



31st Alaska State Legislature  
House Finance Budget Subcommittee  
Department of Public Safety  
FY21 Operating Budget

**Chair:**

Rep. Bart LeBon  
Capitol Room 418  
465-3709

**Members:**

Rep. Drummond  
Capitol Room 108  
465-3875

Rep. Hannan  
Capitol Room 432  
465-4766

Rep. Claman  
Capitol Room 118  
465-4919

Rep. Kreiss-Tomkins  
Capitol Room 411  
465-3732

Rep. Thompson  
Capitol Room 204  
465-3004

Rep. Jackson  
Capitol Room 428  
465-3783

Rep. Merrick  
Capitol Room 500  
465-3777


**Committee Aide:**

Joe Byrnes  
465-2872

## Memorandum

January 18, 2020

TO: Amanda Price  
Commissioner-Designee, Department of Public Safety

FROM: Representative Bart LeBon   
Chair, House Finance DPS Budget Subcommittee

RE: FY21 Budget Questions

The House Finance DPS Budget Subcommittee is on a tight timeline to evaluate the FY21 budget proposal. In order to make the most productive use of our brief time, I have prepared the following questions based on key issues our office has identified along with the Legislative Finance Division.

I would appreciate it if the Department could attempt to answer these questions to the best of their ability during our first meeting on January 23 and follow up with written responses to my office by close of business on Wednesday, January 29. As we move through the subcommittee process, I suspect additional questions will arise and I will attempt to provide these to the Department in a timely manner to ensure adequate time to respond prior to close out. Please contact my office for clarification.

Attachment: January 20, 2020 HDPS Questions for the Department

CC: Kelly Howell, Department of Public Safety  
Casey Bluhm, Office of Management and Budget

**Alaska State Troopers**

1. What is the status of Alaska State Trooper (AST) retention and recruitment efforts, and how many positions are currently filled out of the 389 included in the FY20 Management Plan? Of the filled positions, how many were new hires in 2019?
2. Could the Department please provide a month-to-month position count for the Alaska State Trooper Detachments component for the year 2019?
3. How are trooper position vacancies distributed? What locations or stations are there vacant trooper positions?
4. What is the Department's rationale for the additional trooper positions and reducing the vacancy factor if there are still unfilled positions within the Detachment's allocation? What was the reason the Department did not choose to repurpose unfilled trooper positions to rural Alaska instead of requesting additional positions?
5. How were the stationing locations chosen for the 15 additional requested trooper positions to rural Alaska?
6. Will these added positions focus on Legislative intent of prioritizing the investigation of sex crimes in rural Alaska?
7. How does the Department calculate the cost of adding an Alaska State Trooper?
8. Are the one-time start-up costs for the additional trooper positions included in the request? If not, how does the Department intend to cover those costs?
9. Why are Alaska State Trooper recruits at the training academy funded out of AST Detachment personnel services as opposed to the Training Academy budget?
10. Could you please provide a breakdown of trooper locations by detachment and headquarter location? How many positions are posted within the Fairbanks North Star Borough, Matanuska-Susitna Borough, and Kenai Peninsula Borough?
11. Could you please provide crime rates by area of the state per/1000 people (or the relevant reporting statistic)? What regions of the state is crime most prevalent? What are the crime rates within the most populated urbanized areas that AST patrols such as within the Fairbanks North Star Borough, Matanuska-Susitna Borough, and Kenai Peninsula Borough?
12. Could you please provide a current breakdown of the number of Alaska Police Standards Council (APSC) law enforcement officers active by their respective jurisdictions?

13. Has the Department considered cost-sharing partnerships with municipal/borough governments to offset the costs of troopers posted to urban areas?

#### **Village Public Safety Officer (VPSO) Program**

1. What is the status of FY20 grant funding to the VPSO program? Have all available funds been distributed to grantees? Do grantees report additional need beyond what has been provided by the Department
2. Has the Department met Legislative intent regarding collaboration with the VPSO grantees to develop a recruitment and retention plan?
3. What changes, if any, have been implemented with the Department's management of the VPSO program during FY20?

#### **Alaska Wildlife Troopers**

1. What is the rationale behind reducing the vacancy factor of the Alaska Wildlife Troopers? Between the requested \$470.1 of increased funding for reducing the vacancy factor and the line item transfer of \$868.8 of services to personnel, would the positions budget not be overfunded? Why is the \$868.8 in services funds no longer considered necessary and available to transfer to personnel services?

#### **Anchorage Emergency Communications Center**

1. Where are the cost savings being realized for the transfer of dispatch personnel and the cancellation of the Wasilla Emergency Dispatch Center contract and cancellation of other contract work with external agencies? Could any of those savings be reallocated to cover the 7 PFTs (\$872.8) requested for the DPS Anchorage Emergency Communications Center?
2. Does the Department intend to close the Ketchikan Dispatch Center or any of the other dispatch centers around the state?
3. What operational challenges does the Department foresee through the consolidation of emergency dispatch centers, including lack of backup capacity or concerns with Alaska Land Mobile Radio (ALMR) reliability?

### **Laboratory Services**

1. How was the additional FY20 funding provided to help facilitate third-party testing contracts with Laboratory Services utilized?
2. What is the status of reducing the sexual assault test kit backlog? Is the Department meeting statutory requirements for processing sexual assault test kits? Is the Department still contracting with third-party laboratories?
3. Were the additional 2 PFT positions provided in FY20 filled? How many positions within Laboratory Services remain vacant?
4. Why is the requested additional forensic technician based in Juneau?

### **Fire and Life Safety**

1. How has the Department worked to reduce the turnaround time for building plan reviews with the Division of Fire and Life Safety, and what is the status of these efforts?
2. How was the \$90.0 transferred from Admin Services to the Fire and Life Safety Budget utilized to reducing turnaround times for building plan inspections? Was the \$90.0 utilized to contract out a vendor to assist with the review workload?
3. Was consideration given to changing the fee structure, reopening the Building Plan review office in Fairbanks, or utilization of part-time or seasonal positions to meet the demand?
4. How quickly does the Department expect to fill the requested 4 PFT positions within Fire and Life Safety and reduce the current turnaround time?

### **Alaska Wing Civil Air Patrol**

1. What were the impacts of the elimination of state support for the Alaska Wing Civil Air Patrol?
2. Has the Department met Legislative intent to "strengthen the liaison between the State and the Civil Air Patrol's capabilities in partnership with the Department's mission"?