Department of Public Safety
Body-Worn and In-Car Video and Village Public Safety Officer programs update

House Finance Subcommittee

James Cockrell, Commissioner

Dianna Thornton, Administrative Services Director

Austin McDaniel, Communications Director

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Department of Public Safety

Body-Worn & In-Car Video Program

Transparency for modern law enforcement agencies

- **617 Body-Worn Cameras | 374 In-Car Video Equipped Vehicles**

    State Troopers, Wildlife Troopers, Court Services Officers, Village Public Safety Officers, Deputy Fire Marshals

- **Unlimited Storage:** All digital evidence, including video recordings, are securely stored between 90 days – 50 years

- **Axon Evidence:** Allows secure storage and transmission of digital discovery between Department of Public Safety and prosecutors. All three of Alaska's largest criminal justice agencies now use the same system
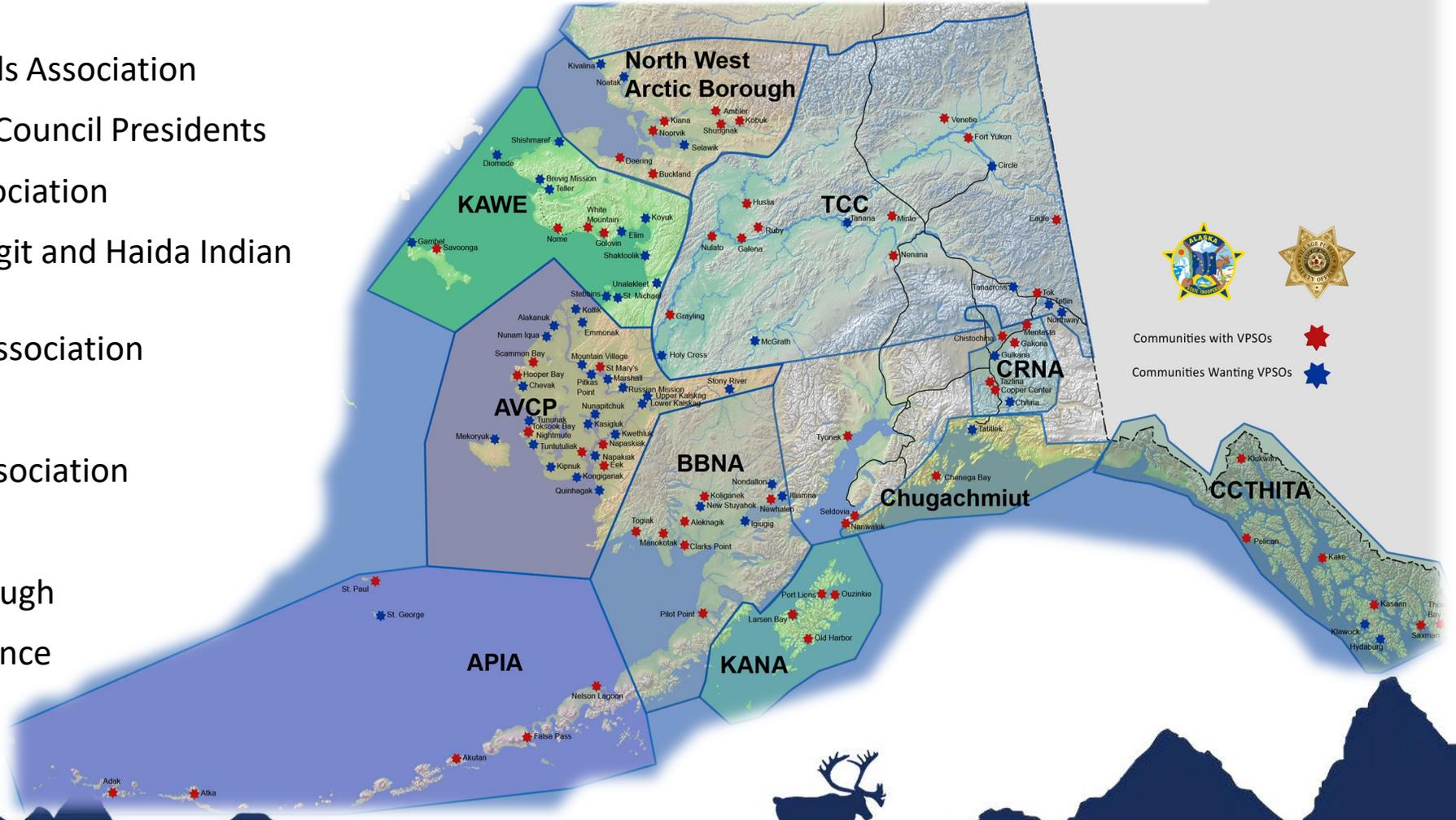
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Public Release of Digital Evidence

- **AS 40.25 & 2 AAC 96**: Last updated in 1990s. Doesn't care for modern government record keeping

- **Fees Assessed:** Access fee for digital evidence $36.49/request. $34,450.09 collected in FY 2025

- **Unable to Charge for Review:** Body-worn camera video is filled with confidential and sensitive info that takes significant time to review. These costs are not recoverable

- **Critical Incidents & Officer Involved Shootings:** Available for public release after all associated criminal court proceedings free of charge

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Village Public Safety Officer (VPSO) Programs

Aleutian Pribilof Islands Association

Association of Village Council Presidents

Bristol Bay Native Association

Central Council of Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska

Copper River Native Association

Chugachmiut

Kodiak Area Native Association

Kawerak, Inc.

Northwest Arctic Borough

Tanana Chiefs Conference

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VPSO Division FY2026 Update

Successes

- **10 Regional Public Safety Officers**: Provide first-line supervision

- **VPSO academies:** Two provided annually

- **Oversee the Village Police Officer Academy:** Yuut Elitnaurviat provides Emergency Trauma Technician, fire, and search and rescue training

- **Recruitment:** 49 hires in FY2025

- **Salary Schedule:** Improves recruitment and retention
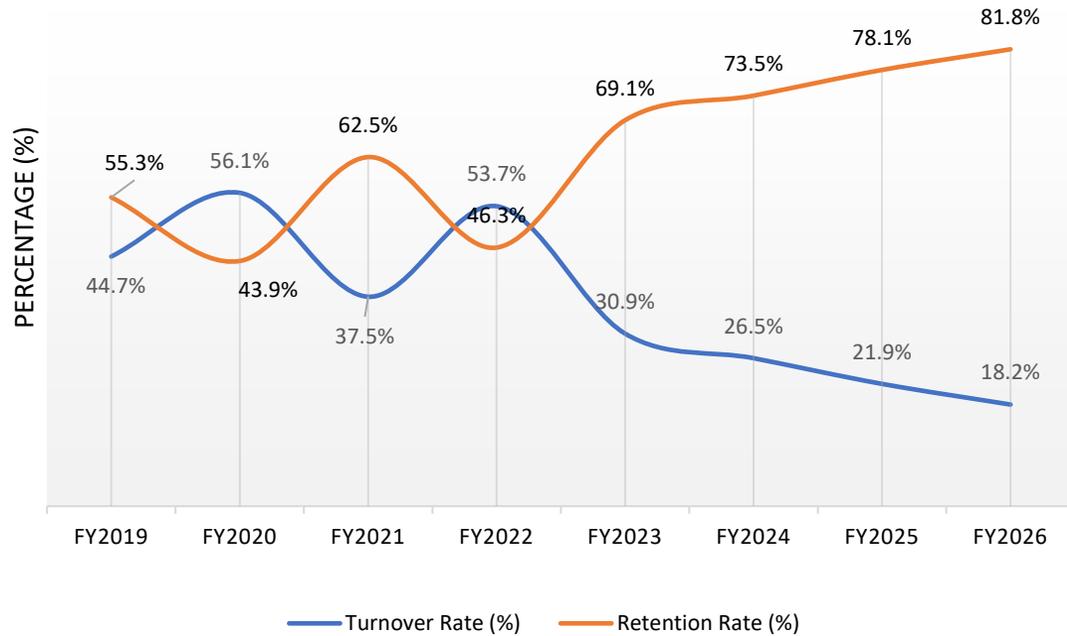
Challenges

- **Infrastructure:** Rural limitations

- **Recruitment:** Limited applicants for remote communities

- **Training:** Attrition due to rigorous standards

- **Sustained investment:** Necessary to maintain program stability

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VPSO Recruitment and Retention

VPSO Turnover and Retention Rates (FY2019 – FY2026 YTD)

Turnover Rate (%) data points: 44.7%, 56.1%, 37.5%, 46.3%, 30.9%, 26.5%, 21.9%, 18.2%

Retention Rate (%) data points: 55.3%, 43.9%, 62.5%, 53.7%, 69.1%, 73.5%, 78.1%, 81.8%

— Turnover Rate (%)   — Retention Rate (%)

VPSO Workforce – FY2026 Year to Date

- **87 officers statewide**
  – 77 Village Public Safety Officers
  – 10 Regional Public Safety Officers
- Approximately one-third of VPSOs self-identify as Alaska Native/Native American
- Retention has improved from 55% in 2018 to over 81% in 2026
- Since FY2021, less than 1% of program funding remains unspent annually
- Two VPSOs are currently attending the 26-01 Alaska Law Enforcement Training in Sitka

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DPS Response to Typhoon Halong

DPS Response to Typhoon Halong

- **Emergency Response:** Troopers were the first to receive calls for help and activated U.S. Coast Guard and Alaska National Guard rescue resources and coordinated initial search and rescue

- **Aircraft Operations:** Flew over 30 hours of DPS aircraft time during the response period

- **Evacuee / Shelter Safety:** Over 50 Troopers and Village public Safety Officers (VPSOs) provided hundreds of hours of uniformed law enforcement presence at mass shelters in Anchorage

- **Ongoing Safety / Security:** VPSOs and Troopers assisted with securing buildings and structures in impacted villages where mass evacuations took place

Department of Public Safety

Thank You

James Cockrell, Commissioner

Leon Morgan, Deputy Commissioner

Dianna Thornton, Administrative Services Director

Alaska Department of Public Safety

James.Cockrell@Alaska.gov | o: 907-269-5086

Leon.Morgan@Alaska.gov | o: 907-269-5511

Dianna.Thornton@Alaska.gov | o: 907-465-5501

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