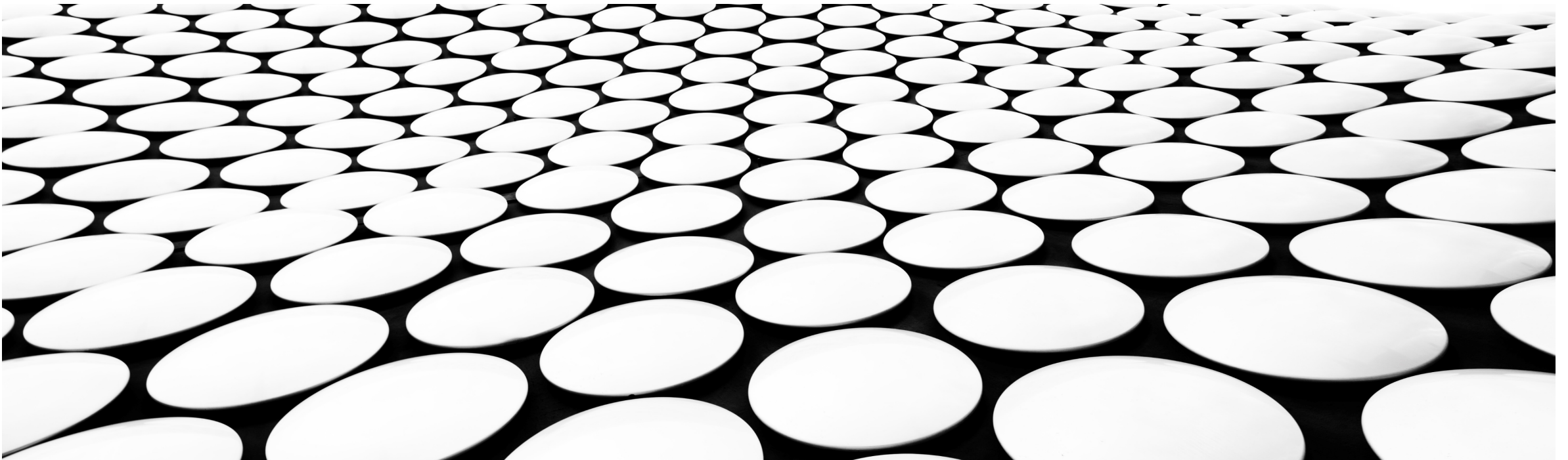

SB 81 VILLAGE PUBLIC SAFETY OFFICER PROGRAM UPDATES

SENATE COMMUNITY & REGIONAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

APRIL 20, 2021

BY SENATOR OLSON



VPSO WORKING GROUP INTRO AND BACKGROUND



Formed by legislative leadership
May, 2019



Working group members:

Senator Donny Olson, Co-Chair;
Representative Chuck Kopp, Co-Chair
Senator Click Bishop;
Senator Mike Shower;
Representative Bryce Edgmon; and
Representative George Rauscher

VPSO GRANTEE ORGANIZATIONS

Chugachmiut.

Copper River Native Association

Aleutian Pribilof Islands Association

Kodiak Area Native Association

Kawerak

Northwest Arctic Borough

Association of Village Council Presidents

Bristol Bay Native Association

Tanana Chiefs Association

Central Council of Tlingit & Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska

WORKING GROUP ASSIGNMENT



Coordinate with stakeholders to examine the underlying causes of the recruitment and retention obstacle and provide proposals to turn around the rate of personnel turnover within the VPSO program.



Working Group Active August – December 2019



Met twice in January to review, then adopt the working group's report.

FROM WORKING GROUP TO BILL INTRODUCTION

May 9, 2019, Senate President and House Speaker create VPSO Working group

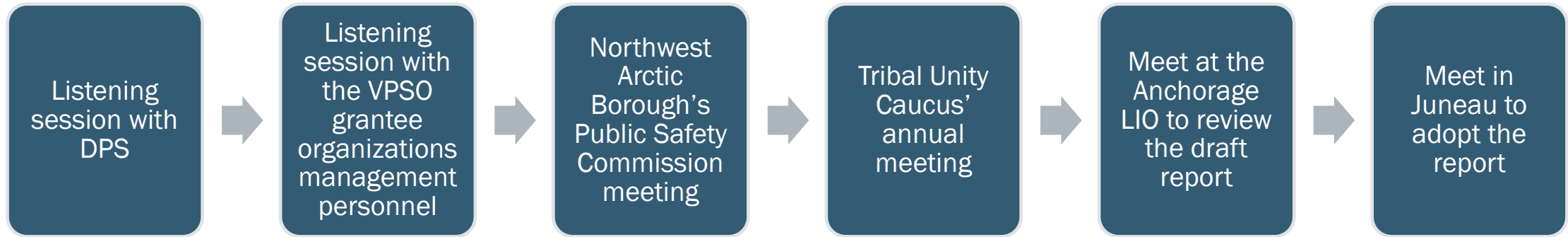
Working Group Activities August 2019 – January 2020

Working Group Report 1st Draft January 9, 2020

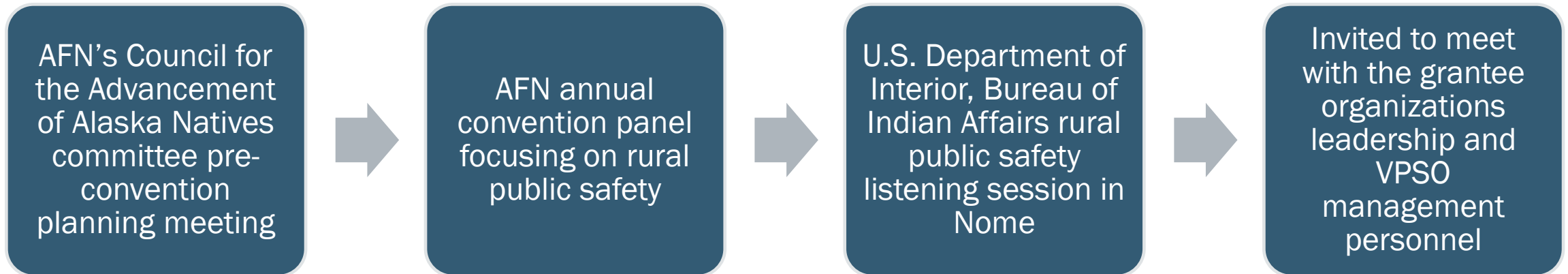
Working Group Adopt Report
January 24, 2020

HB 287
February 24, 2020

FULL WORK GROUP ACTIVITIES



CO-CHAIR ACTIVITIES



VPSO WORKING GROUP LONG TERM RECOMMENDATIONS: 4

Work to define the true cost of providing fully operational public safety services throughout rural Alaska.

Continue working with federal partners on:

- Training: with formal state tribal recognition, tribes may be able access federal law enforcement training programs;
- Greater recurring federal funds for public safety: Alaska is a Federal P.L. 280 state where states have concurrent criminal jurisdiction with Tribes, unlike non-P.L.280 states. The BIA historically does not request tribal court or law enforcement appropriations for P.L 280 states, making the law an unfunded mandate for P.L. 280 tribes and states.

Explore passing a state version of the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act. If passed, the state could formally compact with tribes and offer the maximum amount of program design/redesign and financial flexibility for the various VPSO grantees.

Consider creating upward mobility for VPSO positions: either through compacting or state statutory changes or both, consider providing for different levels of VPSO personnel related to levels of training; the highest VPSO level being equivalent in function, training, and pay to a State Trooper.

Recommendation 1

Update the VPSO statutes to provide a clear law enforcement and public safety vision and mission for the program and provide VPSO personnel clear law enforcement duties and powers.

Recommendation 2

Create more financial flexibility for the VPSO grantee organizations in the updated VPSO statutes.

Recommendation 3

Restore VPSO funding levels to FY18 levels.

Recommendation 4

Fund unfunded mandates.

Recommendation 5

Related to Recommendation 4, in an updated VPSO statute, mandate that grant awards pay grantee organization their full indirect costs.

Recommendation 6

Move financial grant management to the Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development.

Recommendation 7

Maintain operational advisory, training, and experience requirement oversight at the Department of Public Safety.

Recommendation 8

In statute create a Tribal/Grantee organization consultation process before the Department can change training and experience requirements.

Recommendation 9

Revised versions (consistent with the recommendations of the Working Group report) of current VPSO regulations need to be placed in statute in order to operationalize the VPSO program and to facilitate the grant management moving to the Department of Commerce.

CURRENT VPSO STATUTE: AS 18.65.670

- Relevant operating language:
 - (a) There is created in the Department of Public Safety a village public safety officer program . . .
 - (b) With funds appropriated for that purpose, the commissioner of public safety shall provide grants to nonprofit regional corporations and Alaska Native organizations for village public safety officers. . . .
 - (c) The commissioner of public safety may adopt regulations related to village public safety officers, including minimum standards and training, criteria for participation by a community, a municipality, an Alaska Native organization, or a corporation, and the interaction between the Department of Public Safety and village public safety officers. . . .