

Senate Finance FY01 Budget Subcommittee Highlights
Compiled from subcommittee chair reports
3/23/00

Department of Education and Early Development

The mission of the Department of Education and Early Development is to support the development of lifelong learners. The budget recommended by this subcommittee:

- Fulfills our mission to educate young Alaskans by fully funding K-12 schools
- Expands educational opportunities for all Alaskans by adding \$100,000 to Community Schools, for a total of \$500,000
- Provides \$3.4 million for Head Start programs to boost early child development in low-income families
- Helps working families by increasing funding for child care programs by 28 percent, to a total of more than \$29.1 million
- Adds \$2.3 million in additional funding for child care assistance, to help low-income families afford day care and after-school care
- Improves quality of child care by increasing the child care grant amount by \$917,000 – an increase in monthly support from \$22 to \$33 per child
- Provides an extra \$500,000 to improve quality of day care and to expand day care center licensing

Department of Public Safety

The mission of the Department of Public Safety is to ensure public safety and enforce fish and wildlife laws. The budget recommended by this subcommittee:

- Adds \$225,000 in General Funds for one additional state trooper stationed in Petersburg and another available statewide
- Revises funding practices so that money appropriated for trooper salaries cannot easily be diverted to overhead or equipment
- Devotes \$320,000 to continue a batterers intervention and treatment program to hold offenders accountable and reduce the chances of their attacking again
- Adds \$300,000 to expand the state's ability to compensate victims of violent crime, in part with Permanent Fund dividends forfeited by convicted criminals
- Strengthens victims rights by ensuring \$200,000 in funding for the Victims for Justice advocacy program
- Strengthens troopers' scientific and technical resources with \$238,500 for laboratory services

Department of Transportation and Public Facilities

The mission of the Department of Transportation and Public Facilities is to develop, operate, maintain, and manage facilities, vehicles, and transportation modes. The budget recommended by this subcommittee:

- Reopens highway maintenance stations to keep Alaska's high-traffic highways and roads open for commercial, visitor and personal travel
- Responds to Interior mining and tourism interests by directing funds to ensure that snowplows, not sunbeams, clear Northern and Central region roads in the spring

Department of Health and Social Services

The mission of the Department of Health and Social Services is to promote and protect the health and well being of Alaskans. The budget recommended by this subcommittee:

- Continues moving Alaskans from welfare to work, resulting in \$11.7 million savings in Alaska Temporary Assistance Program funds
- Increases funding for Medicaid, Adult Public Assistance, Foster Care, and Subsidized Adoptions
- Allocates an additional \$1.4 million for a total of \$11.3 million to find permanent homes for children languishing in foster care
- Improves state's ability to help children in need by funding training for staff at the Division of Family and Youth Services
- Provides resources to train foster parents of children with special needs
- Meets growing need for safe homes for children by allocating an additional \$3.4 million in foster care assistance
- Improves quality of service for children requiring structured living environments, by funding training of residential treatment facility direct care workers
- Adds \$400,000 to the Infant Learning Program's budget to reduce the wait list for infants and children needing home-based early intervention services, bringing program total to \$5.4 million
- Strengthens forensic resources in our fight against child abuse by funding a child pathologist position
- Adds \$4.2 million to fully fund Adult Public Assistance at \$52.9 million, to meet the increasing needs of impoverished elderly, blind, and disabled Alaskans
- Meets anticipated funding needs for Medicaid services for the entire year, through Hospital Pro-Share Program and other efficiencies
- Provides medical care for chronically ill Alaskans not qualifying for Medicaid, by fully funding the Catastrophic and Chronic Illness Assistance program at more than \$4.3 million

Department of Administration

The mission of the Department of Administration is to (1) provide centralized management and technology services to state agencies; (2) provide legal and advocacy services for indigent Alaskans; (3) provide programs that promote the independence of Alaska's seniors; (4) provide vehicle licensing and registration. The budget recommended by this subcommittee:

- Continues programs to help Alaska senior citizens lead independent lives through continued support of Meals on Wheels, local senior centers, and home-based medical and personal assistance programs
- Improves quality of care at Pioneer Homes by authorizing expenditure of an additional \$525,000 from residents able to pay
- Continues commitment to Alaska's seniors by providing \$54.6 million to fully fund Longevity Bonus
- Responded to increasing caseloads at Office of Public Advocacy and Public Defender's Office by providing additional funding for legal and advocacy services
- Maintains funding for Alaska's radio reading service for the blind and visually impaired

- Maintains public broadcasting's ability to continue radio and television service to Alaska, by providing public industry the opportunity to share satellite service costs

Department of Community and Economic Development

The mission of the Department of Community and Economic Development is to promote independent communities and economic development in Alaska. The budget recommended by this subcommittee:

- Transfers state tourism marketing functions to private sector contract, reducing General Fund expenses by \$80,700
- Supports continuing operation of state international trade offices
- Provides support to Alaska communities, by maintaining current level of General Fund for Municipal Revenue Sharing
- Consolidates rural energy programs into a single budget line, improving opportunity for full funding consideration

Department of Corrections

The mission of the Department of Corrections is to protect the public by confining, supervising, and rehabilitating offenders under the custody of the department. The budget recommended by this subcommittee:

- Commits to long-term public safety in rural Alaska by converting pilot Village Public Safety Officer program to permanent program at \$95,000 per year, and funding 11 officers in Bush Alaska
- Reduces administrative overhead and saves \$76,400 by eliminating administrative services division's legislative liaison position
- Provides \$200,000 for psychiatric services, primarily drug and alcohol rehabilitation, for women incarcerated at Hiland Mountain Correctional Center
- Fights recidivism in Alaska Natives with \$65,000 program to implement culturally sensitive sobriety awareness program at 13 correctional facilities

Department of Environmental Conservation

The mission of the Department of Environmental Conservation is to protect human health and the environment. The budget recommended by this subcommittee:

- Reflects priorities as presented by department management
- Provides financial resources necessary to restructure and streamline water quality division
- Ensures municipalities, mining operations, fish processors and others can quickly obtain the Water Quality permits they need to operate
- Maintains continuing level of food safety inspection program
- Provides department with full discretion to fund Forest Practices Act activities to protect water quality

Department of Fish and Game

The mission of the Department of Fish and Game is to protect, maintain, and improve the fish, game, and aquatic plant resources of the state, and manage their use and development in the best interest of the economy and the well being of the people of the state, consistent with the sustained yield principle. The budget recommended by this subcommittee:

- Reduces time Board of Fish spends in meetings each year, saving \$50,000 annually
- Promotes creation of public/private partnership for the long-term operations of Crystal lake Hatchery
- Appropriates more than \$2 million in federal receipts to fund contracts for fisheries research, monitoring and training in the sportfish division, and other commercial and subsistence fisheries projects

Department of Labor and Workforce Development

The mission of the Department of Labor and Workforce Development is to promote safe and fair working conditions and to advance opportunities for employment. The budget recommended by this subcommittee:

- Encourages Alaskans to become self-sufficient by fully funding vocational rehabilitation, employment training and Adult Basic Education programs
- Streamlines department by eliminating two administrative positions, saving \$90,800

Alaska State Legislature

- Reduced Legislature's budget by \$1 million
- (NOTE: This figure is approximately 3 percent below the General Fund FY00 Management Plan and 4.3 percent below the FY00 Management Plan for total funds. This compares to a proposed 0.9 percent reduction in General Fund spending for all agencies.)

Department of Law

The mission of the Department of Law is to provide legal services to state government and to prosecute crime. The budget recommended by this subcommittee:

- Fully funds the department's Criminal Division with more than \$12.5 million in General Funds, to ensure state prosecutors' ability to prosecute crime in Alaska

Department of Military and Veterans Affairs

The mission of the Department of Military and Veterans' Affairs is to: (1) provide military forces capable of ready operations; (2) provide for an organized response during emergencies and disasters; (3) train at-risk juveniles; (4) coordinate veterans' programs; and (5) assist agencies in suppressing illegal drugs. The budget recommended by this subcommittee:

- Reallocates funds to establish a Missile Defense Coordinator position to help Alaska prepare for possible Alaska basing of National Missile Defense, and chance at creating 700 new National Guard-related jobs
- Provides \$620,500 to leverage \$35 million for the American Legion, VFW and Disabled Am vets to provide veterans outreach services
- Reallocated additional \$94,700 in tuition assistance to facilitate education and advancement of Alaska National Guard members
- Maintains more than 4,000 jobs in 76 communities around Alaska
- Maintains current budgeting levels for all non-General Fund programs

Department of Natural Resources

The mission of the Department of Natural Resources is to provide for the utilization, development, and conservation of all natural resources in the state for the maximum benefit of present and future Alaskans. The budget recommended by this subcommittee:

- Maintains full funding for key state development functions, including the divisions of Oil and Gas, Agriculture, and Geological and Geophysical Surveys
- Approves \$309,000 to improve “one-stop shopping” services to assist members of the public in dealing with DNR
- Approves consolidation of three separate divisions into single entity, the Division of Mining, Land and Water, eliminating administrative overhead
- Approves \$100,000 to help put state-owned agricultural land into private hands
- Adds \$50,000 for maintenance of Alaska State Parks facilities
- Provides funds to allow state parks to remain open for the enjoyment of Alaskans and visitors
- Approves \$93,000 for boating safety programs

Department of Revenue

The mission of the Department of Revenue is to collect and invest funds for public purposes. The budget recommended by this subcommittee:

- Helps the Child Support Enforcement Division tackle its huge case backlog by funding temporary workers with an additional \$620,200
- Empowers Alaskans to apply for their Permanent Fund dividends more quickly and conveniently by establishing on-line application procedures
- Protects Alaska’s financial interests by providing adequate funds for the state to resolve two major business property tax disputes
- Resists expansion of Permanent Fund management expenses, making more money available for dividends
- Provides housing opportunities for older Alaskans through the Alaska Housing Finance Corporation

University of Alaska

The mission of the University of Alaska is to ensure the best opportunity for Alaskans of all ages to be successful, productive, and contributing members of society by fostering and promoting (1) the highest quality postsecondary educational system; (2) vocational development and training; (3) advancement and extension of knowledge, learning, and culture; and (4) the application of new knowledge to state needs.

- The Senate’s University of Alaska budget subcommittee reviewed the University’s request. The full Senate Finance Committee will take up the University’s request.