



ALASKA CHILDREN'S ALLIANCE

Presentation to CDVSA Board

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Our Mission

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



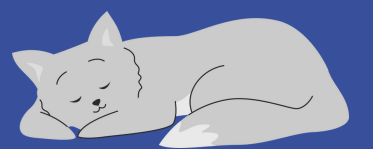
Overlaps Between Child Abuse and DV/SA

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 later in life.

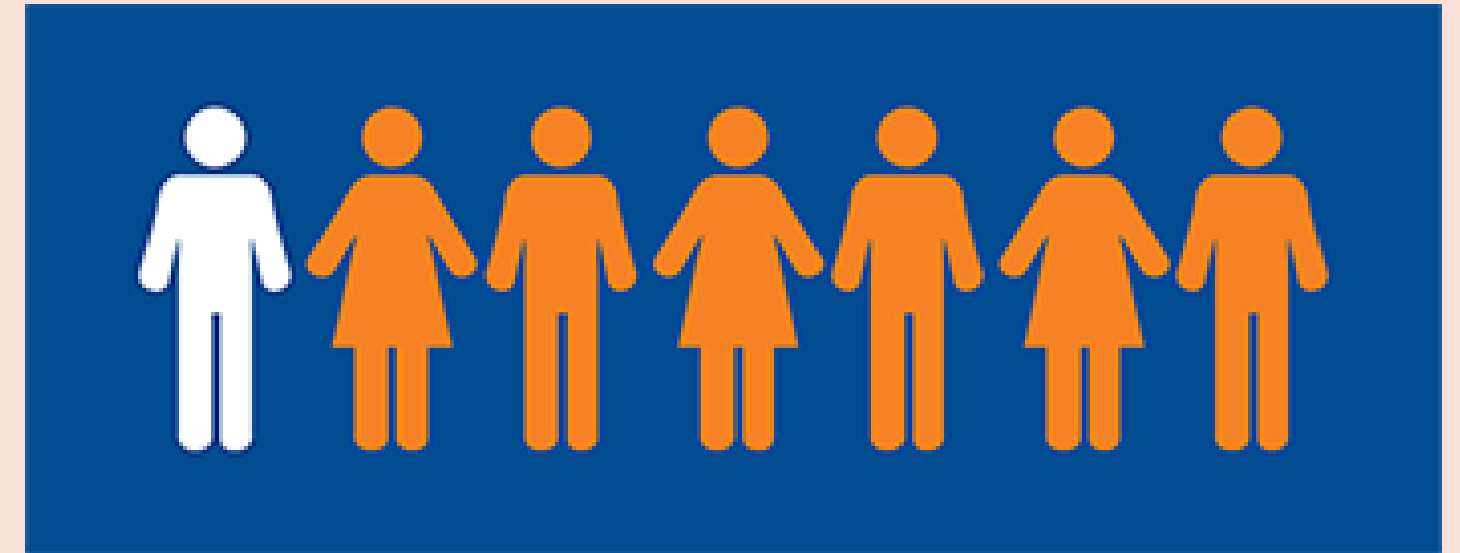
Ports KA, Ford DC, Merrick MT. Adverse childhood experiences and sexual victimization in adulthood. Child Abuse Negl. 2016 Jan; 51:131-22.



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)



What is a Child Advocacy Center?

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

CACs address concerns of:

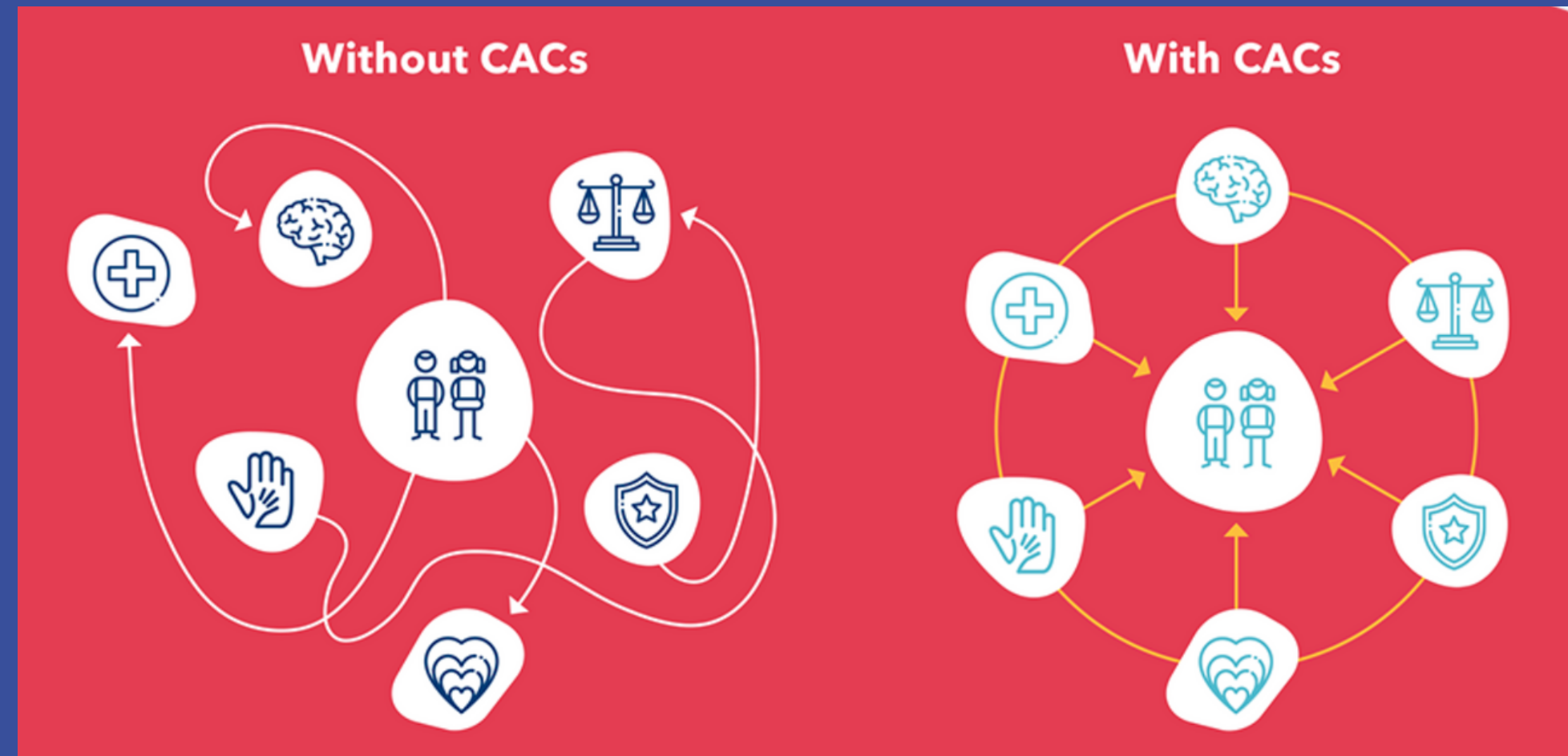
- Sexual abuse (including commercial sexual exploitation and child sexual abuse materials)- Mandated by State statute
- Physical abuse
- Witness to violence, including domestic violence and homicides
- Extreme neglect



What is a Child Advocacy Center?

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.

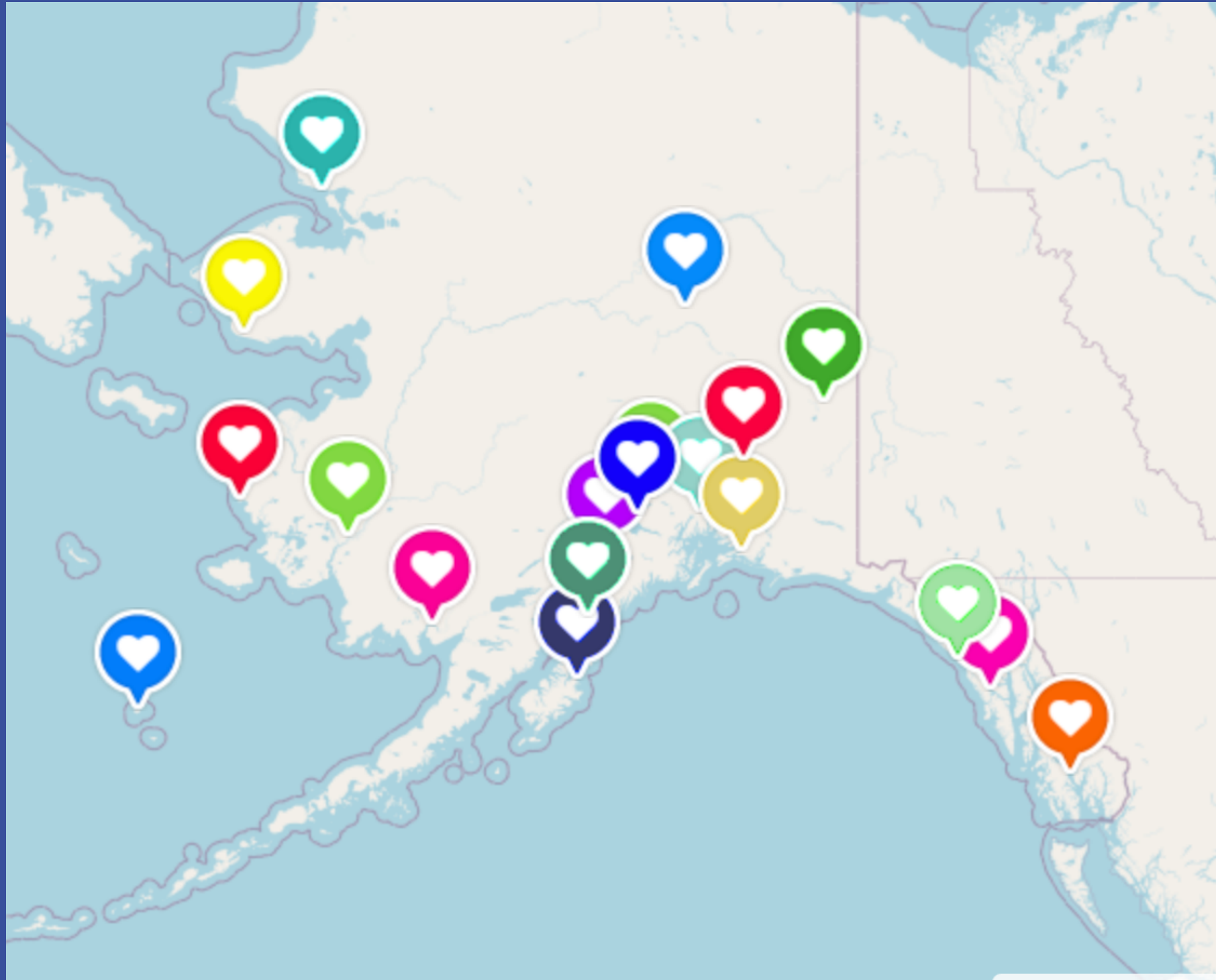


Quotes From Kids

- “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”



CACs Throughout Alaska



Alaska currently
has 19 established,
developing, and
satellite CACs



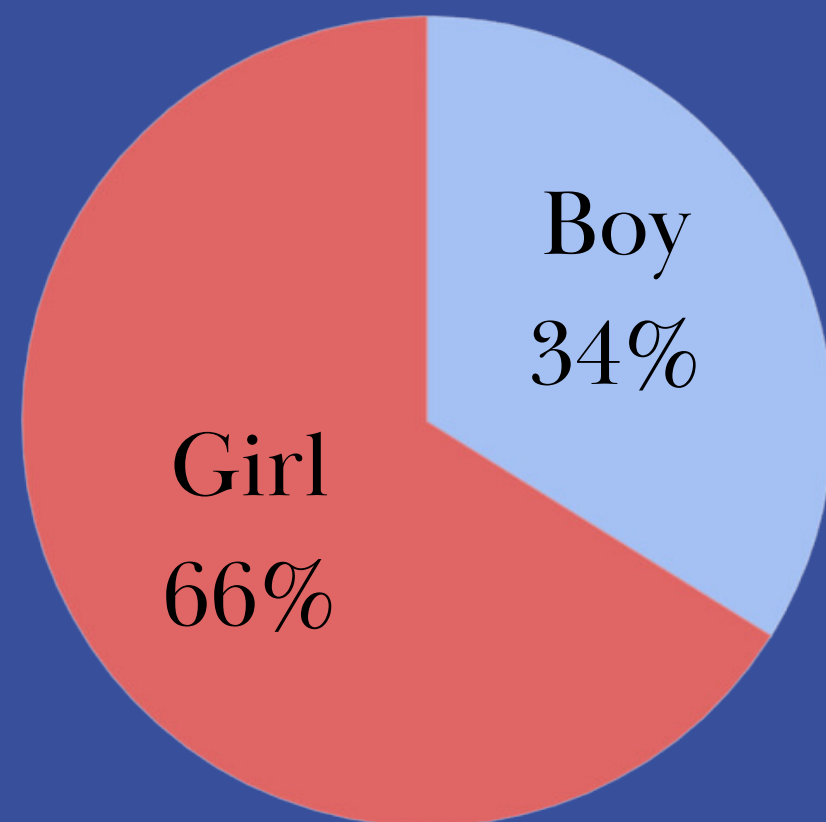
Kids Served in FY23

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

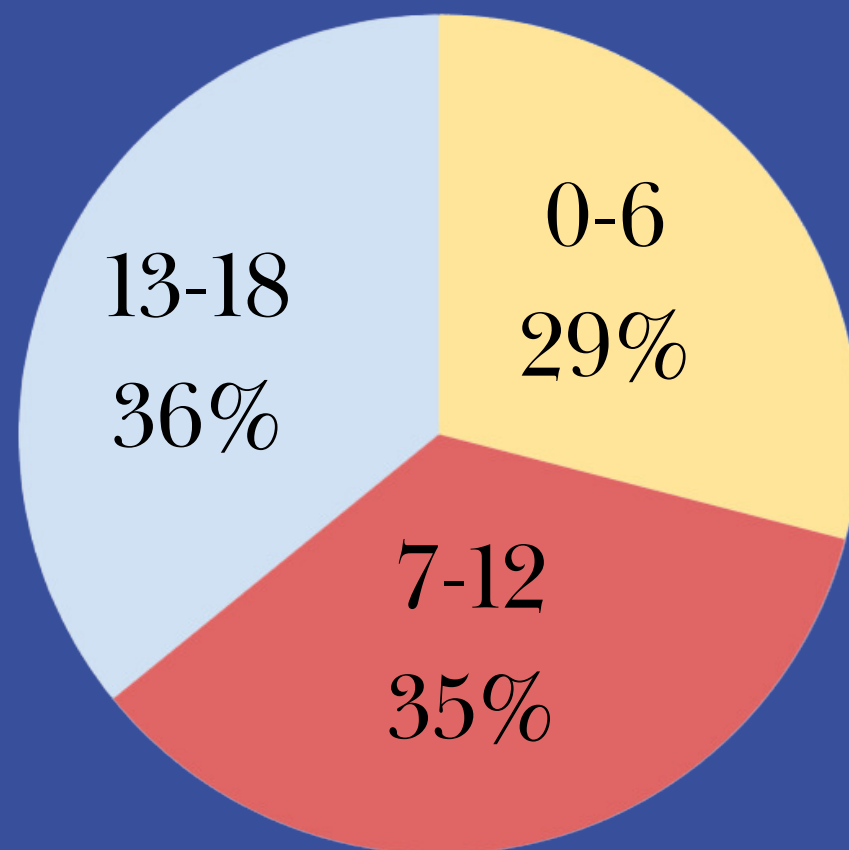


Kids Served in FY23

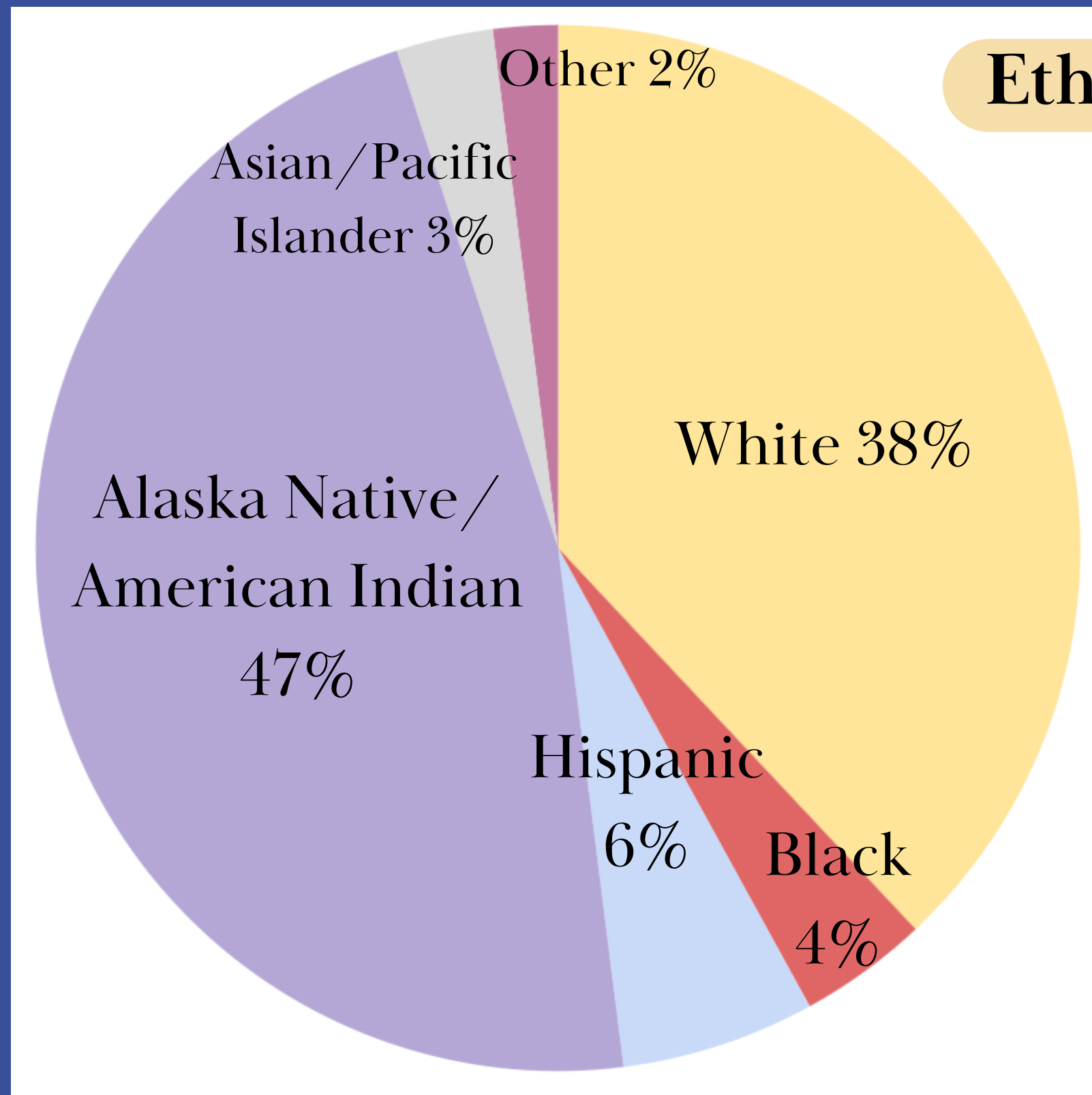
Sex



Age
(in years)

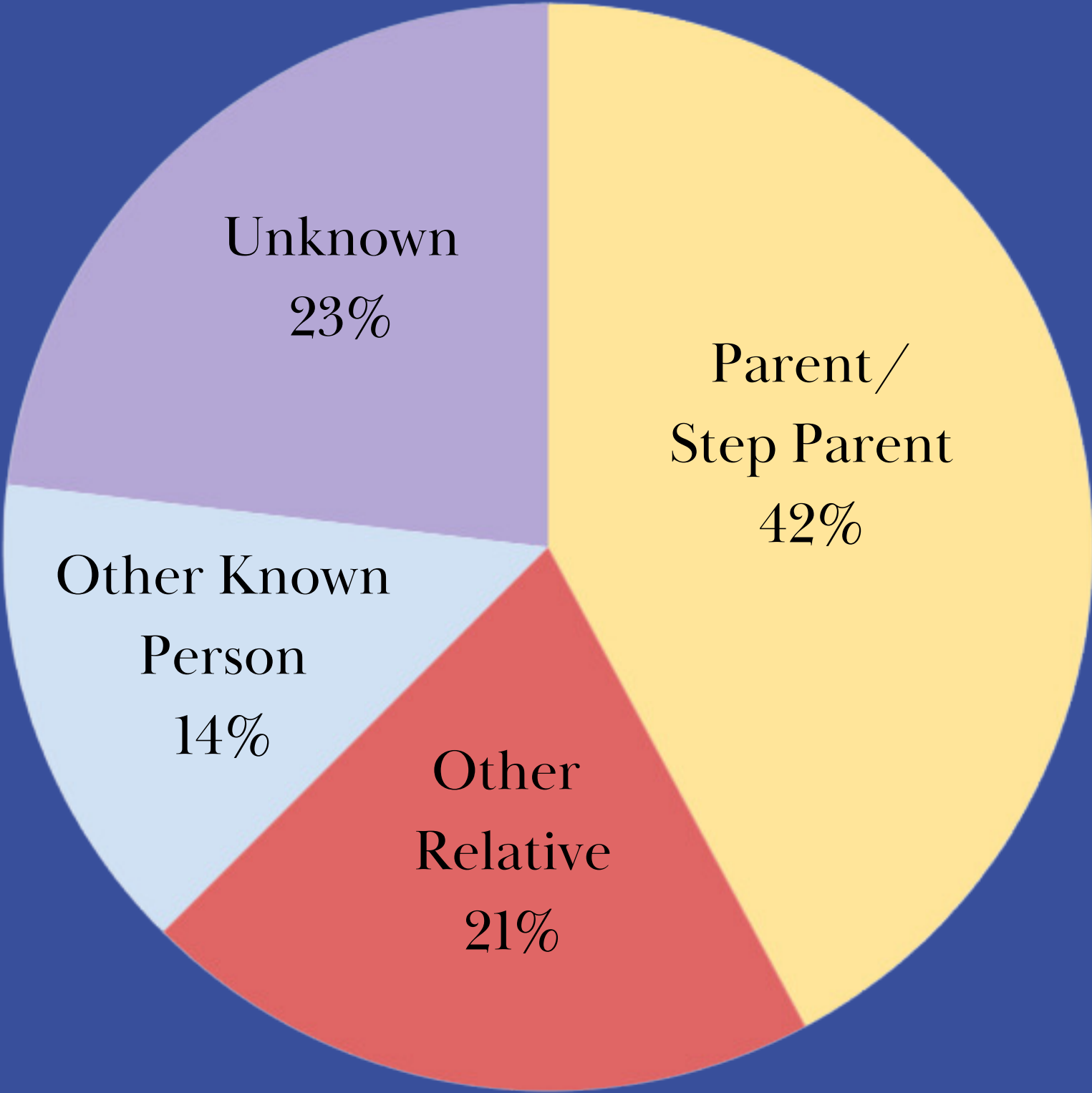


Ethnicity

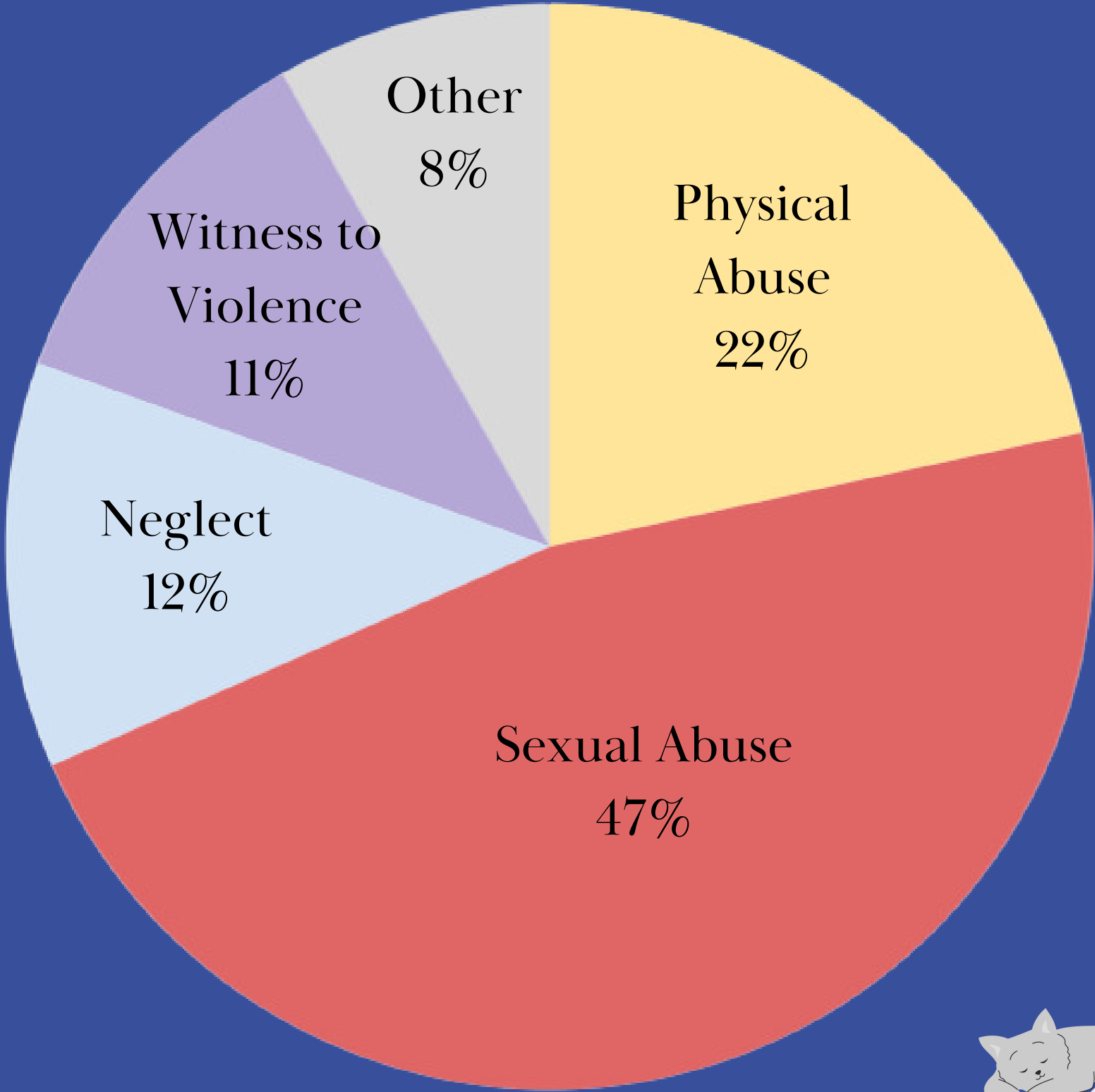


CAC Cases in FY23

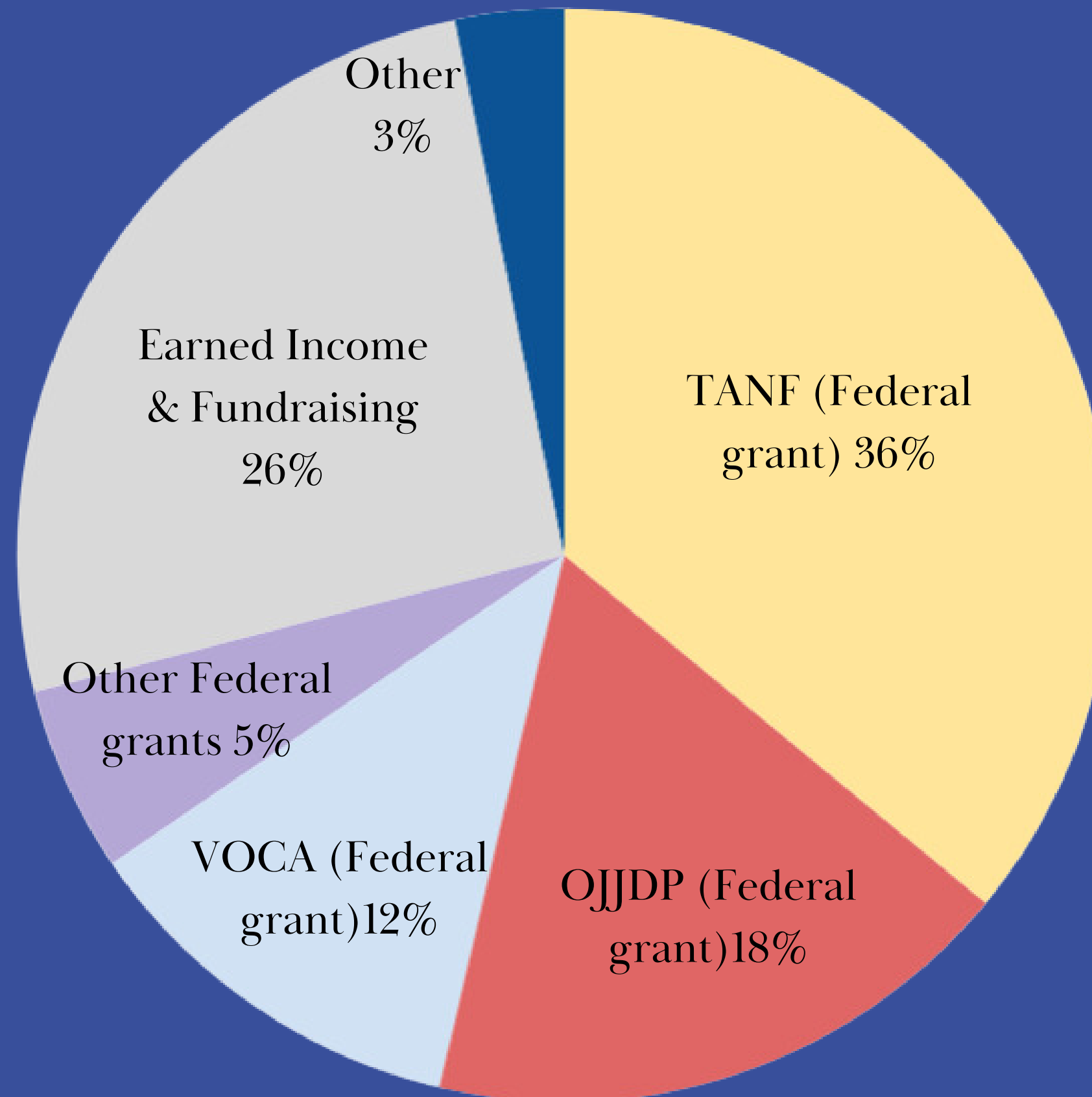
Offender- Relationship to Victim



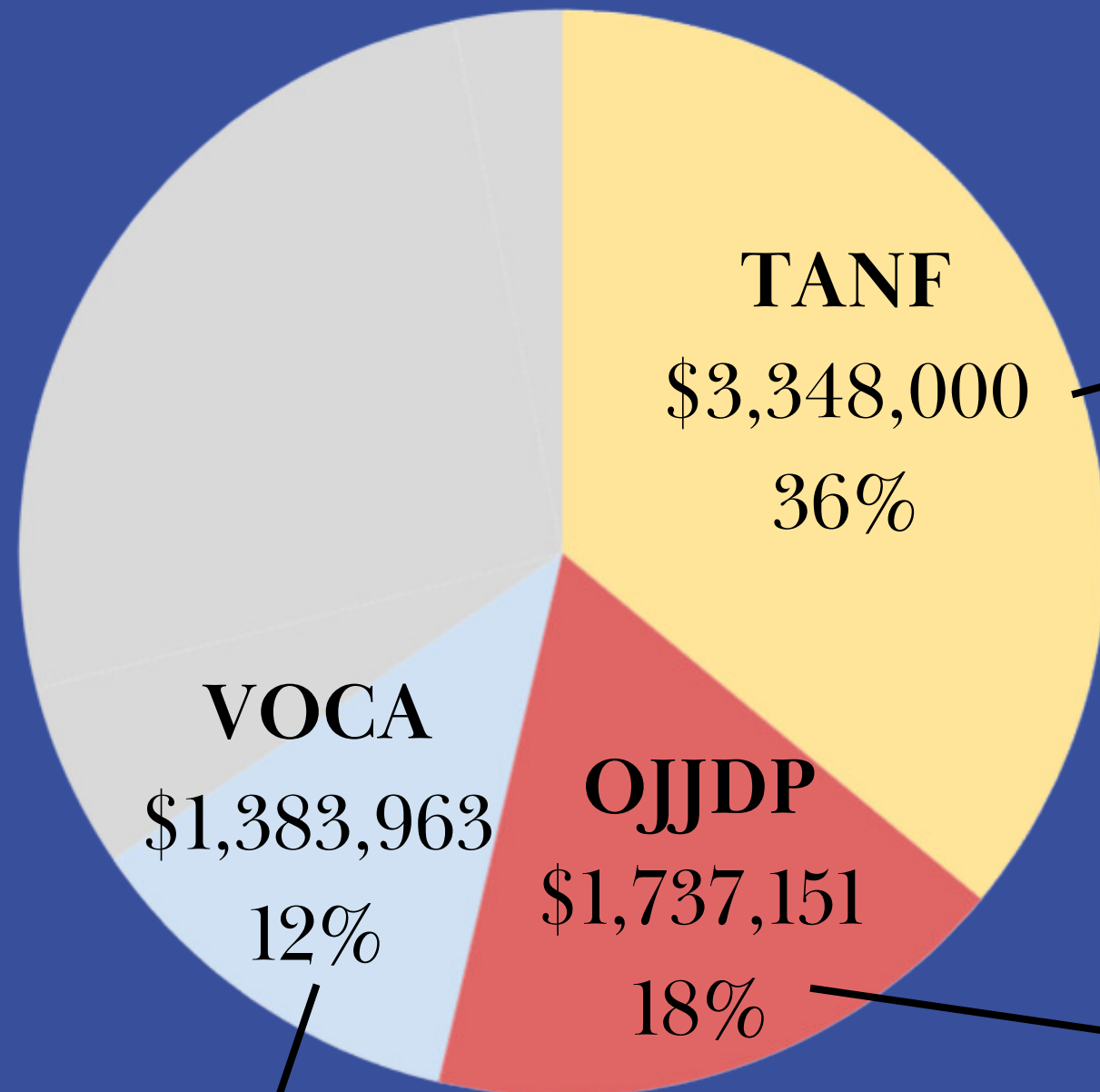
Type of Maltreatment



FY23 Alaska CAC Funding



FY23 Alaska CAC Funding



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



Alaska CAC Funding Concerns

Despite increased need:

- Development of new CACs (5 since 2022- expanding reach into remote/underserved areas)
- Inflation, higher cost of doing business
- Increased programs (staff, services provided)

We anticipate funding loss:

- 1st biggest overall funding source will likely stay flat (TANF)
- 2nd biggest overall funding source will be gone by July 2025 (DOJ)
- 3rd biggest overall funding source unstable (VOCA)



Addressing Funding Needs

Goals:

1. Maintain current core funding sources (TANF-OCS, CDVSA- VOCA)
2. Add new funding sources to replace DOJ grant and meet increased needs

Steps taken:

Meeting stakeholders and partners

- State level
 - Legislators (Group fly-in to Juneau in February 2024)
 - State Commissioners
 - Governor's office
 - Children's Justice Act Task Force
 - Funding administrators (OCS, CDVSA)
 - Support from Jordan Marshall, lobbyist
- Regional/National level
 - Western Regional CAC
 - National Children's Alliance
 - Federal delegation- Offices of Rep. Peltola and Sen. Murkowski, Sullivan (June 2023; scheduled June 2024)



VOCA Funding and CACs

VOCA funds CACs in every state in the US

- Alaska was the last state to provide VOCA funding to CACs- In 2019

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



Senator Murkowski, DC, June 2023



VOCA Supports CAC Direct Services

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



What Does VOCA Mean to You?

Anchorage (Alaska CARES/Providence)

VOCA funds:

2 Advocate positions (out of 20 CAC FTEs)

What would happen if the funding was lost?

It would be very challenging for us operationally to meet national accreditation standards. Also, we are up for re-accreditation next year so it wouldn't give us much time to try and source other funding.



Bethel (Tundra Women's Coalition)

VOCA funds: The 2 Bethel CAC Family Advocate positions (out of 4 CAC FTEs)

What would happen if the funding was lost?

It's the Advocates that keep the CAC in Bethel afloat. Currently the CAC is struggling with turnover. There are only two Advocates onsite and all other positions are currently vacant.

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.



Juneau (Catholic Community Services)

VOCA funds:

- 1.0 FTE Program Coordinator/Forensic Interviewer
- 0.4 FTE Program Manager/Forensic Interviewer
- 1 Mental Health Clinician, 2 hours/week
- 1 Registered Nurse, SANE-P. 0.6 hours/week
- 1 Pediatric Physician
- (Out of 5 CAC FTEs)



What would happen if the funding was lost?

“If VOCA funds went away, the other federal funding sources for the CAC would not be enough to fully fund core staff, and the CAC would need to fundraise from the community, or not be fully staffed.

Not fully staffed means the burden of CAC services may fall upon the local hospital ER, law enforcement or child protective services. Children may have to re-tell their story over and over, children may receive an exam in an ER rather than a child friendly atmosphere, or be interviewed by staff not trained in the best practice ChildFirst protocol. They might have to fly to another community for services, or they may have to wait until another CAC's staff are available to fly here.”



Homer & Kenai (Haven House)



VOCA funds: One Full time Advocate (out of 4 CAC FTEs)

What would happen if the funding was lost?

“Without VOCA funds, we would be down one full time (with benefits) Family Advocate position in Kenai, and we would not be able to compensate (via stipend) anyone for being On-call from either CAC.”



Copper River/Valdez/ Tok (developing)

VOCA funds: 1 FTE- Part of a forensic interview and advocate position (out of 3.5 CAC FTEs)

What would happen if the funding was lost? “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.”



Fairbanks (Resource Center for Parents and Children)

VOCA funds: Part of the salary for our CAC manager, case coordinator, two forensic interviewers, and an advocate (out of 6.5 CAC FTEs)

What would happen if the funding was lost?

“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, displacing additional pressure on the remaining staff and our partner agencies.”



Dillingham (Bristol Bay Area Health Corporation)

VOCA funds The majority of our dedicated Forensic Interviewer, a portion of the CAC manager, forensic nurse, and also covers outreach travel- Dillingham serves 25 villages in the region (out of 3 CAC FTEs)



What would happen if the funding was lost?

“I do not believe that BBAHC would be able to cover the cost of our department if we did not have grant funding for these positions.”



Wasilla (The Children's Place)

VOCA funds Our 2 Nurse Practitioner (NP) positions (out of 8 CAC FTEs)

What would happen if the funding was lost?

“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!



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