



Public Assistance FY2022 Overview

*House Health & Social Services Finance
Subcommittee*

Director Shawnda O'Brien

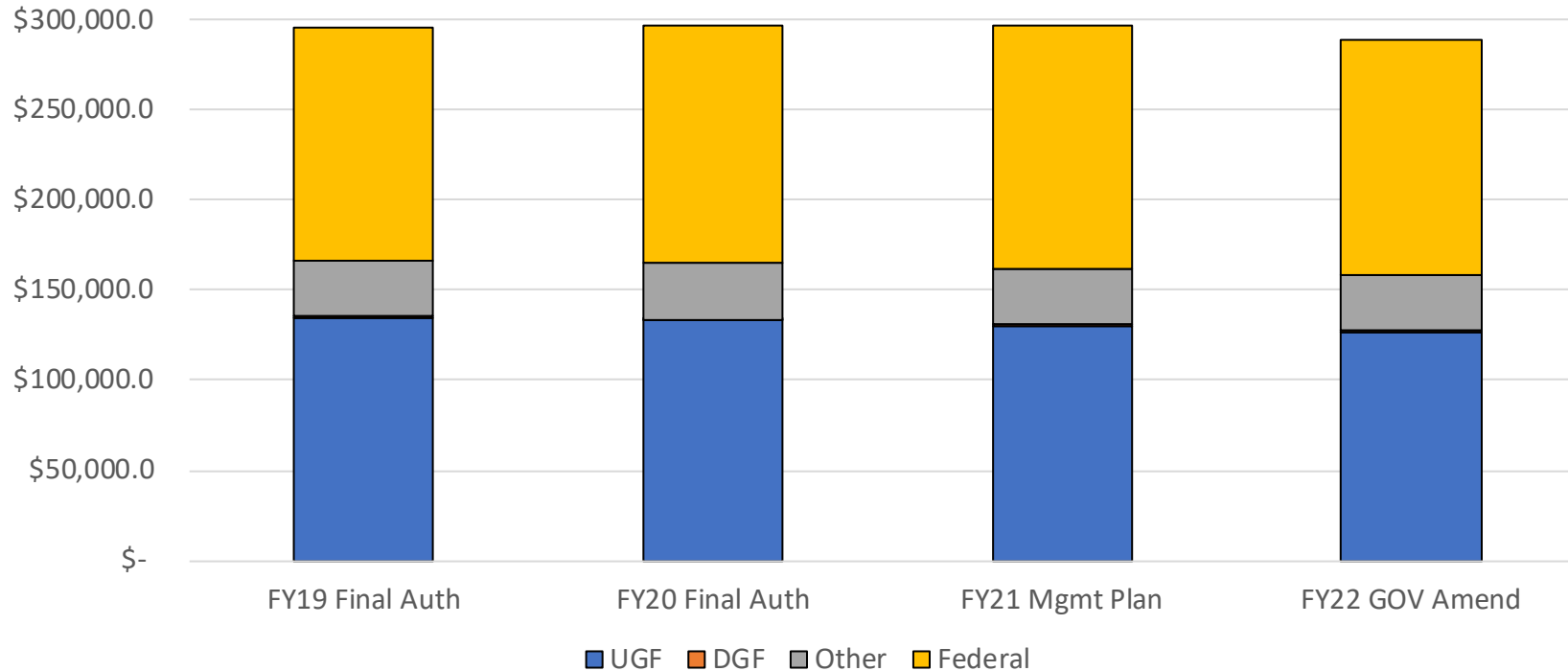
March 11, 2021



Division of Public Assistance Overview

- Determine Eligibility for 15 Public Assistance Programs
- Quality Control
- Fraud Investigation
- Family Nutrition and Education
- Breastfeeding and Peer Counseling
- Child Care Licensing
- Child Care Assistance
- Child Care Quality Rating and Improvement
- Work Services and Employment and Training

Public Assistance* Operating Budget Comparison FY2019-FY2022 (in thousands)



Governor Requested FY21 Supplementals

\$1,200.0 UGF to support
Adult Public Assistance
benefit payments.

\$13,500.0 PFD Fund
(Other) to support the
Hold Harmless program
for additional FY2021
Permanent Fund
Dividend payments.

	FY19 Final Auth	FY20 Final Auth	FY21 Mgmt Plan	FY22 GOV Amend	Difference FY19 and FY22	% Difference FY19 and FY22	Difference FY21 and FY22
UGF	\$ 134,821.1	\$ 133,042.6	\$ 130,178.8	\$ 127,216.7	\$ (7,604.4)	-5.6%	\$ (2,962.1)
DGF	\$ 818.0	\$ 818.0	\$ 818.0	\$ 818.0	\$ -	0.0%	\$ -
Other	\$ 30,876.8	\$ 30,926.6	\$ 30,678.9	\$ 30,691.9	\$ (184.9)	-0.6%	\$ 13.0
Federal	\$ 129,483.0	\$ 132,619.2	\$ 135,286.9	\$ 130,236.7	\$ 753.7	0.6%	\$ (5,050.2)
Total	\$ 295,998.9	\$ 297,406.4	\$ 296,962.6	\$ 288,963.3	\$ (7,035.6)	-2.4%	\$ (7,999.3)

Workload and Status of Backlog

In SFY2020 DPA:

- Received 136,788 applications
- Processed 197,491 renewals, approval and denials
- Processed 73,084 Report of Changes

Average transaction time was 36 minutes

Average processing time was 10 days



Recipients Served

299,625 Statewide Unduplicated Recipients for SFY2020*

- 261,855 Medicaid Recipients
- 119,577 SNAP Recipients
- 27,153 WIC Recipients
- 21,354 Adult Public Assistance Recipients
- 16,050 Heating Assistance Program Recipients
- 13,049 Senior Benefits Program Recipients
- 11,664 Alaska Temporary Assistance Program Recipients
- 4,913 Child Care Assistance Program Recipients
- 1,647 General Relief Recipients
- 412 Interim Assistance Recipients

*Unduplicated across programs but may be receiving benefits in multiple programs



How has the Public Health Emergency affected programs?

Initially Alaska was approved the flexibility to waive the following requirements for SNAP:

- Quality Control Face to Face Interview (COV-1107)
- Postpone Expedited Service Interview (COV-130)
- Telephonic Signature (COV-048)
- Waive Initial and Recertification Interviews (COV-084)
- Temporary Suspension of Claims Activity
- Extend Certification Periods
- Waive ABAWD Requirements

How has the Public Health Emergency affected programs? (cont.)

Alaska was given guidance from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services related to eligibility to:

- Maintain eligibility standards, methodologies or procedures that are no more restrictive than what the state had in place as of January 1, 2020
- Not terminate individuals from Medicaid if individuals were enrolled in the program as of the date of the beginning of the emergency period, or becomes enrolled during the emergency period, unless the individual voluntarily terminates eligibility or is no longer a resident of the state



How has the Public Health Emergency affected programs? (cont.)

- Waiving work requirements and penalties associated with failure to comply with work requirements
- Extended benefit certification periods for 6 months during the first several months of the pandemic
- Requested approval to issue Emergency Allotment benefits to SNAP recipients throughout the pandemic under the state Disaster Declaration
- Increase SNAP Maximum Allotment by 15%

Year in Review:

In SFY2020 the Division of Public Assistance served 299,625 individuals through 10 of the 15 public assistance program areas administered by the division.

- Letters of Corrective Action have been rescinded
- Aligned program resources to remove duplication
- Implemented case review structures to align with training supports to address case error rates and resolution to audit findings





Year in Review:

- Transitioned the majority of division staff to telework
- Transitioned Heating Assistance Program to statewide workload to reduce overtime and manage work more equitably
- Streamlined and integrated processes for the newly implemented document management system with the workload management system

Year in Review:

- Received and issued additional funds to support child care providers
- Covered co-pays for child care assistance participating families for several months
- Alaska's WIC program created the nations first online food ordering system (BALTO) for rural participants of the WIC program

Currently In Process for SFY2021:

- Implemented Asset Verification System
- Virtual Call Center Go Live April 2021
- Consolidating Offices in Anchorage to reduce lease costs
- Implemented various flexibilities and emergency related program enhancements for multiple programs
- Request for Proposal being posted for the Maintenance and Operations Contract for Medicaid eligibility system to focus efforts on system improvements

Currently In Process for SFY2021:

- Increase Office Hours to accommodate longer days and weekend hours
- Implementing new performance management structures for telework
- Restructure recruitment and onboarding processes to address telework and training new staff
- Increased SNAP Benefits

Currently In Process for SFY2021:

- Consolidate contact information for a better client experience to reduce confusion for which offices to contact and reduce duplicate calls and emails
- Centralize Mail for more efficient management of in person workloads and staffing efficiencies in preparation for online forms implementation
- Implementation of state plan for Pandemic EBT

Currently In Process for SFY2021:

- State Plan for Child Care Development Block Grant
- Work Services successful in onboarding new providers for SNAP Employment & Training
- Developing a plan to spend additional Child Care Development Block grant funds awarded under FFCRA in February 2021.
- Licensed 19 new providers statewide
- Extended 47 licenses for renewal

What's Next?

- Online Forms development and implementation
- Online Application development and implementation
- Implementation of an optional electronic notification
- Continued focus on Division-wide efficiencies to eliminate administrative duplication
- System enhancements and integration across programs for eligibility systems

What's Next?

- Working with Food Nutrition Services to explore options for additional vendors to be included in online food purchase inclusion for SNAP recipients.
- Exploring ways programs can be designed to address “Cliff Effect” through increased supports for child care and transitional SNAP



Questions?