



Memorandum

To: Representatives Johnson, Edgmon and Foster
Co-Chairs, House Finance Committee

From: Pam Halloran, Administrative Services Director 
Department of Public Safety

Date: February 21, 2023

Subject: Responses to Questions from House Finance Committee meeting on 2/21/2023

Co-Chairs Johnson, Edgmon and Foster,

In response to the questions posed to the Department of Public Safety (DPS) in the House Finance Committee meeting on February 21, 2023:

1. *Who are Village Public Safety Officers (VPSO) responsible to? Alaska Police Standards Council? (Rep Coulombe)*

Village Public Safety Officers are primarily responsible to their employer agency (DPS grantees), but Alaska State Troopers provide guidance and support to VPSOs across the state. VPSO certifications are unique to the position and as such are managed by the Commissioner of the Department of Public Safety independent from the Alaska Police Standards Council.

2. *Do we have any new VPSO partner agencies that would allow us to add new VPSOs? (Rep Cronk)*

All regions are covered through the program except the North Slope Borough. Previous barriers of required village support for housing and office space were removed in last year's law change. Those previously unable to participate now can, and it is likely that more villages will, seek memorandum of agreements between the village/community and the regional VPSO program. The barrier to these memorandum of agreement commitments is funding and infrastructure. The department is being thoughtful about how much funding is added and how quickly to assure the funding works as intended, is sustainable, and secures continued village, Governor and Legislature support.

3. How many communities have a VPSO? How many villages or communities want a VPSO that don't currently have one? (Rep Tomaszewski)

There are memorandum of agreements with 143 villages across the ten regions. Seven villages have two VPSOs assigned, Kotzebue has three traveling VPSOs. There are VPSOs in just about 53 villages.