.30%	1.57%	4.72%	7.87%	5.91%	73.62%	100%

Source: Report by Alaska Department of Administration, Division of Personnel & Labor Relations (12.31.16)

Age of OCS Protective Services Staff					
20-29 yrs.	30-39 yrs.	40-49 yrs.	50-59 yrs.	60 yrs. +	Total
42	79	70	44	19	254
16.54%	31.10%	27.56%	17.32%	7.48%	100%

Source: Report by Alaska Department of Administration, Division of Personnel & Labor Relations (12.31.16)

2018 Update:

The following data was provided as of 12/31/2017:

Job Class	Female	Male	Total
PROTECTIVE SERVICES MANAGER I	9	1	10
PROTECTIVE SERVICES MANAGER II	4	1	5
PROTECTIVE SERVICES SPECIALIST I	35	17	52
PROTECTIVE SERVICES SPECIALIST II	111	44	155
PROTECTIVE SERVICES SPECIALIST III	10	3	13
PROTECTIVE SERVICES SPECIALIST IV	36	6	42
Total	205	72	277

Source: DHSS OCS Protective Services EE Counts by Gender, Ethnicity and Age as of 12/31/2017 - 180412

Job Class	AK NATIVE / AMER. IND.	ASIAN	BLACK	HISPANIC	PACIFIC IS. / HAWAIIAN	TWO OR MORE RACES	WHITE	Total
PROTECTIVE SERVICES MANAGER I							10	10
PROTECTIVE SERVICES MANAGER II			1				4	5
PROTECTIVE SERVICES SPECIALIST I	8	2	7			2	33	52
PROTECTIVE SERVICES SPECIALIST II	11	3	10	9	1	3	118	155
PROTECTIVE SERVICES SPECIALIST III	4	1					8	13
PROTECTIVE SERVICES SPECIALIST IV	7	3	4	1			27	42
Total	30	9	22	10	1	5	200	277

Source: DHSS OCS Protective Services EE Counts by Gender, Ethnicity and Age as of 12/31/2017 - 180412

Job Class	Age Groups					Total
	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60 +	
PROTECTIVE SERVICES MANAGER I		4	2	4		10
PROTECTIVE SERVICES MANAGER II		1	1	3		5
PROTECTIVE SERVICES SPECIALIST I	20	18	6	8		52
PROTECTIVE SERVICES SPECIALIST II	20	52	40	32	11	155
PROTECTIVE SERVICES SPECIALIST III		4	2	4	3	13
PROTECTIVE SERVICES SPECIALIST IV	1	12	17	7	5	42
Total	41	91	68	58	19	277

2018 Update: Human resource information is maintained by the Department of Administration, Division of Personnel & Labor Relations (DOP). However, the DOP has been unable to provide this data since the statewide accounting system, AKSAS, was migrated to a new system, IRIS, in 2016. OCS will continue to reach out to DOP about obtaining this data.

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 on June 9, 2015 showed that PSS I/II staff had an average assignment of 26 cases.

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.

2017 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 77.2 cases; and management of 1.5 unlicensed providers. This data demonstrates an increase in workload for the PSS IV staff at OCS. Protective Services Specialist I & II are the front line workers at OCS. Statewide ORCA data shows that on April 17, 2017, there were 176 PSS I/II staff in Alaska. At that time, the average caseload statewide was of 29.6 cases. This data shows an increase in number of PSS I/II staff and an increase in average caseload from last year. The information in the paragraph above is provided for comparative purposes to previous years.

OCS is changing how we review caseload data, and looking at it as workload data. Caseload data submitted in prior years has been a straightforward (point in time) comparison of open cases to funded positions. OCS has determined that this approach is not sufficient to accurately calculate caseload. Additional data is being submitted using a new approach that resolves the following problems

1. Point in time data is not reliable. The new approach averages the number of screened in Protective Services Reports (PSRs) each month to derive the Initial Assessment (investigation) caseload. Family Services cases (In Home and Out of Home) are averaged in the same way. The combined results represent a monthly average of open cases.
2. Although most Initial Assessment casework is completed within 30 days, many of these cases remain open for significantly longer. Prior submissions included these cases, which artificially inflates the number of cases per worker. As mentioned in #1, using screened in PSRs to calculate IA cases is the most accurate means of calculating the average IA caseload.
3. Some funded caseworker positions (PCNs), i.e. Intake workers, are not actually case carrying positions. The new code also quantifies the impact of vacancies by calculating the period of time PCNs are not available for case assignment, and reducing the number of case carrying PCNs accordingly.

2018 Update: Currently, Alaska OCS does not have formal requirements regarding average number or maximum number of cases per worker. With the passage of Alaska’s new Children Deserve a Loving Home Act, new caseload restrictions for caseworkers will go into effect in June, 2019.

On 4/11/2018 there are 5,704 open cases with 38 supervisors providing direct supervision to 195 caseworkers. According to this point in time data:

- Supervisors support 5.1 workers
- Supervisors provide oversight for 150 cases
- Caseload is 29.3 cases per caseworker

*Source: RU determined open CPS and PTPR cases. Supervisors and workers are determined from DHSS OCS Protective Serviced EE Counts by Gender Ethnicity and Age as of 12/31/2017 – 180412; Intake staff is subtracted from the report to achieve the total for this update

JUVENILE JUSTICE TRANSFERS

2015 Update: See table 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. The 2015 update provided data by calendar year and in 2016 update OCS began reporting by State Fiscal Year. See table below.

2017 Update: Please see Table 16 below, for updated discharge data.

Table 16: Multi Year Look Back of OCS 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
SFY16	Transfer to DJJ	2
SFY17	Transfer to DJJ	1

Source: State of Alaska Online Resources for Children in Alaska (ORCA) Report to DJJ RR00147

2018 Update: One (1) youth was transferred from the care of Alaska’s child protection system to the State’s juvenile justice system in SFY17. This information is determined from the effective date of a placement end reason of ‘Custody Released to DJJ’ and a discharge from all placements reason of ‘Transfer to DJJ’. The system requires a corresponding legal custody date to match the discharge from all placement dates. See Table 16 for a comparison of previous year transfers.

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 – 2018 Updates: No changes in the past year.

SOURCES OF DATA ON CHILD MALTREATMENT DEATHS

2015 Update: Alaska has a statewide Child Fatality Review Team. 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.

2017 Update: The procedure for review of child maltreatment deaths remains the same for 2017. 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.

2018 Update: The procedure for review of child maltreatment deaths remains the same for 2018. The Maternal Child Death Review program uses data from case reviews to develop public health recommendations to reduce mortality of Alaskan mothers, infants, and children. The program organizes on-going multidisciplinary committee reviews of most infant, child, and maternal deaths that occur in the state or to Alaskan residents to identify preventable causes and contributing factors, including barriers and system issues. The review committee is made up of professionals and child advocates who possess knowledge and experience relating to infant and child health and welfare. Members have expertise in a variety of areas relevant to infant and child health including neonatology and perinatology, family practice, obstetrics/gynecology, pediatrics, pathology, child welfare and social work.

OCS continues to use SMEO, and MMIR as sources of child maltreatment fatality data for NCANDS reporting. The data is entered into the Agency file section of the NCANDS online submission.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING VOUCHERS

2015 Update: The ETV served a total of 57 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 40 students during the 2015-2016 academic year. The ETV program is anticipating its highest number of graduates of the academic year with nine graduations scheduled to occur.

2017 Update: The ETV served a total of 38 students during the 2016-2017 academic year. The program is showing consistent provision of services to youth over time.

2018 Update: Please see Table 17 and Appendix C for the number of youth who received ETV awards and the number of new voucher recipients by school year.

Table 17: 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	College Graduates
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
2016-2017	38	46	23	15	3
2017-2018		58			

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.

2017 Update: During FFY 2016, no children were identified as having been adopted from other countries and entering OCS custody as a result of abuse or neglect. A grantee provides supportive post-adoption services including brief case management, crisis intervention, training, and education to adoptive families in order to promote safe and strong homes for adoptive children, regardless of if they were adopted domestically or internationally.

2018 Update: During FFY 2017, no children were identified as having been adopted from other countries and entering OCS custody as a result of abuse or neglect. A statewide OCS grantee provides services for post adoption support including crisis support, referral and advocacy to adoptive families in order to promote safe and strong homes for adoptive children, regardless of if they were adopted domestically or internationally.

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, the FFP will be reduced by 3%. More information and data can be found in Section 7 of this report.

2017 Update: OCS will submit required data on monthly caseworker visits with children in foster care no later than December 15, 2017, 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 73%. This is a decrease from the previous year's data. The percent of children visited in their home was 66%, which exceeds the 50% federal standard. OCS has additional caseworker visit data provided earlier in this report. Because Alaska failed to meet the standard for performance, the FFY 2017, FFP will be reduced. Monthly case worker visits have a history of and continue to demonstrate decreased performance; this item will be addressed in Alaska's Program Improvement Plan. More information and data can be found in Section 7 of this report.

2018 Update: OCS will submit required data on monthly caseworker visits with children in foster care no later than December 15, 2018, 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% as OCS achieved 67%. This is a decrease from the previous year's data. The percent of children visited in their home was 63%, which exceeds the 50% federal standard.

*Source: RR00124 Federal Monthly Caseworker Visits Measure, FFY2017

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.

2017 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.

2018 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.

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. Title IV-B, subpart 2 funds were not 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. Title IV-B, subpart 2 funds were not spent on administrative costs for the Monthly Caseworker Visit fund.

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, because of 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.

2017 Update: Per the CFS-101, Part III, Alaska received \$554,003 in FFY 2015 funds from title IV-B, subpart II and spent those funds as follows:

- \$138,501 or 25% of its FFY2015 award on family preservation services.
- \$0 or 0% of its FFY2015 award on community-based family support services.
- \$304,702 or 55% of its FFY2015 award on time-limited family reunification services.
- \$110,800 or 20% of its FFY2015 award on adoption promotion and support services.

Per the attached CFS-101, Part III, Alaska spent \$0 or 0% of its FFY2015 award on administrative costs. Title IV-B, subpart 2 funds were not spent on administrative costs for the Monthly Caseworker Visit fund.

In FFY 2015, 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 2015, because of 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 the availability of other funding to support 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 Section 4 of this document, OCS intends to spend future awards for the four identified service categories. However, AK is planning to spend less than 20% on family support services and adoption promotion and support services due to other available funding options.

2018 Update: Per the CFS-101, Part III, Alaska received \$551,091 in FFY 2016 funds from title IV-B, subpart II and spent those funds as follows:

- \$110,218 or 20% of its FFY2016 award on family preservation services.
- \$27,595 or 5% of its FFY2016 award on community-based family support services.
- \$358,209 or 65% of its FFY2016 award on time-limited family reunification services.
- \$55,069 or 10% of its FFY2016 award on adoption promotion and support services.

Per the attached CFS-101, Part III, Alaska spent \$0 or 0% of its FFY2016 award on administrative costs. Title IV-B, subpart 2 funds were not spent on administrative costs for the Monthly Caseworker Visit fund.

In FFY 2016, 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 2016, because of 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 the availability of other funding to support this service, as well as low utilization of the program. OCS utilized other funding sources to support adoption promotion and support services.

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.

2017 Update: Alaska will submit a revised FFY 2017 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.

2018 Update: Alaska will submit a revised FFY 2018 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 \$20,000 from reallocation of unneeded portions of other state's allocation for the ETV Program and \$10,000 from the IV-B Subpart 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. 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.

2017 Update: Alaska has completed Part I of the CFS-101 form to request title IV-B, subpart 1 (CWS) and title IV-B, subpart 2 (PSSF and Monthly Caseworker Visit funds), CAPTA, CFCIP and ETV funds. 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. .

2018 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. 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 H.

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.

2017 Update: 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.

2018 Update: 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 H.

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.

2018 Update: Alaska reports expenditures under title IV-B, subparts 1 and 2, CAPTA, CFCIP and ETV programs on the Financial Status Report, SF-425.

STATE CONTACTS

2019 APSR Coordinator Contact information: [Natalie Norberg, 907-465-3170, Natalie.norberg@alaska.gov](mailto:Natalie.norberg@alaska.gov)
On June 30, 2017, Alaska's 2018 APSR can be located on the OCS publications page:

2018 CAPTA Coordinator Contact information: Yvonne Hill, 907-465-3458, yvonne.hill@alaska.gov

SECTION 16: SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

- Appendix A: CFSR Alaska Final Report 2017
- Appendix B: Citizen Review Panel Annual Report 2017 and Office of Children's Services Response
- Appendix C: Education and Training Voucher Awards
- Appendix D: Foster and Adoptive Parent Diligent Recruitment Plan
- Appendix E: Health Care Oversight Plan
- Appendix F: Continuity of Operations (Disaster) Plan
- Appendix G: Staff Development Plan and Training List
- Appendix H: CFS-101 (parts 1, 2, & 3) PDF Version
- Appendix J: CFS-101 (parts 1, 2, & 3) Excel Version