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Research Brief

TO: Representative Geran Tarr
FROM: Tim Spengler, Legislative Analyst
DATE: February 17, 2014
RE: Alaska Child Sexual Abuse Statistics, Fiscal Year 2013
LRS Report 14.254

You asked for information on child sexual abuse allegations in Alaska for the most recent year available.

The Office of Children's Services (OCS), Alaska Department of Health and Social Services, provided us with the sexual abuse allegation data below.¹

Allegations of Child Sexual Abuse Received by the Office of Children's Services in FY 2013²

- 2,296 total allegations received, involving 1,817 unique alleged child victims³
 - Of these allegations, 971 were in the Anchorage Region, 286 in Northern Region, 575 in Southcentral Region, 242 in Southeast Region, and 222 in Western Region
- 1,487 allegations were *screened out*, of which 884 were *screened out* to law enforcement⁴
- 809 allegations were *screened in* for initial assessment⁵

Of the 809 allegations *screened in*:

- 126 allegations were *substantiated*, involving 117 unique child victims
- 646 allegations were *not substantiated*⁶
- 37 allegations were in initial assessments that were closed without finding⁷

Of the 1,817 alleged child victims:

- 1,245 were female

¹ Naomi Harris, OCS Community Relations Manager can be reached at (907)465-3548. Definitions in the footnotes come from OCS Child Protective Services Manual (<http://dhss.alaska.gov/ocs/Documents/Publications/CPSManual/cps-manual.pdf>).

² What constitutes child sexual abuse is discussed in Alaska's Child in Need of Aid (CINA) statutes at AS 47.10.011(7).

³ One or more allegations may be associated with a single incident of abuse. The number of allegations should not be interpreted as the number of incidents.

⁴ A report is *screened out* when OCS determines the information received does not meet the definition of maltreatment (as described in AS 47.10.011) or for any of the following reasons: insufficient information to locate, multiple reports on same incident, child residing out-of-state, referred to a tribe that has exclusive jurisdiction, or referred to law enforcement. When allegations made to OCS are *screened out* to law enforcement, it generally means that the abuse was allegedly perpetrated by an individual who resides outside the child's home. These cases are investigated by law enforcement personnel.

⁵ During the initial assessment OCS gathers information to determine whether the child is unsafe or at high risk of maltreatment and the extent of the familial protective capacities. A report is *screened in* when the information received indicates a child may be unsafe or at high risk of maltreatment by a primary caregiver, parent, custodian or guardian.

⁶ At the conclusion of an investigation, OCS determines that an allegation was *substantiated* or *not substantiated*. A *substantiated* finding is one where the available facts indicate a child suffered harm as a result of abuse or neglect as defined by AS 47.17.290. A *not substantiated* finding is one where, based on the available facts, the worker is unable to determine if a child suffered harm as a result of abuse or neglect, or where there are no facts to support the allegation that a child suffered abuse or neglect.

⁷ An initial assessment may be closed without finding when the family cannot be located.

- 556 were male
- 16 the gender was unknown
- 747 were Native
- 951 were Non-Native
- 119 race was undetermined
 - Of the 1,817 alleged victims, 771 were in Anchorage Region, 238 in Northern Region, 485 in Southcentral Region, 183 in Southeast Region, and 147 in Western Region.⁸

We hope this is helpful. If you have questions or need additional information, please let us know.

⁸ Children may be alleged victims in one or more allegations and regions. In regional counts, alleged victims are counted once in each region reported. In Statewide counts, alleged victims are counted once. The sum of regional counts will not add to the statewide total.