



THE STATE
of **ALASKA**
GOVERNOR BILL WALKER

Department of
Health and Social Services

FINANCE AND MANAGEMENT SERVICES
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February 15, 2017

The Honorable Les Gara
Alaska State Legislature
State Capitol, Room 511
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

Dear Representative Gara:

On February 3, 2017, the Department of Health and Social Services received the following questions regarding the budget increment amendment for Office of Children's Services.

The Division's responses are as follows:

1. *Cost of upping training to New Jersey Standard. 6-8 weeks of training depending on experience (less if the person had frontline caseworker experience and needs less training).*

Increasing the level of training to the New Jersey Standard of 6-8 weeks would cost \$555.5 for travel and \$1,685.1 in training expenses. The division anticipates training to take place in Anchorage over eight weeks, broken up by periods in the field where new caseworkers may be provided hands on experience with an assigned OCS caseworker, a Protective Services Specialist III. The federal reimbursement for training would likely be about 43% percent.

Total: \$2,460.6 (UGF \$1,277.2)

Training would be provided by the Child Welfare Academy in Anchorage through an existing contract between OCS and the University of Alaska Anchorage. In addition, division would add five Protective Services Specialist III's that would provide the hands on field level training including direct mentorship, introductions to court hearings and supervised case work. Each new position, dedicated to region level training, will be positioned in the regions, with two placed in Anchorage.

2. *Cost of extra staff needed to allow new caseworkers to meet federal standard for 75% match – no more than 6 families (or cases Christy?) for first 3 months; 12 for first 6 months.*

The cost of extra staff needed includes:

Personal Services \$4,494.5 (26 PSS I and 20 PSS II)

Travel	\$338.1 (includes multiple trips into Anchorage for training)
One Time Capital	\$294.4 (desk, chair, IP Phone, Computer)
Office Space	<u>\$45.2 (48 SF)</u>
Total	\$5,172.2 (UGF \$3,361.9)

- 26 new Protective Services Specialist I (Case Worker)
- 20 new Protective Services Specialist II (Case Worker)

The 75% FFP is not a direct match. All training costs must be allocated to the benefiting title IV-E foster care, adoption assistance, guardianship assistance, or other state/federal program consistent with the state’s approved cost allocation plan and in accordance with the cost principles delineated at 45 CFR Part 75 Subpart E. The 75% FFP is applied after the cost allocation and results in an estimated federal reimbursement rate between 40-50%.

3. Cost of enough supervisors/mentors to adequately mentor new caseworkers during the first 12 months.

Supervisors

Personal Services	\$1,275.2
Travel	\$66.2 (1 (includes multiple trips into Anchorage for training))
One Time Capital	\$57.6 (desk, chair, IP Phone, Computer)
Office Space	<u>\$8.8 (48 SF)</u>
Total	\$1,407.8 (UGF \$915.1)

- 9 new Protective Service Specialist IV (supervision)

According to the Child Welfare League of America, front line caseworkers are most successful when they receive proper mentorship and timely reviews of their work and recommendations. It is recommended that a ratio of one supervisor for every five caseworkers be common practice. To provide that proper support, a total of nine Protective Services Specialist IV’s would need to be added to maintain appropriate supervision levels.

Support Staff

Personal Services	\$2,438.1
Travel	\$151.2 (1 (includes multiple trips into Anchorage for training))
One Time Capital	\$179.2 (desk, chair, IP Phone, Computer)
Office Space	<u>\$27.5 (48 SF)</u>
Total	\$2,762.4 (UGF \$1,795.6)

- 5 new Protective Services Specialist III (Training On-Site)*
- 12 new Social Services Associate II (Support staff, 1 for every 4 PSS I and PSS II)
- 12 new Office Assistant II (Support staff, 1 for every 3.7 PSS I and PSS II)

It is possible that expenditures associated with the Protective Services Specialist III’s may be eligible for the enhanced 75% percent rate. The enhanced Title IV-E reimbursement rate related

to very structured, intensive and concentrated training where the worker is closely assessed, monitored and provided regular feedback.

According to a 2012 workforce study report contracted by OCS with Hornby Zeller Associates, the proper ratio for Social Services Associates to Protective Services Specialists is one to four; while the proper ratio for Office Assistants is one to 3.7.

4. If I could see the exact federal language that establishes the 75% match requirement that would be great.

The regulations at 45 CFR 1356.60(b) and (c) specify what is considered a training cost and what is considered an administrative expense under title IV-E. Section 1356.60(c) explains that the State's cost allocation plan shall identify which costs are allocated and claimed under title IV-E. Federal regulations at 45 CFR 1356.60 (b)(2) require that all training activities and costs funded under title IV-E must be included in the title IV-E agency's training plan for title IV-B. Title IV-E agencies may determine the manner in which they allocate costs but must do so in accordance with the cost principles delineated at 45 CFR Part 75 Subpart E. The cost-sharing or matching requirements for the title IV-E training program are addressed in regulation at 45 CFR 235.66(a), and referenced by 45 CFR 1356.60(b).

The State may claim title IV-E at the 75 percent match rate for the periods of time the employee is actually participating in training. Consistent with the regulations at 45 CFR 1356.60(b)(3) and 235.61(a), an employee must be in some form of structured training related to title IV-E administrative activities s/he will perform in order for the State to claim FFP for properly allocated trainee costs at the 75 percent match rate. In some circumstances a State or local agency employee may be considered to be in training while carrying a partial caseload and the costs of that employee's salary, fringe benefits, travel or per diem may be reimbursable at the 75 percent level. To meet these circumstances, the employee must carry a caseload that is significantly smaller than that for the journeyman position in the State. In addition, the work experience component must be fully detailed and justified as an integral component of the initial in-service training program in the State's training plan for title IV-B, as required by 45 CFR 1356.60(b)(2).

5. And any receipt authority needed to take in the 75% match. Use whatever savings would be achieved by the increased federal match to hire part of the additional above workforce.

It may not be realistic to bring 84 new staff on board in the first year. OCS anticipates that it would likely bring on 28 staff each year over three years and it envisions increased workforce stabilization in about five years as a result of the implementation of the New Jersey Standard.

The full potential of savings under the enhanced 75% FFP for training would be a gradual increase. Based on estimate thus far, OCS would need the following additional authority, which may be able to be ratcheted back in future years.

Year 1: 2018: 28 staff + enhanced training

Federal - \$1,484.4
UGF - \$2,449.9

Year 2: 2019: 28 staff + enhanced training

Federal - \$1,484.4
UGF - \$2,449.9

Year 3: 2020: 28 staff + enhanced training

Federal - \$1,484.4
UGF - \$2,449.9

If you have any additional questions, please contact me at 465-1630.

Sincerely,



Christy Lawton
Office of Children's Services

cc: Amanda Ryder, Fiscal Analyst, Legislative Finance
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