A Presentation For
ALASKA MENTAL HEALTH TRUST AUTHORITY
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Presented By
NICOLE BORROMEO
Compact Facilitator
Executive Vice President & General Counsel, Alaska Federation of Natives
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.
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.
ALASKA TRIBAL CHILD WELFARE COMPACT

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.
• **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.
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!)