

# Department of Public Safety FY2026 Governor's Budget Village Public Safety Operations House Finance Subcommittee

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Dianna Thornton, Administrative Services Director

February 20, 2025



**Department of Public Safety**

# Village Public Safety Operations Update

(\$ in thousands)

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## Accomplishments in FY2024-FY2025:

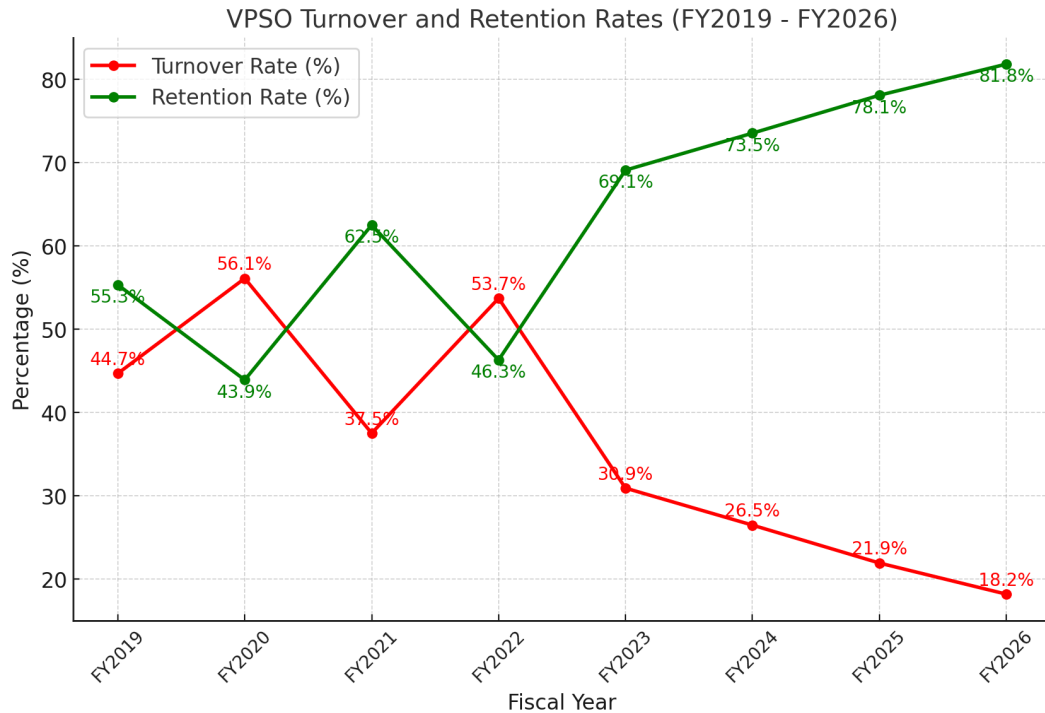
- Increased the number of Village Public Safety Officers (VPSO) by 10
- Implemented salary adjustments and allocated FY2025 \$3,499.8 UGF increase
- The total number of VPSOs has doubled over the past six years, increasing from 42 to 88, meeting the target
- A total of six Regional Public Safety Officers have been commissioned across three regions, with applications pending from two additional regions
- Two VPSO certification academies are conducted at the DPS Academy in Sitka annually
- Yuut Elitnaurviat training center in Bethel provides VPSO training in Emergency Trauma Technician, fire response, and search & rescue
- Statewide marketing efforts to attract VPSO applicants
- Public Safety 'Don't Wait' Advertising Campaign



“Don’t Wait” Video Placeholder



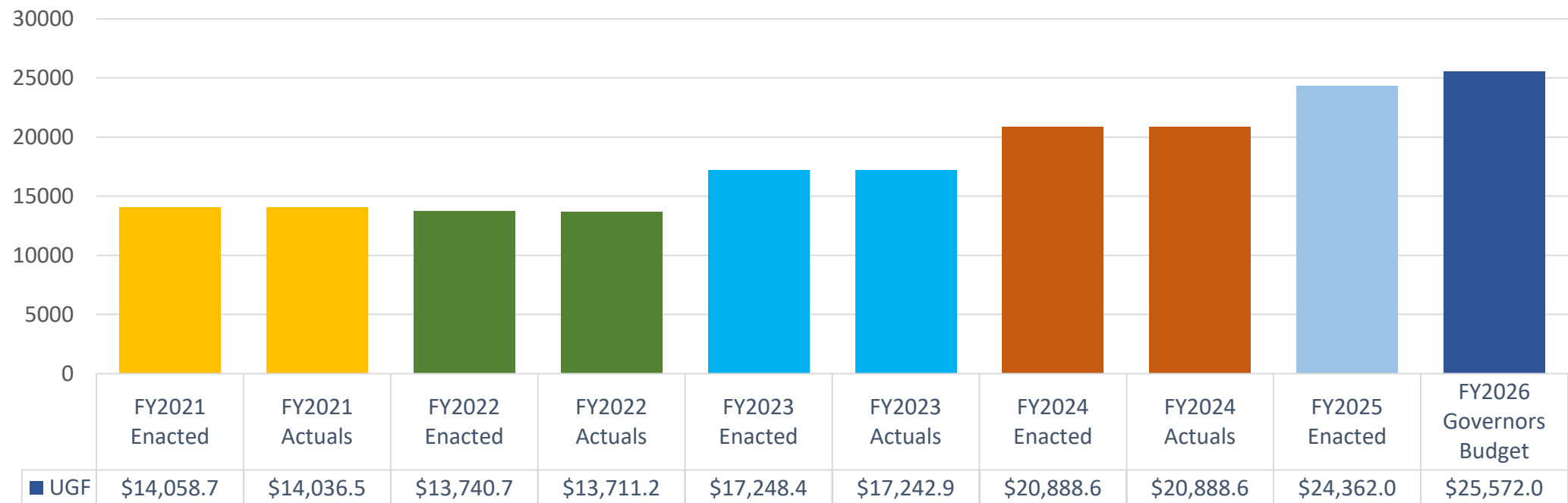
# Village Public Safety Officers Workforce in 2025



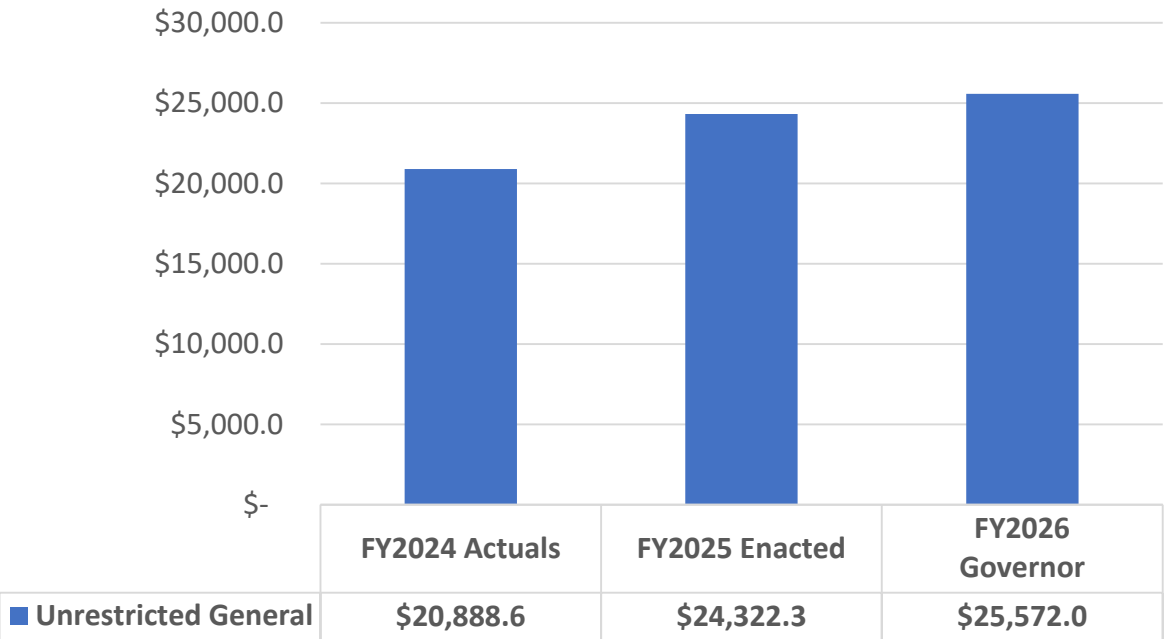
- 33.8 percent of VPSOs are Alaskan Native/Native American
- Retention has improved to 82 percent from 55 percent in 2018
- Since 2021, less than one percent of funding unspent by programs
- 88 VPSOs statewide as of 2/18/2025
- Five attending Alaska Law Enforcement Training, January to June 2025



# Village Public Safety Operations Funding History- Unrestricted General Funds (\$ in thousands)



# Village Public Safety Operations FY2026 (\$ in thousands)



## Significant Budget Change:

5 New VPSO positions, \$1,215.2 UGF

### Contribution to the Overall Department Mission

Preserve public peace, protect life and property in rural villages. Provide public safety outreach to communities through various community policing programs.

### Staff (Current FY2025)

- Five permanent full-time positions (State employees)
- 85 grant-funded VPSO positions (Grantee employees)

### Core Services

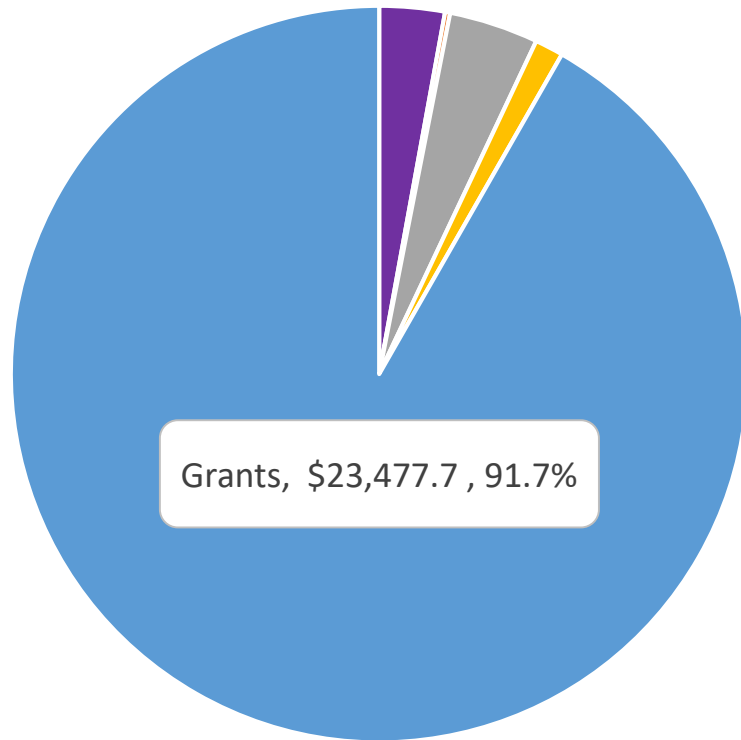
- Administer and oversee VPSO program grant agreements to ensure fiscal accountability.
- Facilitate VPSO certification and deliver ongoing training in law enforcement, fire suppression, and emergency medical care.
- Collaborate with the Alaska State Trooper Division to support VPSOs and align with public safety objectives.
- Oversee and coordinate the distribution of law enforcement equipment for VPSOs, ensuring effective deployment.





# Village Public Safety Operations Funding Breakdown FY2026

(\$ in thousands)



- Personal Services: \$733.9, 2.9%
- Travel: \$57.5, .2%
- Services: \$1,003.9, 3.9%
- Commodities: 319.9, 1.3%
- Grants: \$23,477.7
  - 10 Regional VPSO Programs
    - Aleutian Pribilof Islands Association
    - Association of Village Council Presidents
    - Bristol Bay Native Association
    - Central Council Tlingit & Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska
    - Chugachmiut
    - Copper River Native Association
    - Kawerak, Inc.
    - Kodiak Area Native Association
    - Northwest Arctic Borough
    - Tanana Chiefs Conference



## “Heart of a VPSO” Video Placeholder





# Thank You

**James Hoelscher, Village Public Safety Operations Director**  
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