

Division of Public Assistance

FY2023 Overview

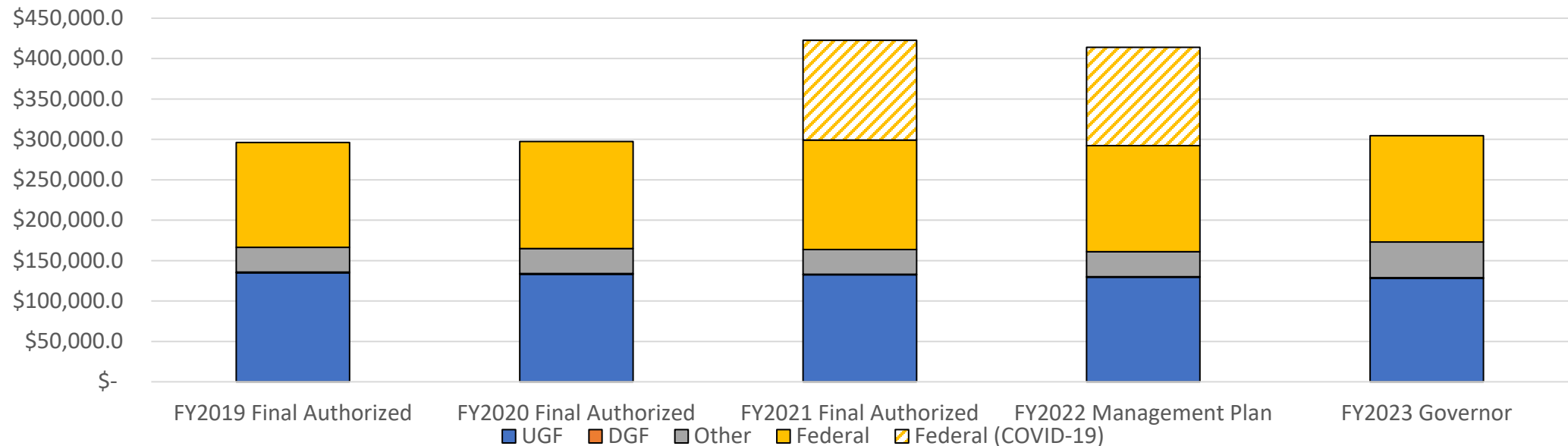
House Health and Social Services Finance Subcommittee

Tuesday, February 01, 2022

Shawnda O'Brien, Director



Division of Public Assistance* Operating Budget Comparison FY2019-FY2023 (in thousands)



	FY2019 Final Authorized	FY2020 Final Authorized	FY2021 Final Authorized	FY2022 Management Plan	FY2023 Governor	Difference FY2019 and FY2023
UGF	\$ 134,821.1	\$ 133,042.6	\$ 132,311.1	\$ 129,305.9	\$ 127,965.1	\$ (6,856.0)
DGF	\$ 818.0	\$ 818.0	\$ 818.0	\$ 818.0	\$ 814.7	\$ (3.3)
Other	\$ 30,876.8	\$ 30,926.6	\$ 30,678.9	\$ 30,754.6	\$ 44,226.0	\$ 13,349.2
Federal	\$ 129,483.0	\$ 132,619.2	\$ 135,287.0	\$ 131,441.6	\$ 131,420.7	\$ 1,937.7
Federal (COVID-19)	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 123,376.7	\$ 121,545.0	\$ -	\$ -
Total	\$ 295,998.9	\$ 297,406.4	\$ 422,471.7	\$ 413,865.1	\$ 304,426.5	\$ 8,427.6

*Includes Senior Benefits Payment Program

Topics to Present:

- Units of work
- Restructuring Field Operations
- Workflow Strategies for Managing Workload
- Public Health Emergency Status and Impacts
 - Unwinding
 - Pandemic –Electronic Benefit Transfer (P-EBT)
 - Emergency Allotments (EA)
- Systems in use
- Systems Roadmap and Implementation Timelines
- Systems Overview and Data
- Child Care Funding Status and Updates
- Work Services
- Family Nutrition Programs
- Quality Control
- Statewide Case Review Team
- Fraud Detection, Waste and Abuse

Division of Public Assistance Overview

- Determine Eligibility for 17 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
- Child Care Stabilization
- Work Services and Employment and Training

Programs Administered

- Supplement Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
- Temporary Assistance Needy Families (TANF)
- Adult Public Assistance (APA)
- Medicaid
- Chronic and Acute Medical Assistance (CAMA)
- General Relief
- Senior Benefits
- Women, Infants and Children (WIC)
- Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP)
- Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP)
- Farmers Market Nutrition Program (FMNP)
- Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP)
- Child Care Licensing
- SNAP Employment & Training
- SNAP Education
- Pandemic Emergency Assistance Fund (PEAF)
- Low Income Household Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)
- Low Income Household Water Assistance (LIHWAP)



Restructuring Field Operations

- Aligned internal supervisory lines to distribute staffing ratios to provide better support to staff in the field
- Continued integration of child care assistance and Family Nutrition programs into existing division infrastructure
- Statewide integration of case review processes to inform decision making for process and quality improvements



Workflow Strategies for Managing Workload

- Incorporating LEAN processes to manage workloads and assignments utilizing staff in all offices regardless of task origination
- Assignments are tracked by program and transaction type and monitored for timeliness
- Work is assigned to all staff across the field to manage the fluctuation in workloads
- Systems in use to assist in management and oversight of workloads are the workload management system - Current TM, Virtual Contact Center (VCC) - Genesys Cloud and Electronic Document Management (EDM) System - Ilinx

Plans for future business process overhaul and redesign

- The volume of work and the implementation of new systems along with changes to policy make it necessary to regularly analyze workflow processes to ensure the most efficient processes are in place and to reduce excess work for staff
 - Business processes and practice are discussed at leadership levels within the division weekly and planning sessions are held monthly with the business process vendor



Public Health Emergency (PHE) Impacts

- The current expiration of the PHE from CMS is 4/16/2022
- At this time, CMS guidance give states 12 months from the end of the pandemic to verify eligibility for their Medicaid caseload
 - DPA's strategy at this time will be to work cases as they are due for recertification, which will ensure the entire caseload will be reviewed within that 12-month period, thus meeting the CMS requirement
- DPA's current contract with Public Consulting Group for the Asset Verification System (AVS) and Income Eligibility Verification System (IEVS) provides a review of eligibility factors and follow-up with clients to ensure the correct eligibility determination is made



Pandemic EBT Status

November 2020 - DPA staff started manually processing benefits and printing cards for the 2020/2021 School Year

- Over half the districts have been issued benefits for the period of August 2020 through June 2021
- Total amount of benefits issued to date for the program:
\$36,479,472

SNAP Emergency Allotment (EA) Status

SFY2020 Recipients April 2020-June 2020	SFY2020 Benefits Issued April 2020 to June 2020
23,344	\$5,809,594
SFY2021 Recipients	SFY2021 Benefits Issued
183,402	\$55,888,131
SFY2022 Recipients through November 2021	SFY2022 Benefits Issued through November 2021
76,140	\$38,086,864



Administrative, State and General Systems used in the division

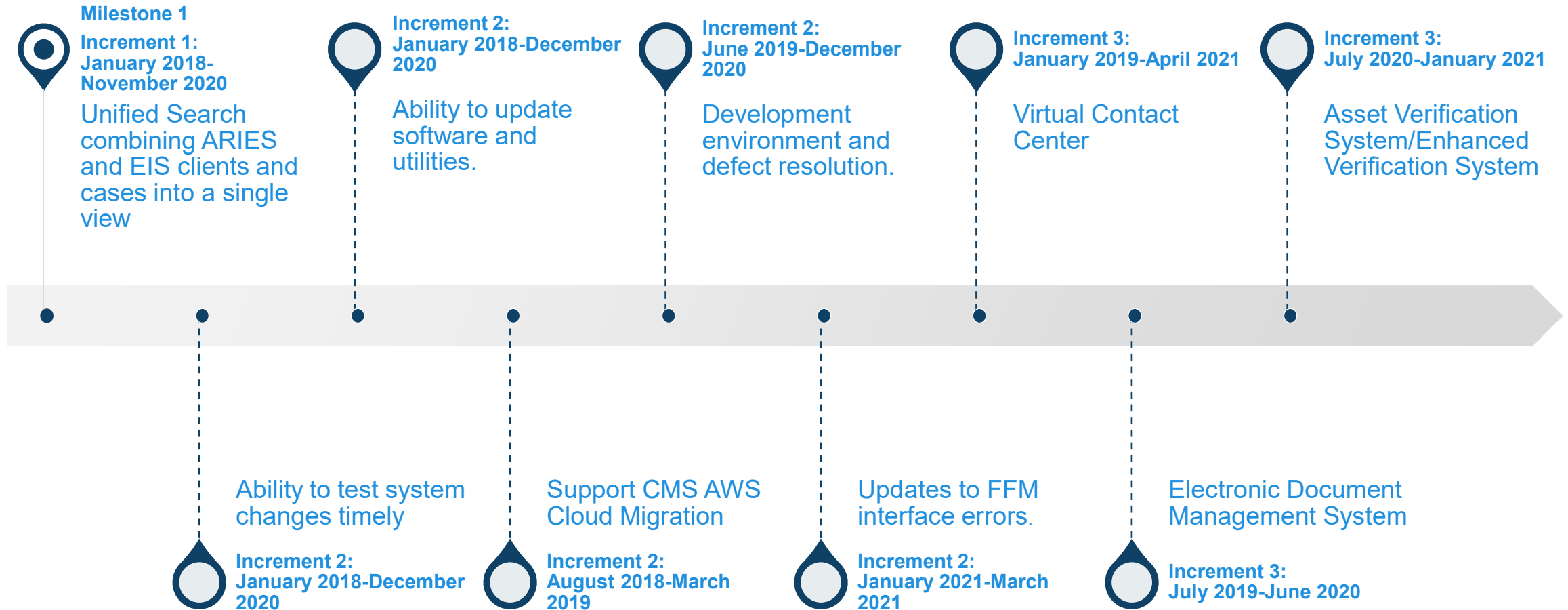
- Cisco
- Email
- Document Secure Messaging
- Cloud based video communication apps (WebEx, Skype, Teams, Zoom)
- Move IT
- IRIS
- IRIS HRM
- Neogov
- Sharepoint
- ASPIRE Alaska
- DPA Web
- ROBOHELP
- Fraud Case Management System
- Random Moment Time System
- GEMS
- Comtrac
- ELMO
- BASIS
- OPD
- ABS
- OLDC
- WIC DIRECT
- EBT Edge
- ASAP
- CAP Plus
- FPRS
- Case Review Tool
- Azure Dev Ops
- Mural
- WIKI
- JIRA



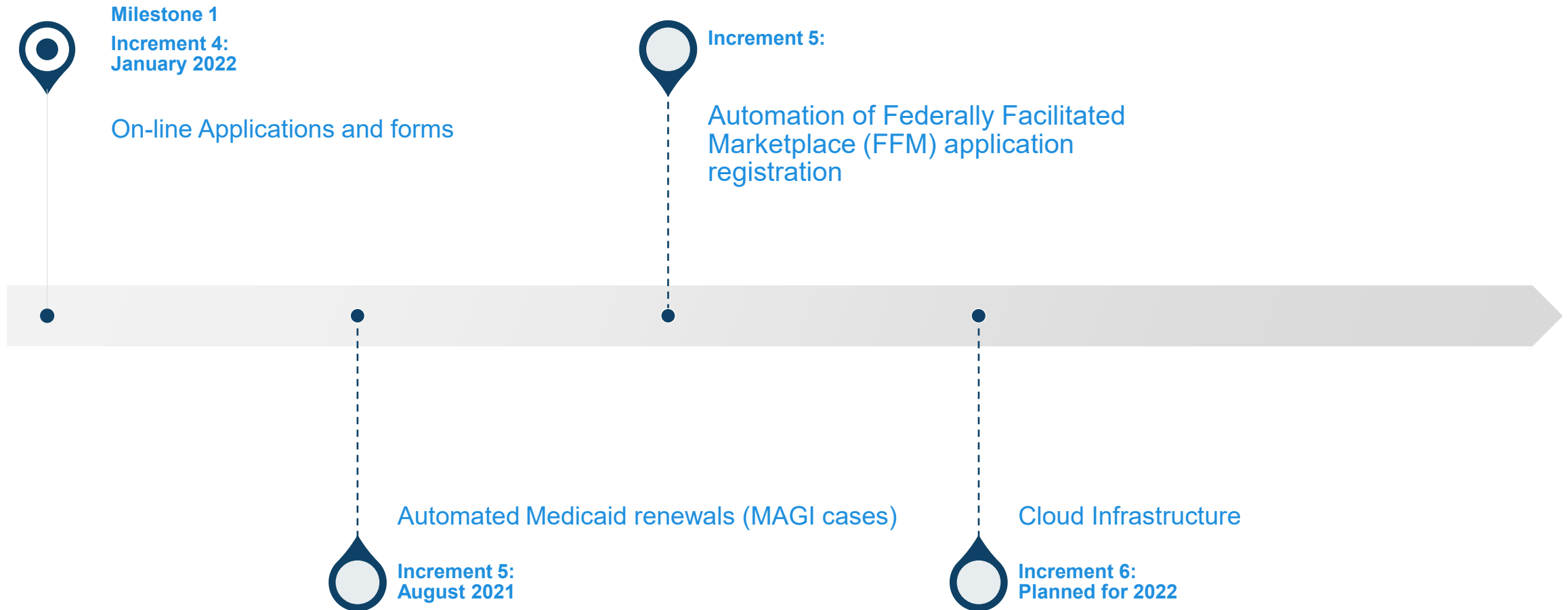
Eligibility and Eligibility Support Systems

- ECOS
- EIS
- ARIES
- Luminist
- MCI
- ILINX
- Genesys
- Current TM
- Single Sign On
- Unified Search
- SPIRIT
- ICCIS
- Harmony
- My Alaska
- AVS/IEVS
- SAM
- Winstar
- Bendex
- Case Management System (CMS)

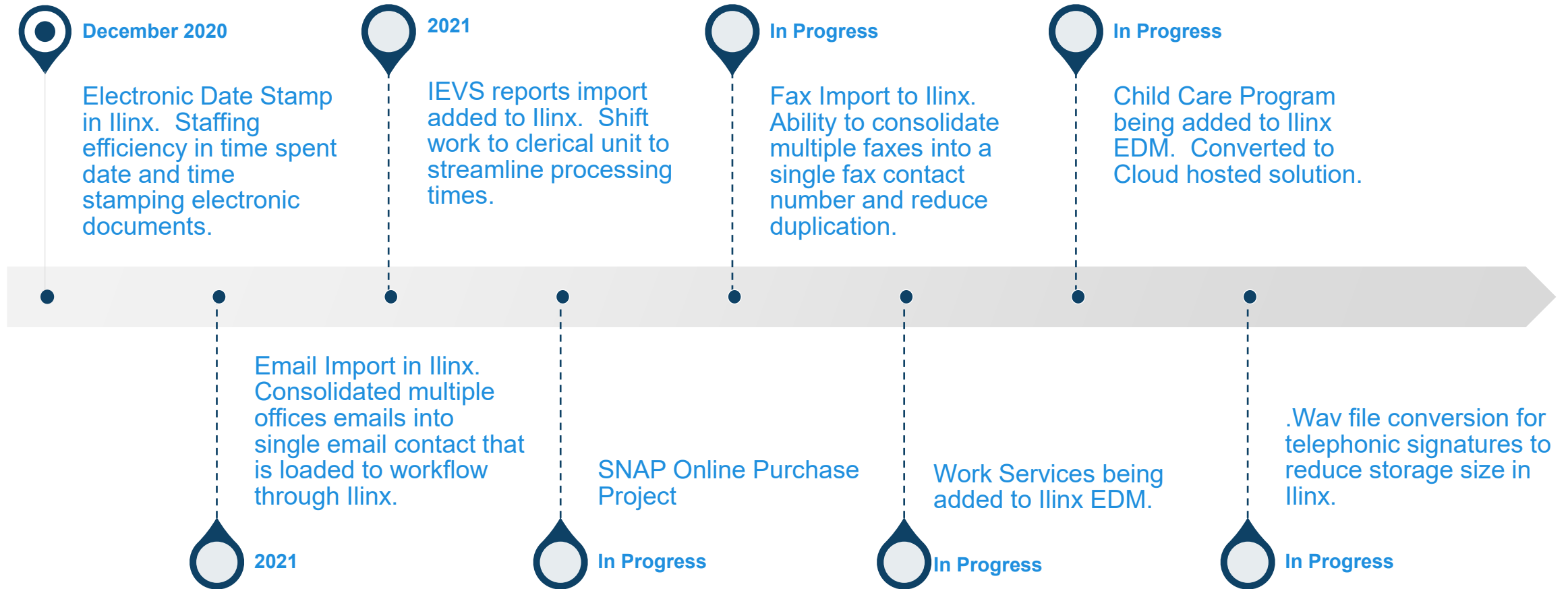
System Increments Implemented



System Increments Planned and In Progress



System Enhancements





Electronic Document Management System

- Ilinx is the software used for the electronic document management system that categorizes and classifies documents received in the division. The system is also the retention method used for storing content
- The system will be integrated to the workload management system used to assign work statewide
- From July 1, 2020 to June 30, 2021:
 - 672,509 documents have been stored
 - Documents can be multiple pages



Electronic Document Management System

- Examples of efficiencies resulting from the implementation of this system:
 - Documents are easier to locate regardless of where they originated
 - No more paper files with backlogged filing stacked on filing cabinets making it easier to track for processing updates and redetermination of eligibility for cases
 - Documents no longer have to be mailed to other offices to distribute work to staff statewide
 - Time spent locating and providing documents to auditors has been reduced from weeks to hours



Workload Management System Integration

- The workload management system was updated to Current TM October 2020 and is in the process of being integrated with the Virtual Contact Center and the Electronic Document Management System
- From 10/2020 to June 30, 2021:
 - 239,963 tasks were added to the system
 - 64,751 of these tasks were not bundled with other programs/tasks



Workload Management System Integration

- The workload management system tracks work by program, type of transaction, date of receipt and staff assignment
 - Tasks are bundled in the system so that cases are worked together
 - Staff are required to sign into the system to claim tasks
 - Assignments are monitored in intervals throughout the day.

Management can adjust assignments as needed to prevent untimely processing for compliance purposes



Virtual Contact Center

- Go Live April 2021
 - Improvement over state phone system with capacity for only one call at a time per line
 - Callers can save their place in line by leaving a call back number
 - CMS compliance for telephonic signatures
 - Calls are routed to staff statewide
 - Reduced complaints
 - Improved method for individuals without a local office to receive assistance
 - Calls are recorded for quality control purposes
 - System is integrated into the workload management system for workload distribution



Virtual Contact Center

- 1,652 telephonic applications/signatures received between 10/20/21 and January 20, 2022
- Average 21,600 calls per month
 - Prior to PHE there were approximately 7,000 individuals served in lobbies per month



Plans for future system development

- Roadmap for SFY2022:
 - Medicaid Auto renewals
 - Medicaid Subtypes
 - E Forms (online application)
- SFY2023:
 - Continued development of electronic forms and smart phone access
 - Electronic notices
 - System Development to include all systems utilizing mainframe platforms



Child Care ARPA and CRRSA Funding Status

Alaska has received federal relief funding for child care through three funding streams. These include:

- \$18.8M (CRRSA) available until September 30, 2023
- \$45M for child care stabilization grants, available until September 30, 2023 (ARPA)
- \$28M for supplemental CCDF Discretionary Funds, available until September 30, 2024 (ARPA)
- \$1.3M in Mandatory and Matching funding for CCDF, a permanent annual appropriation

Coronavirus Response And Relief Supplemental Act

Enacted December 27, 2020 – Awarded \$18.8 million

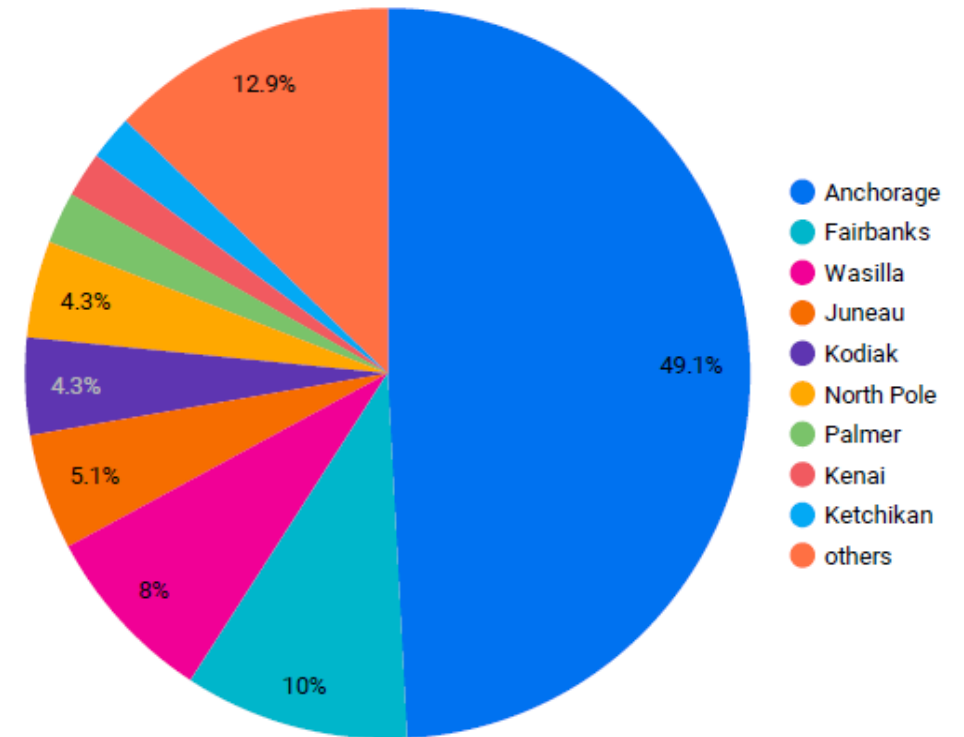
- Submitted plan for use of CRRSA funds on February 24, 2021- Approved by Office of Child Care.

Spending to date: \$4,240,000

- Provided scholarship funds to the University of Alaska system for early childhood
- Provided funding to thread for:
 - \$3 million for the Retaining our Outstanding Teachers (ROOTS) Award- funding to individuals working in the field and in the System for Early Education Development (SEED) registry
 - \$1 million for COVID response capacity; infrastructure support-completion of Provider Portal to support child care programs access to resources; and free training for child care available to all individuals

American Rescue Plan Act

- Enacted March 11, 2021
- Awarded \$45.3 million
- **Spending to date: \$20 million**
- Phase 1 stabilization passthrough awarded to thread
- Awarded \$4 million to 350 licensed providers





American Rescue Plan Act

Phase 2 stabilization passthrough awarded to thread. Application posted January 26, 2022.

Awards will be based on licensed capacity for:

- Licensed homes and group homes at \$650 per child
- Licensed child care centers at \$1,100 per child
 - Note: School-aged only programs that are licensed child care centers will receive \$1,100 per child. Recognizing the timing of this phase, the CCPO wanted to support programs through the summer and the increased cost of care during these months
- Bonuses: Awards will also include flat rate bonuses for programs participating in Learn and Grow and/or the Child Care Assistance Program at the time the application is submitted, in keeping with our objective to improve affordability and quality for families



American Rescue Plan Act

Enacted March 11, 2021 – Awarded \$28.3 million

Spending to date: \$100,000

- Contract for planning and outreach

Decisions will be made after the contract has been awarded and the vendor onboarded. Initial plans include:

- Increasing provider payments
- Expanding the child care assistance program to more families
- Establishing extended timeframes for families participating in the child care assistance program to address the “cliff effect”
- Increasing wages for early educators and family child care providers
- Building the supply of child care for underserved populations



American Rescue Plan Act

Enacted March 11, 2021 – Awarded \$1.3 million

This award is increasing the base Child Care Development Fund award and will be ongoing. It is subject to meeting mandatory targets for infant/toddler care and quality. Currently the division is using it to pay family co-pays for participating families in the Child Care Assistance Program.

Work Services

- Formalized partnership and client referral process with Department of Labor, Career Support & Training, to increase outcomes for TANF recipients
- Onboarded two additional SNAP Employment & Training providers of service in Anchorage and Mat-Su
- Exceeded the federally required Work Participation Rate (WPR) for both All-Families and Two-Parent Families during the most recent report year of FFY2020 --- link:
<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/documents/ofa/wpr2020table01a.pdf>
- Initiated process to procure Case Management System (CMS) replacement
- Continuous enhancement of client services in a virtual environment (91% of staff telework)

Family Nutrition Programs

- Women, Infants and Children
 - Provides for prescribed food benefits to pregnant, breastfeeding and post partum women and children up to age 5
- Commodity Supplemental Food Program
 - Offers food boxes to approximately 2,000 income-eligible seniors
- Farmer's Market Nutrition Program and Senior Farmer's Market Nutrition Program
 - Provides vouchers and coupons to WIC eligible participants and income-eligible seniors to purchase locally grown fruits and vegetables
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education
 - Provides for nutrition education and obesity prevention for SNAP recipients

Quality Control

- Federally mandated to conduct quality control auditing of Medicaid, Child Care and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance (SNAP) eligibility and benefit accuracy
- Conducts Management Evaluations in accordance with SNAP monitoring requirements to ensure federal funds are used for intended purposes
 - In FFY2021 states were required to perform ME's for target areas as follows:
 - Initial Certification Processes and Access
 - Household reporting requirements

Statewide Case Review Team

- Dedicated team of field staff assigned to perform mandatory case reviews for eligibility determinations made by Eligibility Technicians
 - This team was restructured to a centralized management unit with statewide responsibility to enable a more consistent practice of reviewing cases and to better inform leadership of trends and training needs across the field
 - The team also functions as training liaison and peer support to tenured staff to ensure there are additional supports in place for ongoing training and on the job aid

Fraud Detection, Waste and Abuse

There are three main components

- **Recipient Fraud Control**

- This function focuses primarily on intentional recipient fraud of all programs administered by the division. This includes, ATAP, SNAP, Medicaid, Child Care Assistance and Adult Public Assistance benefits, SNAP Hold Harmless; ATAP WS Supportive Services, Senior Benefits Heating Assistance and Women, Infants and Children (WIC)

- **Categorically Ineligible Fraud Detection**

- This function identifies, through various data mining techniques, “*categorical ineligible*” individuals with ongoing welfare program involvement. Specifically, individuals who are incarcerated, classified as fleeing to avoid prosecution or confinement for a felony-level crime, or individuals who are residing outside Alaska without an approved absence

- **Early Fraud Detection**

- This function focuses primarily on applicant fraud of all programs administered by the division

http://dpaweb.hss.state.ak.us/FRAUD/PDF/Accomplishments_Report_FY2021.pdf

Thank you!

Division webpage

- <https://dhss.alaska.gov/dpa/Pages/features/org/Overview.aspx>

Program Descriptions

- <https://dhss.alaska.gov/dpa/Documents/dpa/publications/Program-Descriptions.pdf>

Contact Information

- 800-478-7778 Virtual Contact Center
- Hss.dpa.offices@alaska.gov Email
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- 888-269-6520 (statewide fax)
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