



ALASKA CHILDREN'S ALLIANCE

Presentation to CDVSA Board

9/15/23

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WHAT WE'LL BE DISCUSSING

01

About child abuse

02

About Alaska Children's Alliance

03

About the Child Advocacy Center model

04

About Alaska's Child Advocacy Centers

05

Funding of Alaska Child Advocacy Centers

06

CDVSA/VOCA funding and Child Advocacy Centers



Land acknowledgement





OUR MISSION

Promoting a culturally appropriate multi-disciplinary response to child maltreatment throughout Alaska

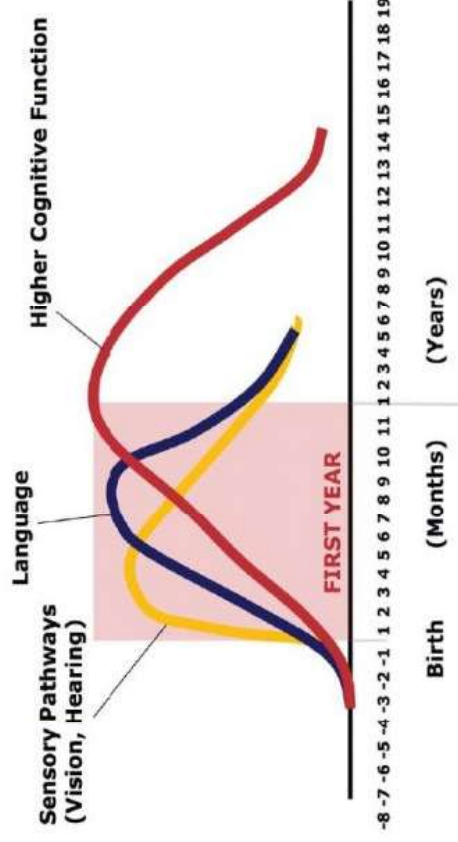


WHY DOES CHILDHOOD TRAUMA MATTER?



Center on the Developing Child
HARVARD UNIVERSITY

Human Brain Development Neural Connections for Different Functions Develop Sequentially



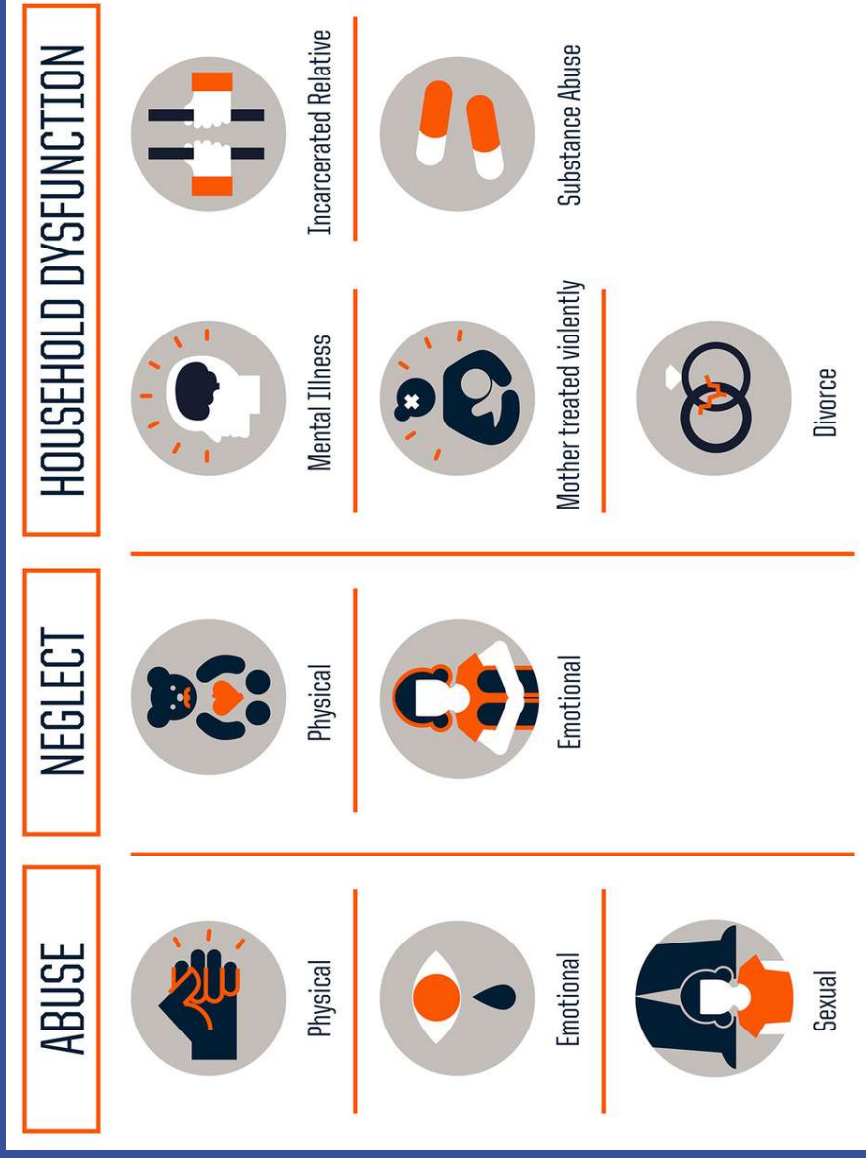
Source: C.A. Nelson (2000)



WHY DOES CHILDHOOD TRAUMA MATTER?

Adverse Childhood
Experiences study

Center for Disease
Control and
Prevention / Kaiser



WHY DOES CHILDHOOD TRAUMA MATTER?



Early Adversity has Lasting Impacts



CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE AND ADULT OUTCOMES

A 23-year longitudinal study found that females who experienced child sexual abuse are at increased risk of experiencing:

- Poorer mental health outcomes (depression, dissociation, self mutilation, suicide attempts)
- Risky health behaviors (alcohol and substance use)
- Risky sexual behaviors, teen motherhood
- Health outcomes (cognitive deficits, earlier onset of puberty, obesity, major illnesses)
- Re-victimization of physical and sexual violence

Trickett PK, Noll JG, Putnam FW. The impact of sexual abuse on female development: lessons from a multigenerational, longitudinal research study. Dev Psychopathol. 2011 May;23(2):453-76.



CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE AND ADULT OUTCOMES

Child sexual abuse is among the strongest predictors of continued sexual victimization in adulthood.

The host of poor psychological, social, and physiological outcomes associated with child sexual abuse are also widely documented risk factors for rape, intimate partner violence, and peer violence. Thus, victims of child sexual abuse are particularly vulnerable to sexual violence.

A meta-analysis concluded that between 15-79% of women with histories of child sexual abuse were subsequently raped as adults. Moreover, a 2009 study found that females who had experienced child sexual abuse had re-victimizations that were more physically violent.

Portis KA, Ford DC, Merrick MT. Adverse childhood experiences and sexual victimization in adulthood.

Child Abuse Negl. 2016 Jan; 51:131-22.



CHILD ABUSE IN ALASKA

Alaska consistently struggles with some of the nation's highest rates of child abuse and neglect.

In cases where the mother is subject to Intimate Partner Violence, these children are 2.6 times as likely to experience an allegation of harm for sexual abuse.



~1 in 7 children born in Alaska will experience an allegation of sexual abuse before their 12th birthday.

Alaska Longitudinal Child Abuse and Neglect Linkage Project (ALCANLink)



ABOUT ALASKA CHILDREN'S ALLIANCE (ACA)

ACA is standalone 501(c)3 dedicated to serving Alaska's Child Advocacy Centers
An accredited chapter of the National Children's Alliance

- Training
 - Biennial Alaska Conference on Child Maltreatment
 - ChildFirst forensic interview training
- Network building
 - Opportunities for CACs and multi disciplinary team partners to engage on best practices
- 1:1 Technical support
- Advocacy and outreach
- Resources and stipends



WHAT IS A CHILD ADVOCACY CENTER (CAC)?



WHAT IS A CHILD ADVOCACY CENTER (CAC)?

A Child Advocacy Center (CAC) is a neutral, developmentally appropriate place where a child and their safe caregiver can visit following a concern of abuse.

CACs address concerns of:

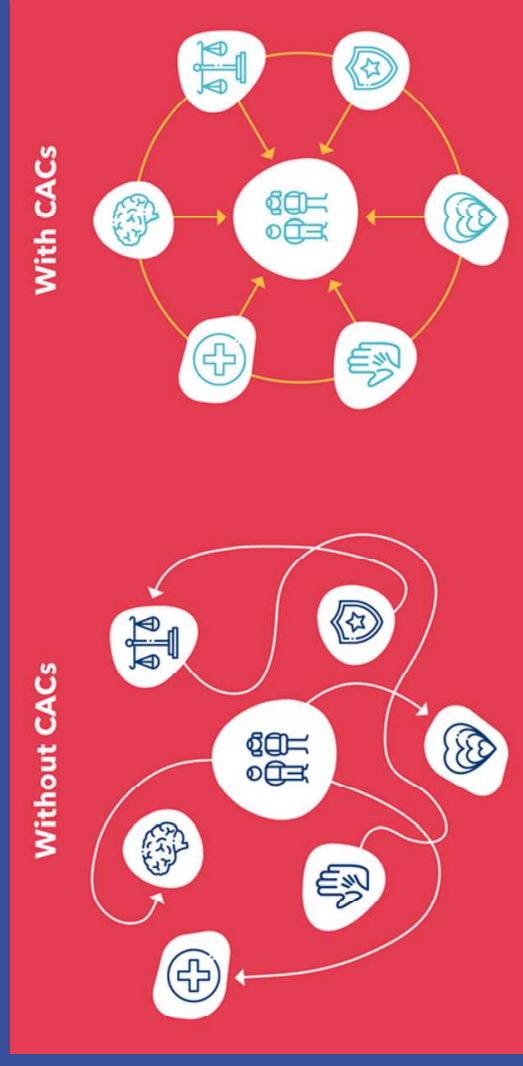
- Sexual abuse (including commercial sexual exploitation and child sexual abuse materials)
- Physical abuse
- Witness to violence, including domestic violence and homicides
- Extreme neglect



WHAT IS A CHILD ADVOCACY CENTER (CAC)?

CACs coordinate a holistic Multi Disciplinary Team (MDT) of professionals including:

- Family advocacy
- Forensic interviewing
- Medical
- Child protection
- Law enforcement
- FBI
- Military
- Tribal/ICWA
- Behavioral health (therapy)
- Prosecution



Everyone works together for the best interests of the child and family.



HOW DO CACS SUPPORT FAMILIES?



- **Forensic Interview:** to gather legally defensible information about what happened in a trauma informed, developmentally appropriate manner
- **Medical evaluation:** to check on the child's health; provide evaluations and forensic examinations
- **Family advocacy:** to support the child and safe caregiver and help them navigate through the systems; assist with resources and referrals

- **Behavioral health:** evidence based therapy to help the child and their family heal
- **Support coordination of investigations,** both criminal (law enforcement) and civil (child welfare)
- **Case review** with multi-disciplinary partners to make sure everyone is on the same page about the needs of the family and the case





Stevie's Place CAC
Fairbanks



Talking Room



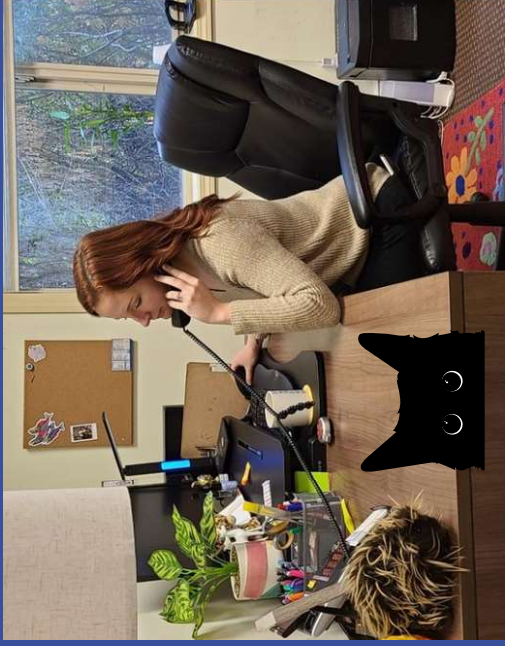
Medical Exam
Room



Waiting Room



Listening Room



WHY CHILD ADVOCACY CENTERS?

01

Child sexual abuse cases must be referred to a CAC per State of Alaska statute

02

Childhood presents an opportune window for prevention and intervention

03

Strong system response is especially critical in Alaska, which consistently struggles with some of the nation's highest rates of child abuse

04

The CAC model is evidence based, following national standards based on research

05

CACs are centered on the best interests of the child and family (higher satisfaction-based on surveys)

06

CACs are cost effective:
For every \$1 spent on a Multi-Disciplinary Team, there is a \$663 return on investment

07

CACs help kids to heal through evidence based behavioral health services

08

CACs result in higher prosecution rates

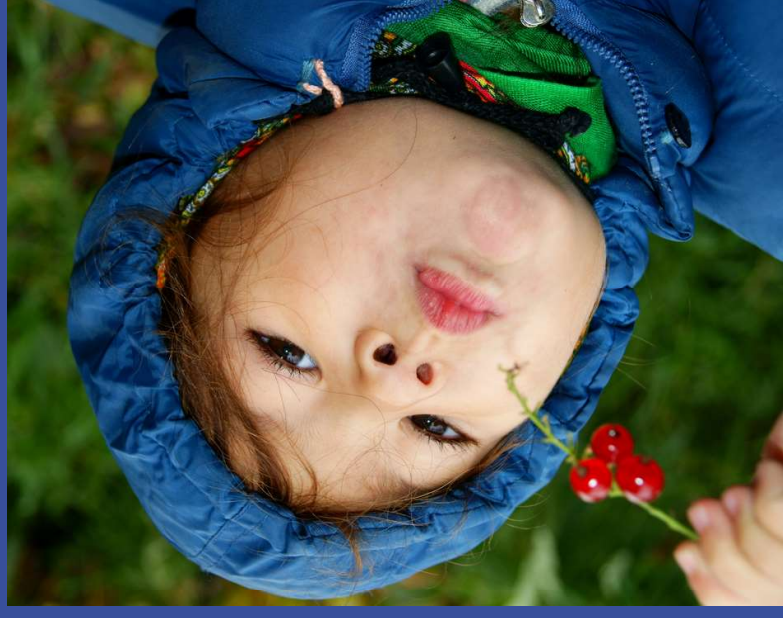
09

Child abuse is a crime. CACs help us hold offenders accountable and make our communities safer



QUOTES FROM KIDS

- “This is SO much better than last time” (referring to the CAC)
- “Somehow make my Dad nice.”
- “I feel safe to talk here”
- “The people helped me calm down”
- “It was all better the first time I walked in the door”
- The best part was: “I got to tell my feelings”
- The best part was: “Telling what my dad did to us.”
- The best part was “finding out my body is ok”
- “Talking to people I trust and that care for me.”
- “The people are really nice and its really comfortable.”
- “I felt safe when I was talking to the people inside the talking room”



HISTORY OF CACS IN ALASKA

1993

First SART team in Homer.
This model was developed for adult victims, and teams were finding a significant number of their cases involved children.

2001

More CACs open (Juneau, SAFE CAC; Bethel, Tundra Women's Coalition)

1996

Alaska CARES (Anchorage) opened under Providence hospital.

ACA becomes a state chapter with National Children's Alliance.

1999

First statewide teleconference meeting at the request of then Rep. Fred Dyson to discuss establishing a statewide system of CACs.

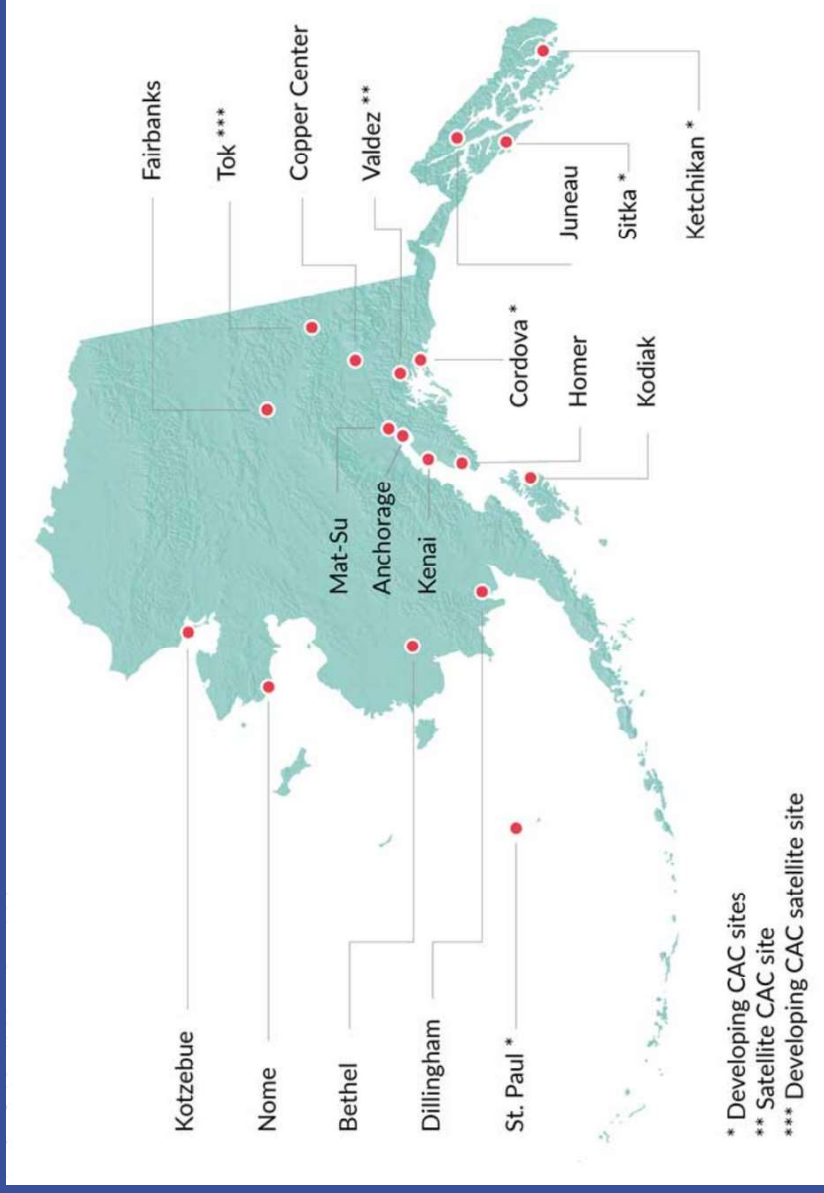
18 established, developing, and satellite CACs in Alaska.



Second CAC (The Children's Place, Wasilla) opens.

CHILD ADVOCACY CENTERS IN ALASKA

Alaska currently has 18 established, and developing, and satellite CACs

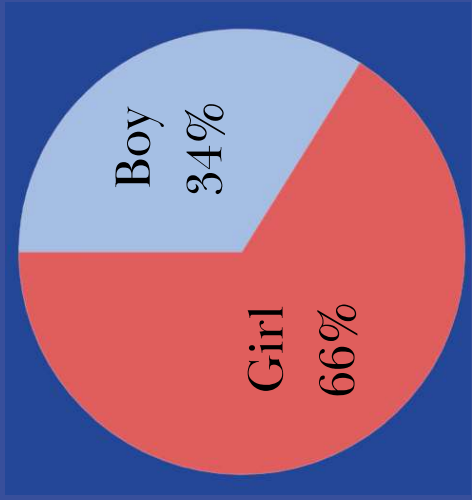


WHO DID CACS SERVE IN FY23?

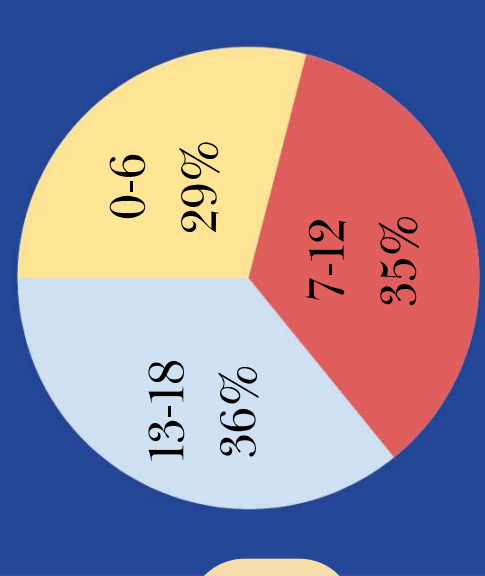
CAC	# Communities Served	# Kids Served in FY23
Anchorage	27	736
Bethel	56	247
Copper River Basin	17	53
Dillingham	33	45
Fairbanks	52	420
Juneau	19	108
Kenai Peninsula	30	147
Ketchikan	3	12
Kodiak	7	56
Kotzebue	11	110
Mat-Su	25	299
Nome	17	115
Sitka	11	40
St. Paul Island	2	0
Total	310	2,388



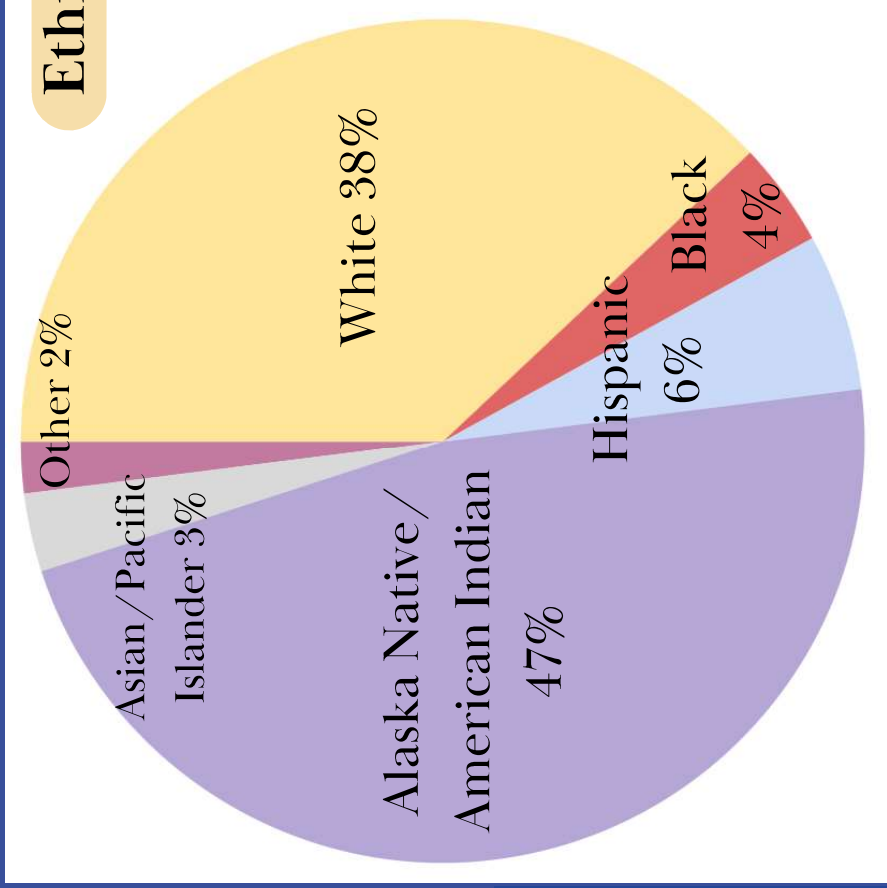
WHO DID CACS SERVE IN FY23?



Sex



**Age
(in years)**

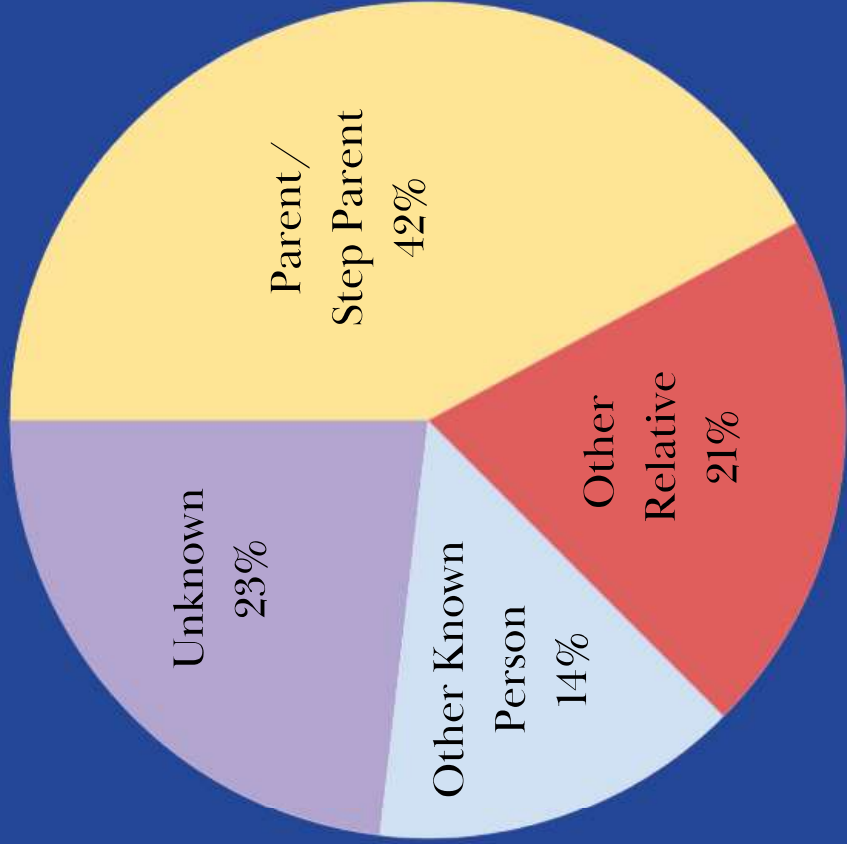


Ethnicity

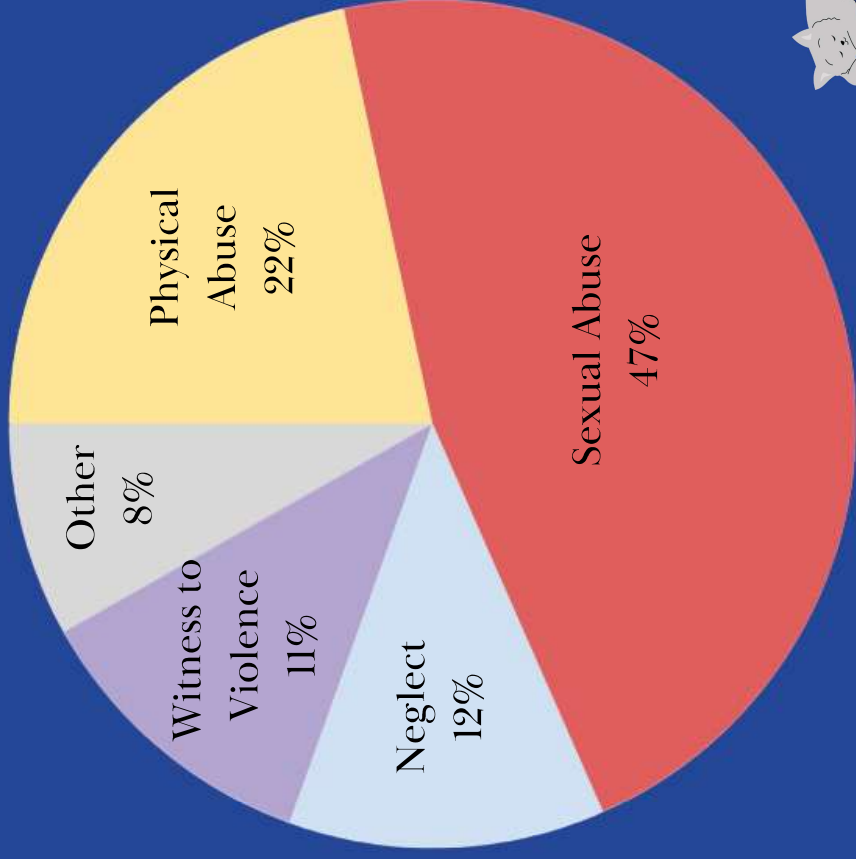


CAC CASES IN FY23

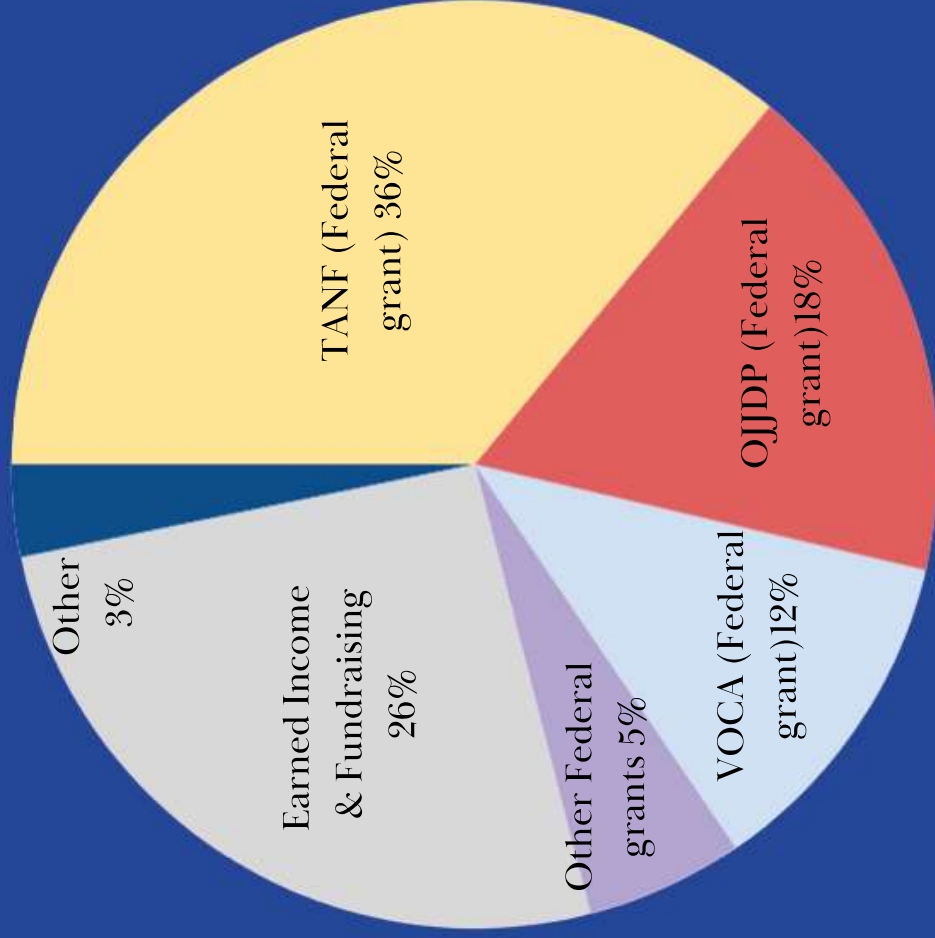
Offender- Relationship to Victim



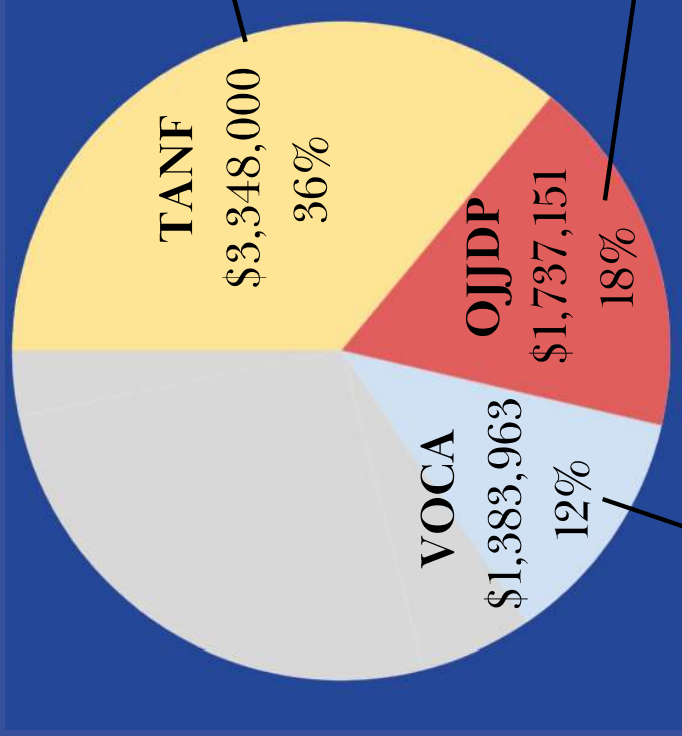
Type of Maltreatment



ALASKA CAC FUNDING - FY23



ALASKA CAC FUNDING- FY23



Temporary Assistance For Needy Families (TANF).

- Federal pass through grant managed by State of Alaska OCS
- Most CACs have not seen any increase in funding since FY18
- No increase to TANF funds in FY24 despite increased CAC output, inflation, and opening of new CACs

Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency (OJJDP).

Alaska Native / American Indian Expansion grant

- Result of former AG Barr's trip to rural Alaska in 2019
- Intended to expand the CAC model with a focus on opening new programs
- One-time special grant (will end in 2025 with no option for renewal)

Victims of Crime Act (VOCA).

- Federal grant managed by CDVSA



VOCA FUNDING



Alaska CACs began receiving
VOCA funding in 2019 (last
state in the US)

ACA and CACs have been
working with national partners
to address VOCA sustainability
issues

Senator Murkowski, DC, June 2023



CAC FUNDING FROM CDVSA: FY 21-24

Which CACs have received funding?

- **FY21-23:**
 1. Providence Alaska- Alaska CARES (Anchorage)
 2. Bristol Bay Area Health Corporation- Nitaput (Dillingham)
 3. Resource Center for Parents and Children-Stevie's Place (Fairbanks)
 4. Catholic Community Services- SAFE CAC (Juneau)
 5. Haven House (Homer/Kenai)
 6. The Children's Place (Wasilla)
 7. Copper River Basin
 8. Tundra Women's Coalition (Bethel)
 9. Maniilaq Family Crisis Center (Kotzebue)

How much funding have CACs received?

- **FY21: VOCA: \$1,253,617**
- **FY22: VOCA: \$1,910,937**
- **FY23: OVC Discretionary Funds: \$1,383,963 (from Sen. Murkowski to fill the VOCA gap)**
- **FY24: VOCA**

- **FY24:**
 - There will still be 9 CACs funded, but Maniilaq (Kotzebue) did not reapply, and Women in Safe Homes (WISH) in Ketchikan did apply.



HOW CDVSA FUNDS SUPPORT CAC SERVICES (FY24)

- Funds used for direct services such as personnel:
 - Family advocates
 - Forensic interviewers
 - Medical providers
 - CAC manager /MDT coordinator
 - Mental health providers



WHAT DOES VOCA FUNDING MEAN TO YOU?

Anchorage: VOCA funds two Advocate positions. “If VOCA went away, those positions might also go away.”

Bethel: “VOCA funds the Bethel CAC Family Advocate positions. Currently the CAC is struggling with turnover. There are only two Advocates onsite and all other positions are currently vacant. It’s the Advocates that keep the CAC in Bethel afloat.

Women’s shelter/CAC advocates provide legal and outreach advocates to assist caregivers to file protection orders against suspects, support caregivers with children through the difficult investigation process...

Without the VOCA funding we would not be able to assist the caregivers with children through this very difficult process of investigation and court appearances. Victim advocates are a big need in the Yukon and Kuskokwim delta region to support caregivers with children to ease the feelings of being alone.”



WHAT DOES VOCA FUNDING MEAN TO YOU?

Fairbanks:

The VOCA grant covers part of the salary for our CAC manager, case coordinator, two forensic interviewers, and an advocate.

Prior to receiving VOCA funds, Stevie's Place had 3 full time staff (serving over 400 kids per year). Now we have 6 staff.

If VOCA was reduced, we'd lose those positions.

Copper River:

VOCA covers part of a forensic interview and advocate position.

“If we lost this grant, we wouldn't have an advocate in Valdez. The responsibilities would fall back to other staff, with everyone doing multiple jobs. That wears people down.”



Dillingham:

“One of the most significant aspects of the VOCA grant is its role in covering the majority of the salary of our dedicated [Forensic Interviewer](#). This essential team member is at the forefront of our efforts to provide a safe and supportive environment for children to share their experiences, facilitating the disclosure process while minimizing trauma. Without the VOCA grant, maintaining such a vital position would be considerably challenging.

Additionally, the grant contributes to a portion of the salary of our [CAC Manager](#), who serves as the Multidisciplinary Team (MDT) facilitator. The MDT approach is a cornerstone of our operations, bringing together professionals from various disciplines to collaborate in cases of child abuse. This collaboration ensures that we provide comprehensive and well-coordinated services to the children and families we serve.

Moreover, the VOCA grant extends its support to our [forensic nurse](#) by covering a portion of their salary. Their expertise is crucial in conducting medical assessments and providing care to the children who come through our doors. This funding is indispensable in maintaining the high level of care we offer to the children in our community.

Another invaluable aspect of the grant is its provision for [outreach travel](#) to the outlying villages of Bristol Bay. Our CAC in Dillingham serves not only the city but also the surrounding 25 villages in the region. Outreach efforts are essential in strengthening the relationships between our center and partnering agencies, community organizations, school leadership, and health professionals in these villages. These connections are vital in ensuring that children in these remote areas receive the support and care they deserve.”



WHAT DOES VOCA FUNDING MEAN TO YOU?

Wasilla:

“Our CDVSA funds pay for 2 Nurse Practitioner (NP) positions.

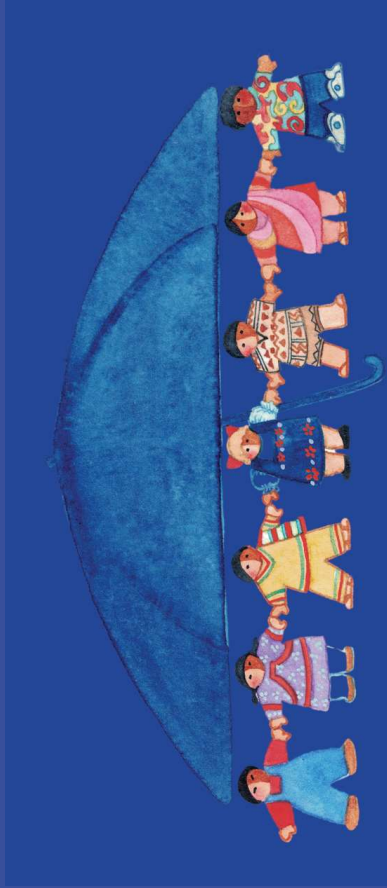
Our current NP is on call most of the time and rarely gets a break.

The position is not just about seeing happy healthy kiddos as you would in a general practitioner’s office. These kiddos and their families are processing a lot of trauma, emotion, and stress and providing a medical exam under these circumstances is challenging, to say the least. It is necessary to have the support of an NP.

If we did not have this funding, we would not be able to do pay for medical staff, or other support positions would need to be cut, in order to have at least one NP.”



THANK YOU!
QUESTIONS AND CONTACT INFO



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