Alaska Tribal Child Welfare Conference
September 28, 2023

Partnering for Resource Family Recruitment and Retention

Kirstie Ione- Kawerak Foster Care Recruiter/Foster Parent
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Aileen Mcinnis- Alaska Center for Resource Families Director

Purpose of Foster Care

Purpose of foster care is to be temporary. The division's number one goal is reunification with the biological parents whenever possible. Foster care is when a child in state custody is in out-of-home placement when it is determined the child is unsafe or at high risk of maltreatment.

- OCS has the responsibility to assess homes for safety and to have a licensing unit for foster homes and placement agencies available.

What are the types of foster care?

- There are two types of resource families that can provide care for foster children.
  - Foster care by relative caregivers and foster care by non-relative caregivers.

- A foster home, as defined by 7AAC 67.990(20) has the meaning given in AS 47.32.900(5):
  - A foster home is a place where the adult head of household provides 24 hour care on a continuing basis to one or more children who are apart from their parents.

- Relative Caregivers: Care by a relative, is the preferred choice for out-of-home placement. Relatives have an option to care for a child with or without a foster home license.

- Foster Homes are family homes that are licensed to provide ongoing care for children in a time of family crises.

Licensing Process

Alaska Statute 47.32 is intended to improve the quality of care and promote health, safety and welfare for individuals residing in licensed environments. The Office of Children's Services, foster care licensing standards, require foster parents to demonstrate the ability to provide for the health, safety and well-being of children in care.

*Homes may choose to have an Emergency Shelter Home specialization or specific conditions placed on their license, i.e. specific child only or gender specific.

Steps to becoming a Licensed Foster Home

Attend a Resource Family Orientation

⬇

Submit a Foster Home application

⬇

Fingerprinting and background checks

⬇

Home Inspection, full regulation review and family assessment

⬇

Licensed

What if the applicants cannot meet all of the requirements or someone has a background barrier?

General Variances

- If an applicant cannot meet the regulatory requirements, they may request a general variance 7ACC 67.065.
- A general variance varies the licensing regulation and is an alternative means, acceptable to the department that satisfies the purpose of the requirement for which the variance is sought and the health, safety, and welfare of recipients of services are protected.

Background Variances

- Providers or applicants who receive an invalid background check (barrier) can request a background check variance. This application will be reviewed by three levels of committees for a final decision to be made.

Supports for Resource Families

Unlicensed Relatives
- Unlicensed relatives are provided with Emergency Relief Support payments for two months following placement.

Licensed Foster Parents
- Receive a monthly stipend for the length of time each child is placed in there home.
  - The foster care stipend are financial payments to offset the costs associated with caring for a child in the resource family's home. The reimbursements are not intended to be a wage or salary to the resource family. Families should have a stable income other than the reimbursement and not depend on reimbursements to pay rent or time-sensitive necessities.

- Special Needs Funds
  - Special Needs Funds include goods and commodities that are not included in the foster care reimbursement.

Supports for Resource Families, continued

Training

Training is offered for all Resource Families through the Alaska Center for Resource Families (ACRF).

The Alaska Center for Resource Families seeks to provide support, information and training to all of Alaska's resource families (foster, adoptive, relative caretakers and guardianship families).

They are dedicated to working in partnership with OCS, Tribes, and others involved in foster care and adoption. Their program welcomes all prospective parents regardless of race, age, sex, marital status, religious beliefs, physical disability, gender identity, or sexual orientation.

Tribal Compacting Licensing Assist

- ## What is the Scope of Work for Licensing Assist?

- Provisional Licensing

- Conversion to Biennial License

- Relocation

- Fingerprints

- Variance Process (both general and barrier)

- Resource family recruitment

Licensing Services Referral Form — Date of Referral: Click here to enter text.

Please Note: Must be referred by OCS within 4 days of the identified need.

Priority	Priority ☐ Child Already Placed ☐ Placement Being Considered ☐ No Specific Child Identified			
	Additional Information Click here to enter text.			Recruited By ☐ OCS ☐ Co-Signer
	ORCA Provider Names and Number Click here to enter text.			

From	OCS CLLS II (Licensing Supervisor) Click here to enter text.	Phone Number Click here to enter text.	Fax Number Click here to enter text.	Email Address Click here to enter text.
To	Co-Signer/Individual Click here to enter text.	Phone Number Click here to enter text.	Fax Number Click here to enter text.	Email Address Click here to enter text.

Foster Parent Information	Parent #1 Name & Physical Address Click here to enter text.	Phone Number Click here to enter text.	Email Address Click here to enter text.
	Parent #2 Name & Physical Address Click here to enter text.	Phone Number Click here to enter text.	Email Address Click here to enter text.

Household Info	Number of Household Members 16 and Older Click here to enter text.	Number of Children Under 16 in the Home Click here to enter text.

Purpose of Referral	Mark Desired Services (Check all that Apply) ☐ Provisional Licensing ☐ Conversion to Biennial License ☐ Biennial License Renewal ☐ Relocation ☐ Fingerprints ☐ Variance Process 　☐ General Variance 　☐ Barrier Crime/Condition Variance	Additional Comments Click here to enter text.

For Co-Signer Use	Date Referral Received Click here to enter text. Please Note: Please respond regarding acceptance or denial within 2 business days.	Date Referral Accepted or Reason for Not Accepting Click here to enter text.

FY24 Co-Signers and Identified Scopes of Work

ENTITY * ALL Co-Signers Serving AK Native Children in Identifed Service Area	Initial Diligent Relative Search	Ongoing Placement Search	Safety Evaluations	Family Contact	Licensing Assist
1. Aleutian Pribilof Islands Association	X	X	X	X	X
2. Arctic Slope Native Association	X	X	X	X	X
3. Assoc of Village Council Presidents (AVCP)	X	X	X	N/A	X
4. Bristol Bay Native Association	X	X	X	X	X
5. Central Council Tlingit & Haida	X	X	X	X	X
6. Chugachmiut	X	X	X	X	X
7. Cook Inlet Tribal Council, INC	X	X	X	X	N/A
8. Copper River Native Association	X	X	X	X	X
9. Eyak	X	X	X	X	X
10. Kawerak Inc	X	X	X	X	X
11. Kenaitze	X	X	X	X	X
12. Knik Tribe	X	X	X	X	X
13. Maniilaq Association	X	X	X	N/A	X
14. Nome Eskimo Community	X	X	X	X	X
15. Aleut Community of Saint Paul Island	X	X	X	N/A	X
16. Sun'aq Tribe of Kodiak	X	X	X	X	X
17. Tanana Chiefs Conference	X	X	X	N/A	X
18. Sitka Tribe	X	X	X	N/A	N/A

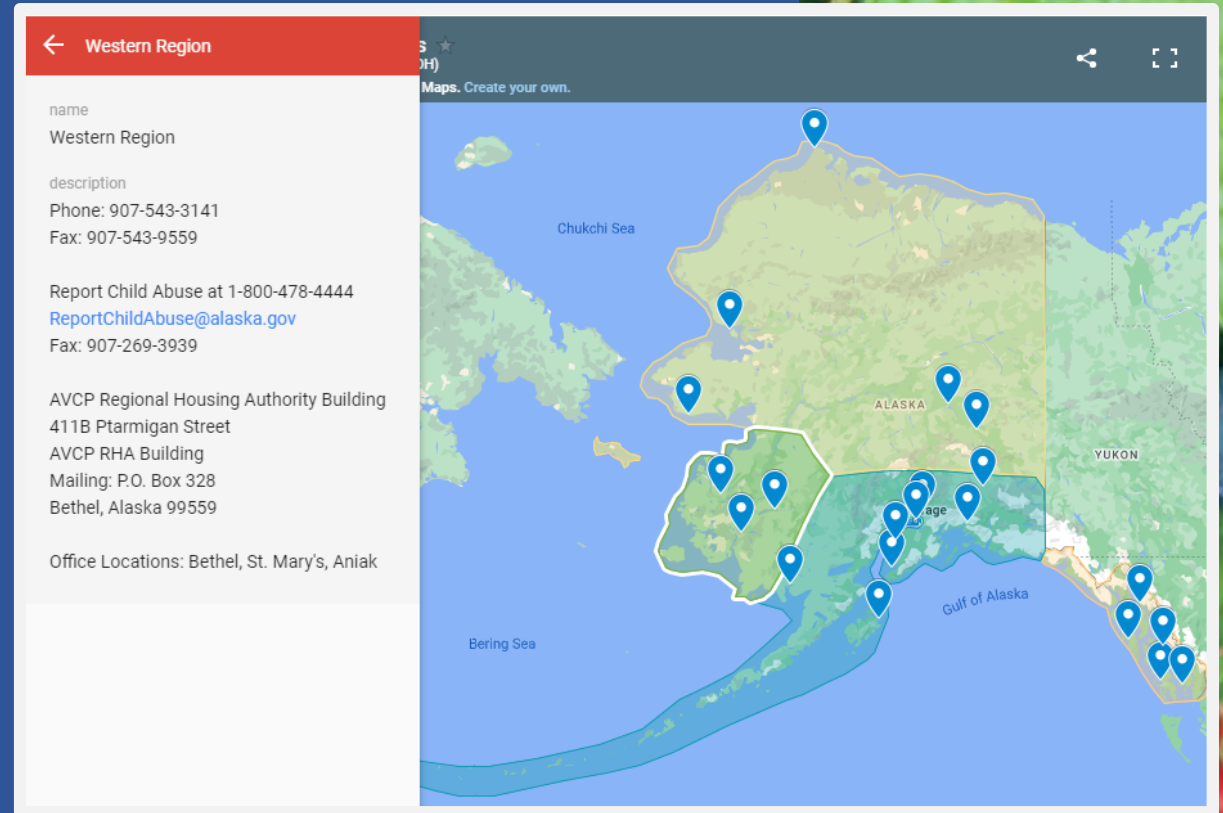# Regional Recruitment & Retention Committee
Recruitment & Retention Plan

- Each region has a Recruitment and Retention Committee.

- Each Regional Recruitment and Retention Committee has a Recruitment and Retention Plan, and the plan is updated the beginning of each fiscal year.

- Each regional plan has goals, baseline data, objectives, and required activities.

- Community and Tribal partners sit on the Recruitment and Retention Committee.
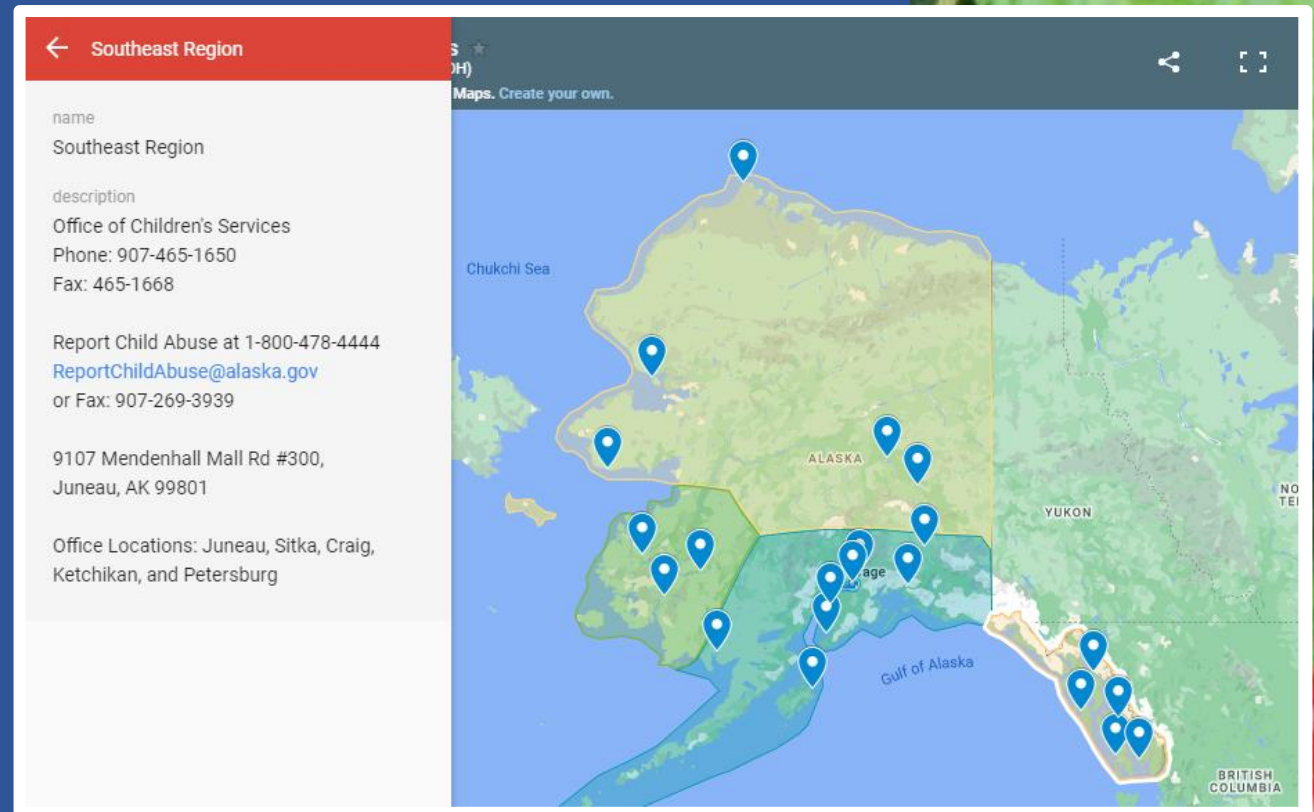
Western Regional Office (WRO) Recruitment & Retention Committee

- Meet quarterly

- Regular attendees include:
  - Assoc. of Village Council Presidents
  - Orutsararmiut Traditional Native Council
  - Community Care Licensing Specialist I/IIs
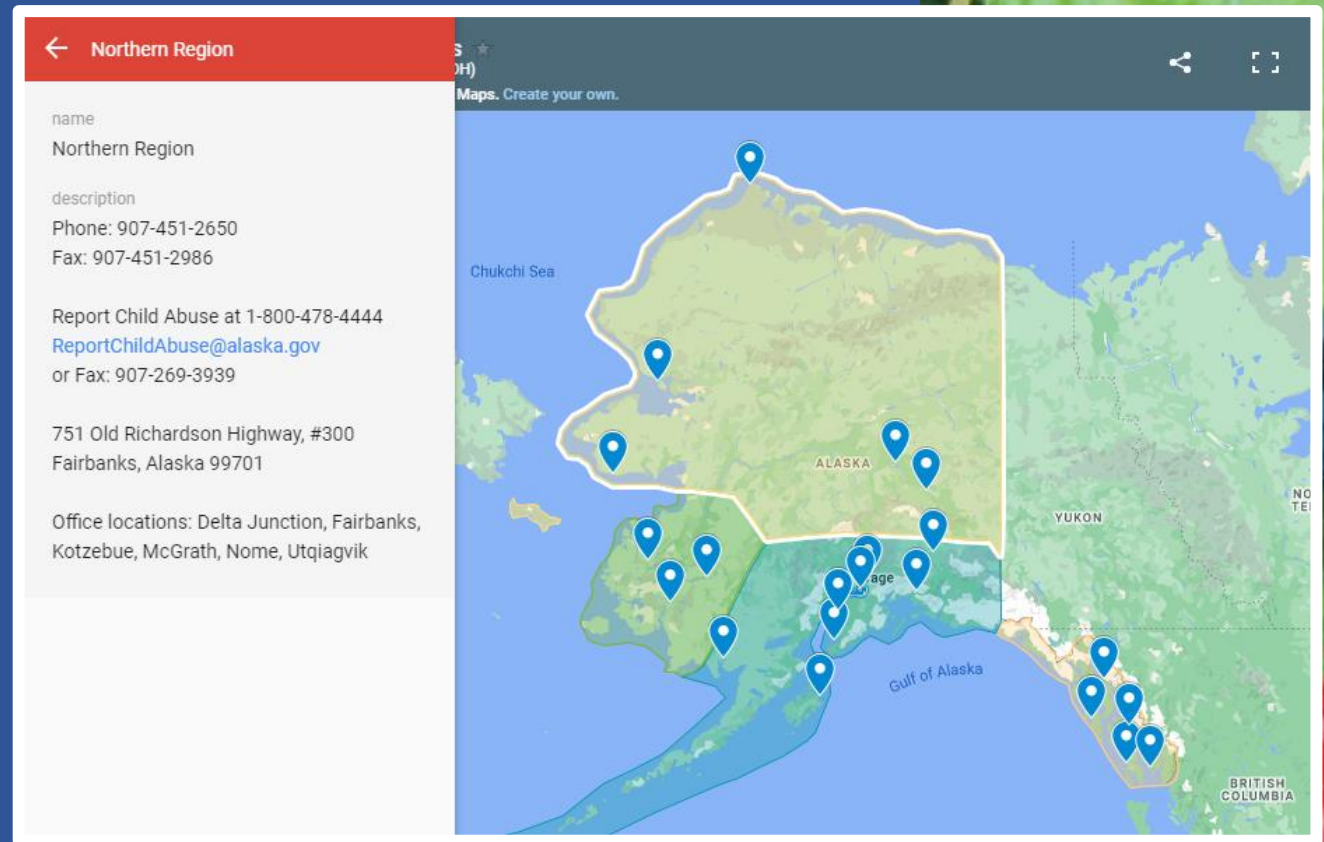 - OCS ICWA Worker
  - ACRF

Southeast Regional Office (SERO) Recruitment & Retention Committee

- Meet monthly

- Regular attendees include:
  - Tlingit & Haida
  - Ketchikan Indian Community
  - Sitka Tribe
  - Community Care Licensing Specialists I/II/IIIs
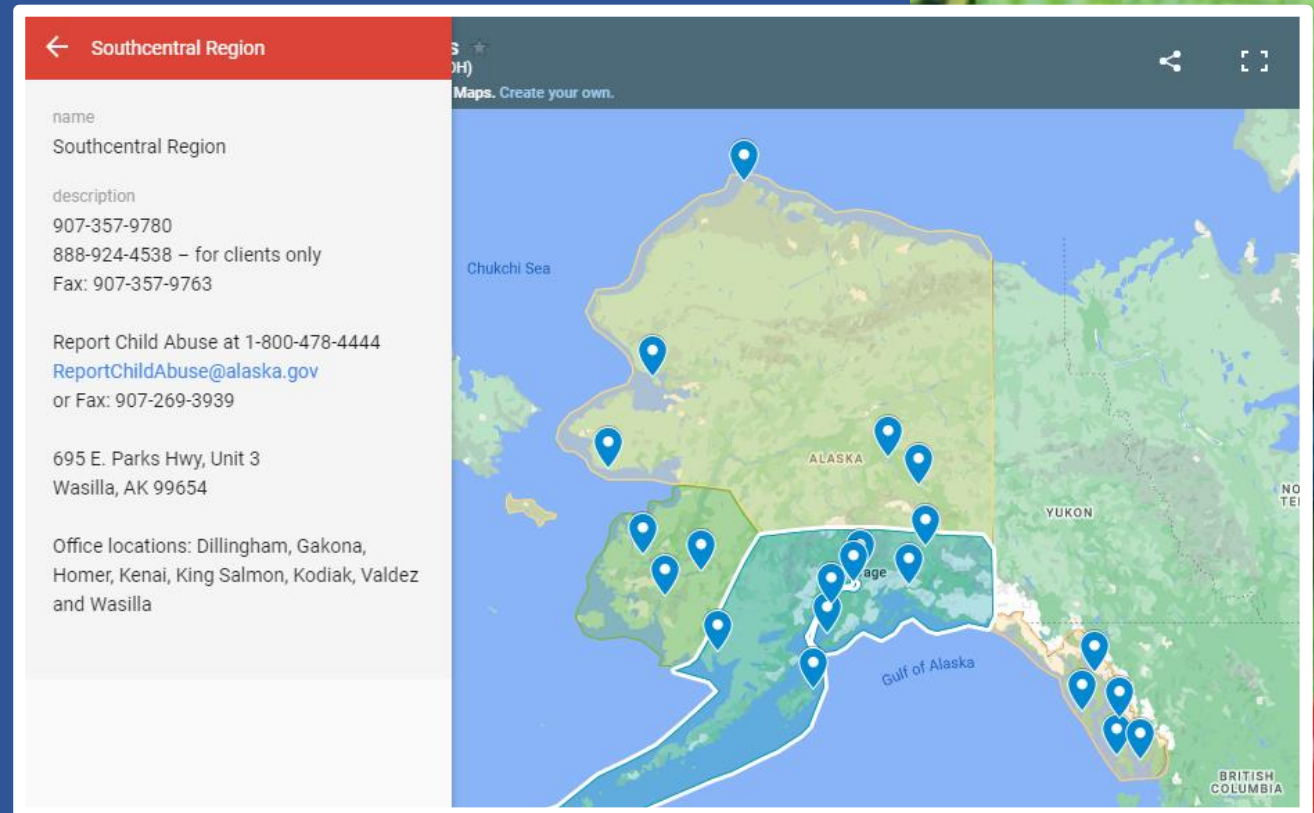 - Protective Services Manager II
  - ACRF

Northern Regional Office (NRO) Recruitment & Retention Committee

- Meet quarterly

- Regular attendees include:
  - Tanana Chiefs Conference
  - Kawerak, Inc.
  - Community Care Licensing Specialists I/IIs
  - Protective Services Specialist IV
  - OCS ICWA Specialist
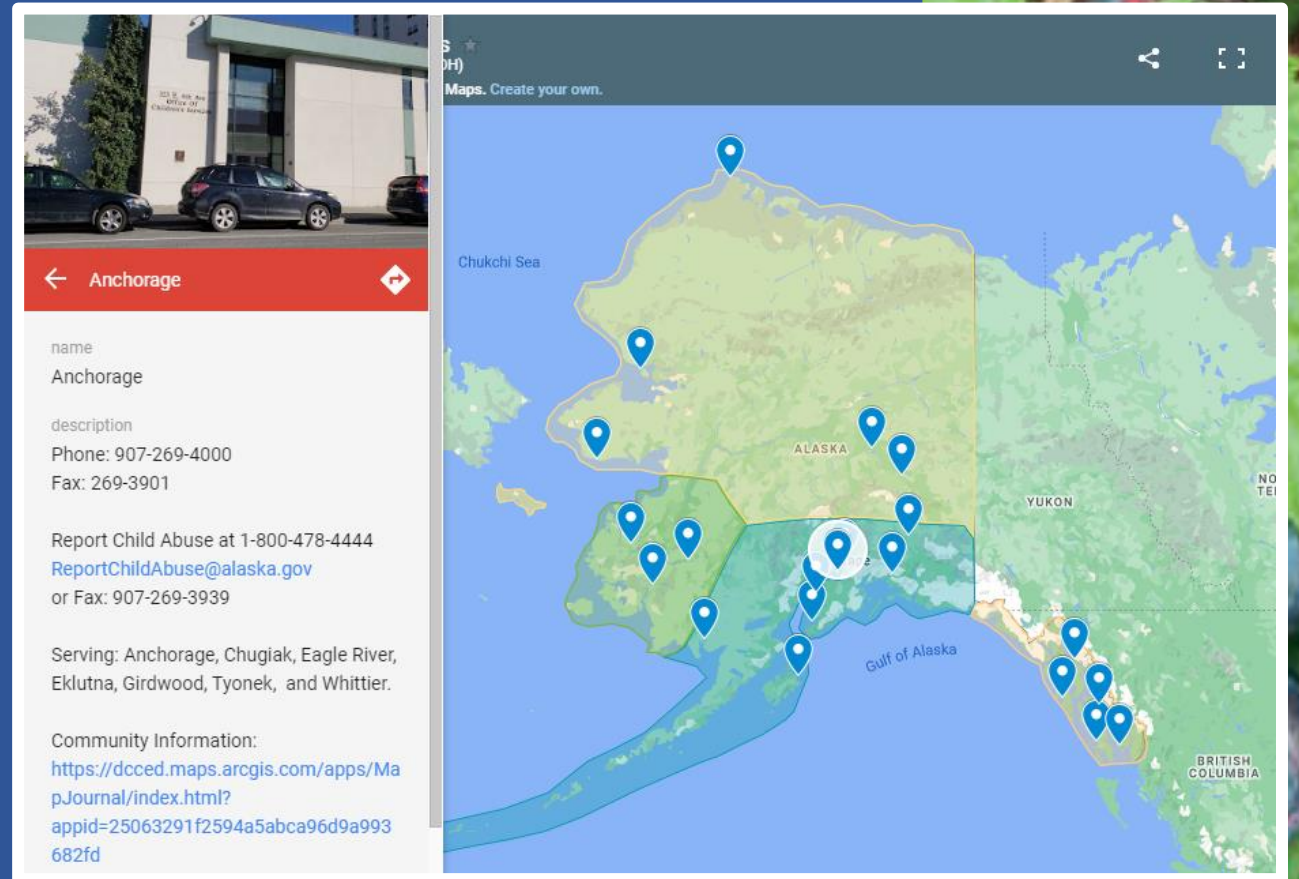 - Foster care providers
  - ACRF

Southcentral Regional Office (SCRO) Recruitment & Retention Committee

- Meet quarterly

- Regular attendees include:
  - Knik Tribe
  - Community Care Licensing Specialist I/II/IIIs
  - OCS ICWA Specialist
  - Protective Services Specialist IV
  - OCS Adoption Unit
  - Beacon Hill
  - Chosen Ministry
  - R.O.C.K. Matsu

Anchorage Regional Office (ARO) Recruitment & Retention Committee

- Meet quarterly

- Regular attendees include:
  - Tlingit & Haida
  - Nome Eskimo Community
  - Southcentral Foundation
  - Community Care Licensing Specialists I/II/III
  - Protective Services Managers I/II
  - Social Services Associate
  - Social Services Program Coordinator
  - Div. of Juvenile Justice
  - Beacon Hill
  - ACRF
  - Hope Community
  - Child Placement Agencies

name
Anchorage

description
Phone: 907-269-4000
Fax: 269-3901

Report Child Abuse at 1-800-478-4444
ReportChildAbuse@alaska.gov
or Fax: 907-269-3939

Serving: Anchorage, Chugiak, Eagle River, Eklutna, Girdwood, Tyonek, and Whittier.

Community Information:
https://dcced.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapJournal/index.html?appid=25063291f2594a5abca96d9a993682fd

HOW CAN WE BETTER REACH OUT AND RECRUIT NEW FOSTER HOMES?

- What encourages families to say "yes"?
- What discourages families from saying "yes"?