

# ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

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## REPRESENTATIVE DAN SADDLER

August 21, 2017

Senator Bert Stedman, Chair  
Legislative Budget and Audit Committee  
1900 First Ave., Suite 310  
Ketchikan, AK 99901

Dear Senator Stedman,

I am writing to request a operations audit of the Village Public Safety Officer (VPSO) program. While working on the State of Alaska's operating budget for FY2018, I developed questions about how the program is financed and managed that I believe can best be answered with an audit. The following audit objectives have been drafted in consultation with Kris Curtis, Legislative Auditor.

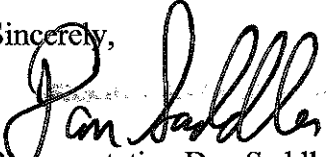
1. Determine if the VPSO grant program has been administered in a fiscally prudent manner by DPS and in compliance with legislative authorization. This evaluation should include a review of areas such as cash management, grantee monitoring, use of funds by grantees for appropriate purposes, indirect costs as a percentage of grant award, Department of Public Safety staff response to problems; reasonableness of equipment costs; appropriateness of budgetary amendments for grantees; appropriateness of budgeting for VPSO coordinators separately from indirect costs and funding used for non-VPSO purposes.
2. Evaluate the degree the VSPO program has been effective at providing public safety services to rural Alaska villages. This evaluation should include the following: turnover rate FY 13 through FY 17 and cause of turnover; average years of experience of VPSOs; number of filled positions FY 13 through FY 17; VPSO success at serving communities (basic law enforcement, fire safety and prevention, search and rescue, and emergency first aid); location of unfilled VPSO positions and cause; and funding used for non-VPSO purposes.
3. Determine whether alternate forms of funding for the VPSO program have been considered by DPS such as contracting directly with villages to employ VPSOs and/or working through U.S. Department of Justice Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) program. This should also consider whether VPSOs would qualify for funding under the federal COPS program.
4. Provide a summary of VPSO annual program data including: operating authorization, grantee name, original grant award, total amendments, indirect costs, indirect as a percent of award, average number of VPSO filled, and vacancy as a percentage of authorized positions.

5. The legislative auditor should also pursue other areas of concern that come to her attention during the audit.

I understand audits cost money. But I believe an audit of the VPSO program is justified because of the public's high expectations for the program, its important role in providing rural public safety services, and the large amount of state money it receives. There is a strong possibility an audit could reveal significant savings and efficiencies.

I stand ready to help you in any way I can. Thank you in advance for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



Representative Dan Saddler