

# Division of Public Assistance

Winter Update  
February, 2006

## News and Notes

### ***Stewardship and Accountability***

*DPA continues to focus on continuous improvement in all programs, including the Food Stamp program where DPA was awarded \$205,000 in FY2005 for most improved accuracy ratings in the nation. A Quality Council initiative along with numerous other policy and programmatic changes have improved quality measures across the Division.*

### Highlights and Accomplishments

## Alaska continues success of moving families to self-sufficiency

Temporary Assistance caseloads continue to drop as Alaskans move toward self-sufficiency. The caseload has dropped 60% since 1994 and spending is down nearly \$70 million since FY97. Great news!

Here is a summary of our priority initiatives:

### **Alaska Partnership for Healthy Communities**

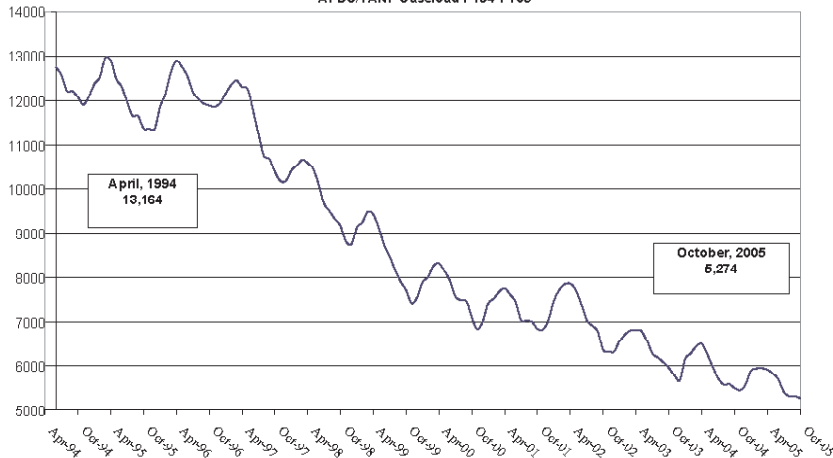
This broad strategy is one of the Dept. of Health & Social Services four strategic goals. Numerous initiatives embody the agency's

efforts to: increase community ownership, improve services, and ensure sustainable structures and funding for vital services to Alaskan communities. Components of this strategy are included in the Division of Public Assistance's current initiatives and ongoing operations.

### **Family Centered Services**

DPA has implemented an initial phase of wrap-around services for long-term Temporary Assistance families who face multiple barriers to employment and self sufficiency. The model is based on the Customized Employment Grant sponsored by the Div. of Vocational Rehabilitation

AFDC/TANF Caseload FY94-FY05



**70%** Caseload Drop  
in FY05

## News...continued

### Early Childhood Development

DPA supports the Ready to Read, Ready to Learn Task Force with a FY07 funding requests to implement such things as Early Learning Guidelines and a Quality Rating System, both of which help working parents



access quality child care and all parents to ensure a quality learning environment for children ages 0-5 years of age.

### Asset Building

The Division is collaborating with Native, non-profit and private partners in an event on Feb. 22-23 to highlight existing strategies, introduce national and international best practices, and develop a statewide strategy to reduce asset poverty in Alaska. Elements include expanding use of individual development accounts, micro-enterprise and micro-finance to enable lower income Alaskans to develop assets for education, home-ownership and self-employment.

### TANF Reauthorization

Federal reauthorization of the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program will require DPA to reexamine the Alaska Temporary Assistance Program and ensure continued success in employment related outcomes for participants that has led to more than \$12M in performance bonus funds over the past four years. Increased expectations regarding work participation levels will require the agency, their contractors and Job Center partners to seek new levels of performance in work participation.

### Homelessness Ends in Alaska Advisory Team

DPA participates in a statewide effort to end homelessness through improved and integrated service. A training program for homeless service providers is scheduled March 13-17 on the Family Centered/Customized Employment model as adapted for homeless families seeking self-sufficiency.

Visit Public Assistance online at:  
<http://hss.state.ak.us/dpa/>

## AWIB Guidance Requested



The Division of Public Assistance requests guidance from the Alaska Workforce Investment Board as to expectations for implementing the following oversight functions as defined in Alaska Statute AS 23.15.550 (d):

*The board shall provide oversight for the planning and coordination of employment-related education training programs operated by the state or operated under contract with the state that are described in (f) of this section.*

Section (f) includes the following DPA functions:

(D) employment training services operated as part of the Alaska temporary assistance program (ATAP);

(F) Alaska works programs, assisting with the welfare-to-work program.

### Mark your calendars

## Regional Leadership Conference

DHSS has funded The Foraker Group to provide technical assistance and capacity building to regional organizations throughout FY06. The work includes a conference in May 17, 18 or 19 to present the findings of existing regional efforts and successful models that can be adapted to Alaska's diverse socio-economic regions seeking to leverage local, state, federal, public and private investments.

