

Office of Children's Services -Citizen Review Panel Response 2018- 2019

For House HSS Subcommittee

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#1: Improved Administrative Review Process

Background: Federal Requirements tied to funding require a formal case review of all child protection cases every six months until case closure.

- ▶ To comply, OCS employs six full time staff and two administrative assistants, to facilitate the federally required reviews.
- ▶ These staff complete 2855 reviews per year.
- ▶ Alaska is one of only 2 states who have not incorporated these functions into the court system.

#1: OCS Response:

OCS remains steadfast in our position that Administrative Reviews must be incorporated into the judicial review process.

- ▶ Reduce redundancy, better use of resources
- ▶ Increased accountability for all parties

OCS will be implementing a judicial review pilot in the Fairbanks jurisdiction as part of our Federal Program Improvement Plan.

#2: Improve Outcomes for Family Reunification

Background: Reunification is the priority goal for all children in foster for at least the first 9 - 12 months in care.

- ▶ In 2018, of the children who exited foster care 54.5% were reunified
- ▶ National rate for reunification is: 49%

#2: OCS Response

OCS remains aligned with the priority to improve rates of reunification.

Reunification is largely dependent on two systemic issues:

1. Stable workforce
2. The accessibility of appropriate community services.

New Opportunities created by the 1115 Behavioral Health Waiver and Family First Prevention Services Act

1115 Behavioral Health Waiver

- ▶ Services designed to target families at risk of entering the child welfare system
- ▶ Continuum of community based, in-home family support services
- ▶ Current Gap Analysis includes OCS to ensure the unique needs of families involved with child welfare are being discussed and addressed with providers.

Family First Prevention and Services Act

- ▶ Allows states to claim reimbursement for 50% of costs for the services after they have been provided
- ▶ Children and parents must meet eligibility requirements:
 - the child must be a “candidate” for foster care, or
 - be a pregnant or parenting youth in foster care
- ▶ Allows the following evidence-base services to be reimbursed:
 - Mental health prevention and treatment services provided by a qualified clinician for not more than a 12 month period.
 - Substance abuse prevention and treatment services provided by a qualified clinician for not more than a 12 month period.
 - In-home parent skill-based programs that include parenting skills training, parent education and individual and family counseling for not more than a 12 month period.

Preliminary List of Allowable Services:

<i>Prevention Services/Mental Health:</i>	<i>Substance Abuse:</i>	<i>In-Home Parent Skill-Based:</i>
Parent-Child Interaction Therapy	Motivational Interviewing	Nurse-Family Partnership
Trauma Focused-Cognitive Behavioral Therapy	Multisystemic Therapy	Healthy Families America
Multisystemic Therapy	Methadone Maintenance Therapy	Parents as Teachers
Functional Family Therapy		

#3: OCS Response - Cultural Competency

OCS is concerned about and committed to addressing potential racism and cultural bias among its workforce. This has been addressed in an ongoing fashion through multiple strategies, including:

- Tribal State Collaboration Group Meetings

- Extensive required training on the Indian Child Welfare Act for new workers

- Cultural Humility curriculum is required for all new staff

- Two-day Knowing Who You are Training, provided and required for the last decade - designed to help case workers address and acknowledge the unique experiences of racial minorities.

- Cultural Resources for Alaska Families: Traditional Health and Wellness Guide

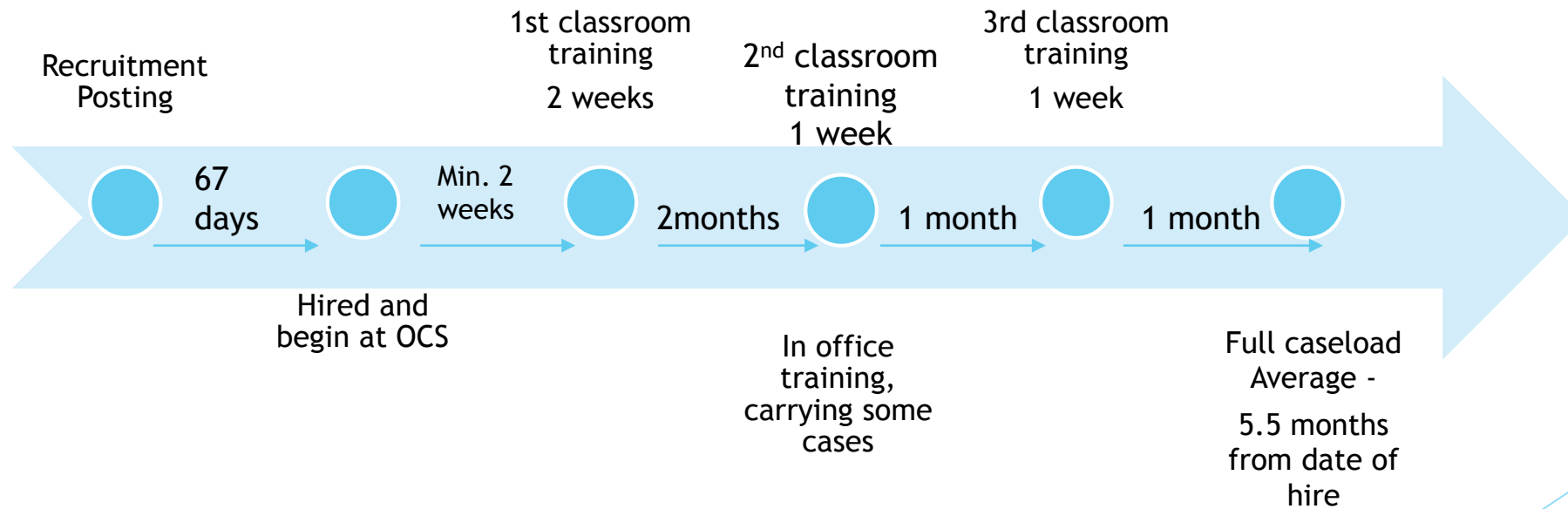
- Tribal partners are involved on hiring teams for caseworkers and key management positions.

#4: Finding relatives for placement of children in foster care

Federal and State Mandates to identify, contact and invite relatives to be involved within 30 days of removal.

- ▶ Since 2014 we have increased the number of children placed in relatives by nearly 10%
- ▶ Efforts to comply:
 - Automated noticing system
 - Tribal Compacting
 - Training and new policy for supervisory certification

Children Deserve a Loving Home Act HB 151 - Update on New Positions



#5: OCS Response to Worker Burnout and Vacancies

- ▶ Dedicated staff to Recruitment and Retention
- ▶ Letters of Agreement to address unique challenges
- ▶ Commitment to Recruiting the Right People for the Job
- ▶ Develop Managers and Supervisors
- ▶ Support for Wellness Activities
- ▶ First Year Onboarding
- ▶ Mentorship Program
- ▶ Recognition and Welcome Packages
- ▶ Exit Surveys
- ▶ Social media and local recruitment efforts

Questions?

Thank you!