

Alaska's Citizen Review Panel



The House Committee on Health and Social Services
State of Alaska
February 11, 2014

Panel's mandate

“The CRP shall examine the policies, procedures, and practices of State and local agencies and where appropriate, specific cases, to evaluate the extent to which State and local child protection system agencies are effectively discharging their protection responsibilities.”

Panel members

The CRP is composed of

- volunteer members
- broadly representative of the state,
- with expertise and experience in the field of child maltreatment prevention

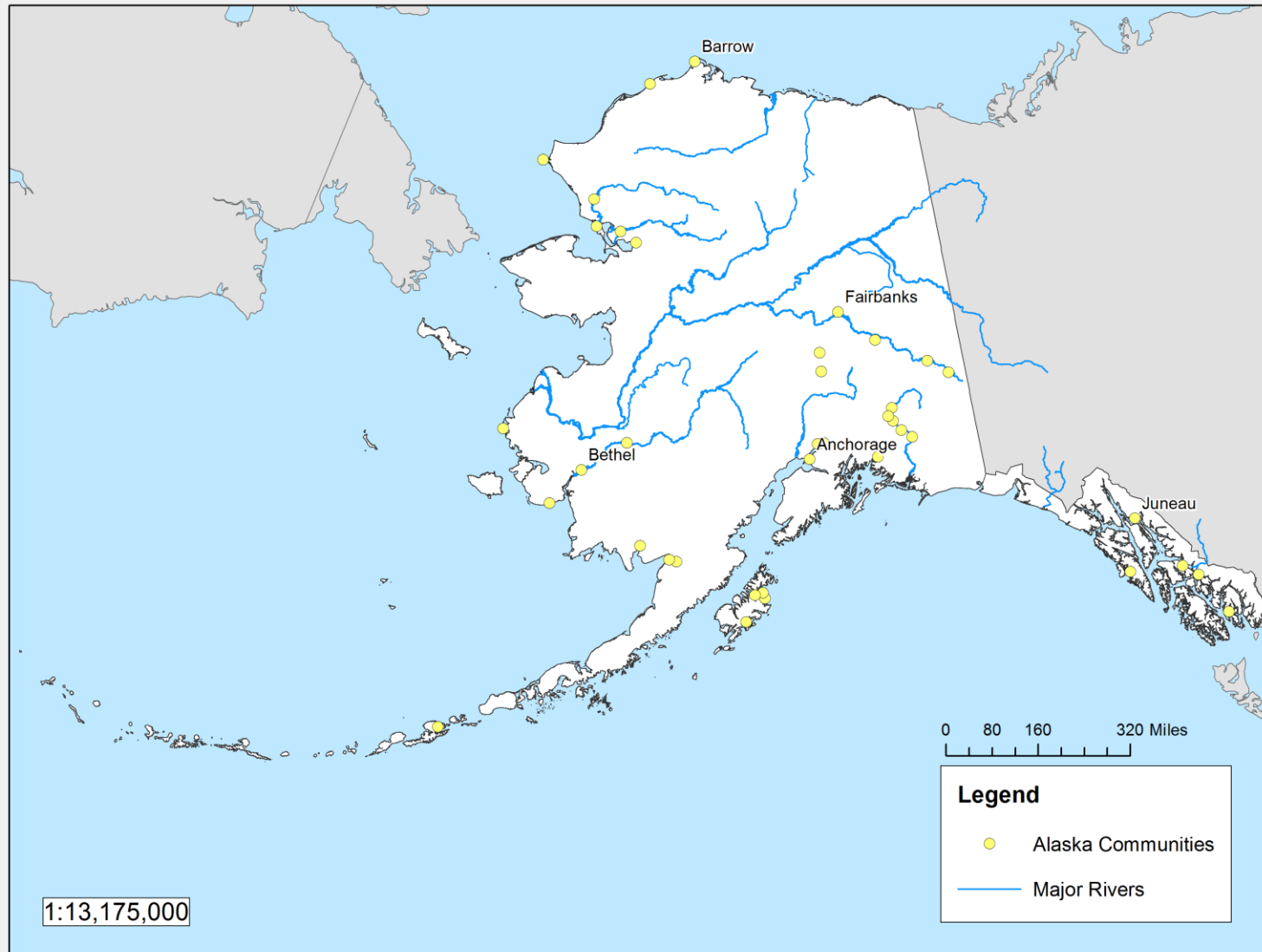
Seven members – Anchorage; Juneau; Wasilla; Haines

Panel's annual activities

- At least two teleconferences per month
- Two site visits per year
- Annual report

Translates to approximately more than 1000 volunteer hours

Site visits since 2002



2012-2013

Recommendations and response

1. Reduce staff turnover

- A new recruiting video being developed
- Week-on; week-off scheduling
- Travel team

Afterhours work standardization remains to be done

2. Deadlines for non-emergency petitions

- A multi-agency team working on potential options to improve in-home program model

2012-2013

Recommendations and response

3. Staff Western Region

- Several key functions are still served by staff in other regional offices
- Travel team contributing heavily to reduce workload

4. Improve data compilation efforts

- Additional training from national sources
- Access to Chapin Hall data

2013-2014

Work Plan Goals

1. Screening decisions

- Screened-in and screened-out decisions have been rising
- Consistency in screening-decisions are of concern

2. In-home practice model

- Urban vs. rural differences
- No legal oversight
- Extreme workloads in rural areas

2013-2014

Work Plan Goals

3. Initial Assessment (IA) Backlog
 - IA backlog has been a problem in the recent past
 - Establish a file review process
4. Service needs assessment in Unalaska
 - Unalaska field office has been closed due to low caseloads
 - CRP is concerned about unmet needs

2013-2014 Site Visits

Barrow

Sept 2013

Kodiak

Jan 2014

Bethel

Jan 2014

Major concerns identified:

- OCS-Tribal local relationships
- Regional Intake
- Continued staffing challenges
- Local and regional partnerships
- Lack of basic resources

2013-2014

Current Concerns

OCS – Tribal Relationship

- Agreement with Native Village of Barrow
- Local relationships in Kodiak and Bethel

Regional Intake

- Regional intake is mostly disliked by local communities due to the delay in response
- Perceptions of “unfamiliarity” and “lack of confidence”

Housing for rural OCS employees

- Lack of housing options is a debilitating factor in recruiting and retaining OCS workers in rural areas

2013-2014

Current Concerns

In-home cases

- No consistent model for in-home cases in rural areas

Screened-out cases

- The number of screened-out cases has been increasing while the number of screened-in cases are on the rise.

IA Backlog

- OCS has been working on avoiding any backlog in Initial Assessments; CRP has been monitoring this effort.

2013-2014

Current Concerns

OCS Budget

- OCS provides a public safety function just like Troopers
- Already challenged to meet demand
 - Horrendous case loads and too few workers
 - No budget for essential supplies
- Cuts will endanger children



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