

ALASKA TRIBAL CHILD WELFARE COMPACT

A Presentation For
ALASKA MENTAL HEALTH TRUST AUTHORITY
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WHY THE WORK BEGAN

(1) Significant Disparities

- Alaska Native children make up 15% of the state's general population; but represent 60% of the kids in state custody.
- Disparities of this nature generally indicate a system failure, and Alaska is no exception.

(2) Retention Difficulties

- Additionally, the state has a difficult time recruiting and retaining a proficient workforce. The Office of Children's Services (OCS) typically operates at a 50% vacancy rate, requiring its frontline workforce to carry caseloads more than 3x the national average.

HOW THE WORK BEGAN

Tribal State Collaboration Group

- What → 25-year partnership between state and tribal representatives (and invited stakeholders)
- Goals → (1) strengthening Alaska's compliance with the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA); (2) reducing the disproportionality of 'Indian' kids in state custody; and (3) building and strengthening working relationships.

Tribal Title IV-E Agreements

- What → provides federal resources (\$) to states and tribes for foster care, transitional independent living programs, guardianship assistance, and adoption assistance.
- Note → Tribes receive a higher reimbursement rate than states for covered services, resulting in significant General Fund savings.

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Overview

- What → a **intergovernmental** agreement between the State of Alaska and 18 federally recognized Alaska Native tribes and tribal organizations to improve the life outcomes of Alaska's children and families, by transferring **negotiated** child welfare services and supports – along with their respective revenue streams – from OCS to the 'Tribal Co-Signers.'
- Goal → provide higher quality services and supports at a **lower cost**.

COMPACT (CONT'D)

- Precedence → modeled after the compacts the **federal** government routinely negotiates with tribes and tribal organizations under the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (ISDEAA).
- Historical → the Compact is the first ever government-to-government agreement negotiated and executed at the state level (**history making!**).
- Sovereignty → recognizes the **inherent authority** of federally recognized Alaska Native tribes <***think: local government***> to provide child welfare services and supports to their members.

18 TRIBAL CO-SIGNERS

<REPRESENTING 161 TRIBES>

- Aleutian Pribilof Islands Association
- Arctic Slope Native Association
- Association of Village Council Presidents
- Bristol Bay Native Association
- Central Council Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska
- Cheesh'na Tribal Council*
- Chugachmiut
- Cook Inlet Tribal Council
- Copper River Native Association
- Native Village of Eyak
- Kawerak, Inc.
- Kenaitze Indian Tribe
- Maniilaq Association
- Mentasta Traditional Council*
- Nome Eskimo Community
- Aleut Community of St. Paul Island
- Sun'aq Tribe of Kodiak
- Tanana Chiefs Conference

IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE

Fiscal Year (FY) 2018

- Tribal Co-Signers developed/redesign their programs, and built capacity and infrastructure.
- State began sharing Protective Services Reports (PSRs or 'screen ins' or 'screen outs'), and providing training and technical support.

FY 2019

- Tribal Co-Signers began performing Initial Diligent Relative Searches (IDRS).
- The Parties negotiated four new Scopes of Work (SOW) for: (1) Ongoing Relatives Searches (ORS); (2) Family Contact; (3) Licensing Assists; and (4) Safety Evaluations, but **State declined to sign** due to change in Administration.

IMPLEMENTATION (CONT'D)

FY 2020

- Parties worked out differences and signed all five pre-negotiated Scopes, including: (1) IDRS; (2) ORS; (3) Family Contact; (4) Licensing Assists; and (5) Safety Evaluations.

FY 2021 and FY 2022 and FY 2023

- On account of the COVID-19 pandemic, no additional scopes were signed. Rather, the Tribal Co-Signers continued to work on the scopes they were administering. Prevention was added in FY 2023.

PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP

Casey Family Programs

- Applying the federal compact model to state child welfare work caught the attention of Casey Family Programs (CFP), the largest foster care and related services foundation in the country.
- CFP was eager to partner on the endeavor, and through a modest amount of seed money helped create the first ever public-private partnership to transform Alaska's child welfare system (**history making AGAIN!**).

LONG TERM GOALS

- Alaska children and families will be served locally, as close to home as possible.
- Services will be provided in a more cost effective and efficient manner.
- Children and families will be more receptive to changing abusive or neglectful behavior(s), which will decrease the number of children in state custody.
- Outcomes for Alaska children and families will be improved, particularly Alaska Native children and families.

QUYANA
(THANK YOU!)

