



Alaska Department of Administration

COVID-19 PANDEMIC RESPONSE REPORT

Calendar Year 2020

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Introduction

As the State of Alaska adapts to address the impacts of COVID-19, the Department of Administration (DOA) crafted this report to reflect upon its response to date, lessons learned, and emergency preparedness for pandemics and other disruptions in the future.

Moving forward, this report will serve as a foundation to assist DOA in continuing to improve performance. Based on what was learned, recent changes such as teleworking and business process digitization will be assessed to determine how to optimize efficiencies.

DOA's goal was and continues to be to support the State in ensuring worker safety, maintaining continuity of operations, and mitigating health risks to Alaskans.

Did you know?

In 2019, the Alaska Federal Surplus Property Program pulled 3 pallets from the Federal Surplus System containing 16,000 collapsed cardboard lunch boxes. The lunch boxes did not sell in the FSPP program and were transferred to the State Surplus Property Program. Yet again, they did not sell. As COVID-19 began to spread in the USA, the Anchorage School District canceled school for two weeks after spring break. A DOA employee reached out to several non-profits to see if any would be interested in the lunch boxes and found the perfect match – The Children's Lunchbox.

The Children's Lunchbox is a part of Beans Café and normally serves meals to children of low-income families during the summer vacation, but they were gearing up to meet an unprecedented demand created by COVID-19. The next day DOA delivered over 14,000 lunch boxes to them to help support the needs of school children in and around Anchorage.



View the News Clip via NewsBreak, [here](#).

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Department's efforts focused on two main functions: (1) immediate pandemic response activities; and (2) development of the Pandemic Preparedness Plan. Immediate response activities included policy development for administrative services such as teleworking, facilities, and employee leave; and, tactical support including modified business processes, coordination with other departments, and heightened communication. DOA began developing the Pandemic Preparedness Plan (PPP) in response to Governor Dunleavy's April 14, 2020 request. The purpose of the PPP is to ensure worker safety and maintain continuity of government operations during the COVID-19 pandemic by establishing an information technology (IT) infrastructure that would support a massive shift to telework and reconfigure processes for personnel, supervisors, and leadership to ensure continuity of services to the State of Alaska.

PANDEMIC RESPONSE EFFORTS

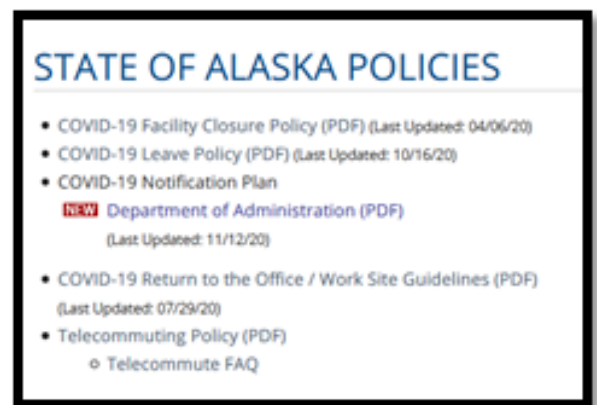
DOA activities were divided into four main categories: policy; tactical support; coordination with other departments; and communication. A brief description and some highlights are provided below. Additional detail is available in the Pandemic Response Efforts section of this report.

Policy

The department developed five (5) enterprise level policies in response to the pandemic. DOA continues to monitor federal and state developments regarding the pandemic and updates its policies as appropriate to ensure alignment with the most recent guidance. Related efforts resulted in 32 COVID-19-related Letters of Agreement with various bargaining units and procedural guidance for return to workplace plans and positive case notification for the workplace. The policies can be found on the DOA website, COVID-19 Resources for State of Alaska (SOA) employees:

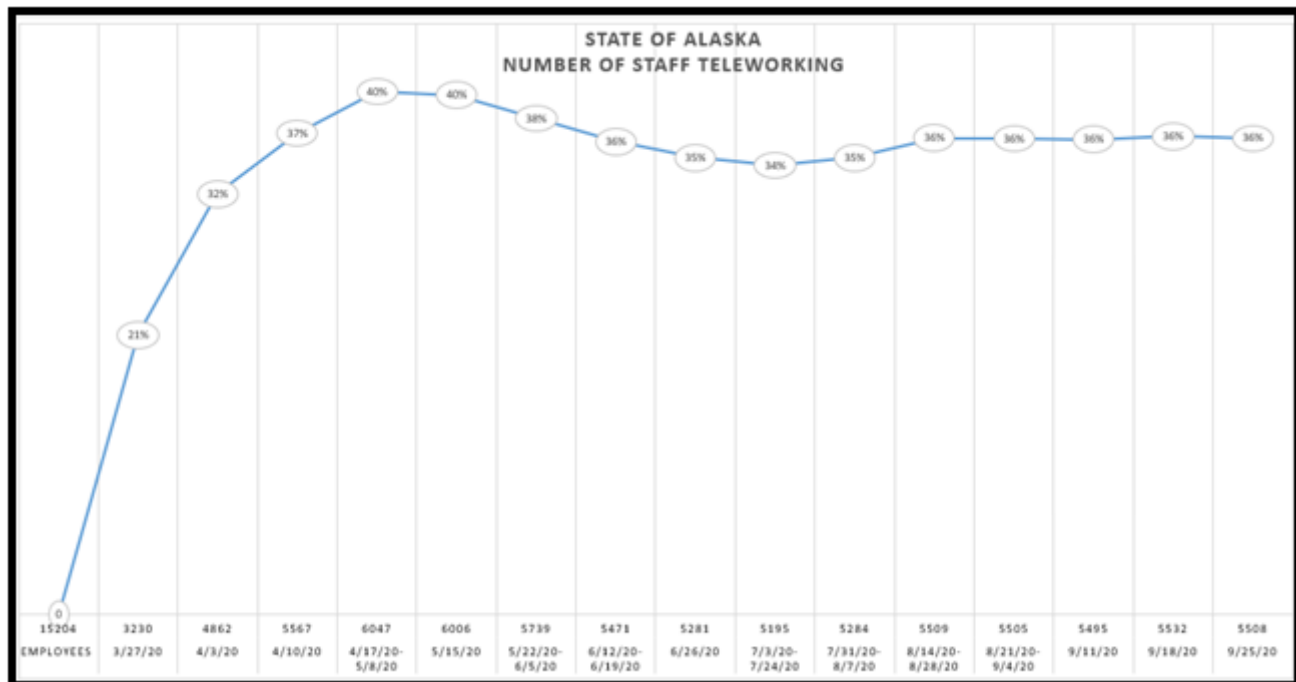
<http://doa.alaska.gov/dop/directorsoffice/covid19/>

This work required timely and extensive collaboration and coordination with other agencies. The policies and procedures were developed in conjunction with the Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS). The Department of Law assisted with legal interpretation of some aspects of the policies and procedures, particularly those related to labor law. DOA also worked with labor unions where appropriate.



Tactical Support

DOA provided tactical support for three areas: telework infrastructure; facilities; and modified business processes. Telework infrastructure activities focused on immediate pandemic response such as procuring laptops and deploying MS Teams across departments in order to accommodate the March – May surge in teleworking employees.



Between March 1st and May 8th, over 6,000 State employees transitioned to teleworking. This influx of technical need stretched DOA’s IT personnel further than they had ever been stretched before and they handled it effectively, professionally and with aplomb. The successful response on the part of the Office of Information Technology (OIT) can be partially attributed to their early, decisive action. Before Alaska’s first COVID-19 case, OIT had already taken measures to significantly increase SOA telework infrastructure and connectivity. As the pandemic persisted, DOA transitioned several telework infrastructure efforts to the Pandemic Preparedness Plan project.

Concurrently, the department worked quickly with leaders, facility managers, contractors, and lessors across the state to increase facility cleaning measures, build protective barriers, and coordinate facility closures to public access. DOA also addressed unique facility issues, such as coordinating the use of a parking lot at the State-owned Geological Materials Centers as a mobile COVID-19 testing site for the Municipality of Anchorage.

Finally, the department modified numerous business processes to facilitate teleworking, and so public employees and Alaskans would be able to comply with COVID-19 public health precautions while delivering or receiving government services. For example, the Division of Motor Vehicles (DMV) redesigned its non-commercial road tests to use video recording and satellite navigation. The redesign meant a DMV employee did not have to be in the vehicle with the driver during the road test, thus honoring each individual’s COVID-19 social distancing space. Processes throughout the department and in most divisions were modified, including Retirement and Benefits, Finance, Shared Services of Alaska, OIT, Office of Public Advocacy, Public Defender Agency, Personnel and Labor Relations, and others.

Coordination with Other Departments

Pandemic response activities often involved multiple departments and required collaboration and cooperation, usually with short notice and quick turnaround times. DOA worked with several departments on critical issues such as: Corrections (DOC) – distribution of 26,632 face coverings to State employees; Labor & Workforce Development – distribution of unemployment checks; and Office of Management & Budget – COVID relief reimbursement process. The Department will continue to work with other agencies as needed to foster timely and effective pandemic responses.

Communication

Sharing information, particularly regarding the State's workforce, was a key component of DOA's pandemic response duties. Between the Commissioner and Director of Personnel & Labor Relations, over 20 communications were sent to State employees and department leadership. These communications provided DHSS-approved COVID-19 resources and policy information. In addition, the department maintained a COVID-19 webpage, with DHSS-approved content, that was used by the State's workforce to establish telework agreements, obtain notices for state facilities, and more. A sample facility notice is below:



ATTENTION:

Please wear a facemask

Due to concerns over the covid 19 pandemic, building access is restricted.

Please follow cdc health guidelines including use of face coverings and social distancing in this building.

Slow the spread! Guyana! Thank you!

PANDEMIC PREPAREDNESS PLAN

In April 2020, Governor Dunleavy requested the DOA develop a plan to ensure worker safety and health, and to maintain continuity of government operations during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. To achieve both objectives, DOA developed a plan for improving telework capabilities for public employees to enable compliance with COVID-19 health precautions – the Pandemic Preparedness Plan (PPP). This is an authorized use of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act) Coronavirus Relief Fund (CRF): a) expenses to improve telework capabilities for government employees to enable compliance with COVID-19 public health precautions; and b) expenses necessary to the function of government/used for actions taken to respond to the public health emergency.

PPP involves a series of multiple, contemporaneously managed projects categorized in phases:

Phase 1: Completed	Core Services Evaluation
Phase 2: Ongoing	Remote Worker Enablement – Pathway Project Completed; Expanding Beyond Pilot Implementation
Phase 3: Ongoing	Enabling Technology within DOA – Foundation Technology Completed; Expanding to Further Functionality; Ongoing Service
Phases 4-6: On Hold	Short-term to Long-Term Enabling Technology within Other Departments

Telework

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, approximately 120 employees, representing less than 1% of the workforce, were teleworking across the Executive Branch. During COVID-19, however, the State has supported approximately 40% of the SOA workforce teleworking (around 6,000 employees). With the implementation of PPP, the SOA anticipates more employees will be able telework as the COVID-19 pandemic continues. Using federal CRF funding, the PPP improves telework capabilities for public employees to enable compliance with COVID-19 health precautions and continue government service delivery for Alaskans.

Successfully developing a telework infrastructure to support State employees included many rapid changes such as: increasing the virtual private network (VPN) capacity from approximately 1,500 to over 15,000 concurrent users; launching Microsoft Teams to 8,000 contemporaneous users; and increasing access to help desks for personnel, retirees, and constituents. Additional details are available in the Pandemic Preparedness Plan section of this report.

Performance System

In order to ensure successful transition to a telework environment, SOA personnel needed to be equipped with the ability to measure outcomes individually, collaborate in a virtual environment, and maintain productivity. Supervisors and leadership also needed to be prepared for maintaining performance and effectiveness, by managing performance, keeping personnel engaged, and collaborating and coaching successfully in a virtual environment.

Phase 2 of the PPP (Pathway Project) revised the performance system to better support telework arrangements and enhance the State's telework infrastructure in order to ensure worker safety. The Pathway Project actualized many efforts, including: developed a remote training platform for employee professional development; digitized the performance management system; and produced customized online supervisor skills training for managing teleworking staff. More accomplishments can be found in the Pandemic Preparedness Plan section of this report.

The Pandemic Preparedness Plan also resulted in an increase in communication between personnel, supervisors, and leadership, through virtual townhalls, email blasts, one-on-one meetings, union meetings, division meetings, and director meetings. It ensured continuity of government services through modernization of business processes and alleviated unnecessary manual processes by utilizing new technology and thus creating a more efficient and effective service to the state.

SUMMARY

Department of Administration employees rose to the challenge of ensuring worker safety and maintaining government operations while simultaneously responding to the pandemic, shifting to telework, and managing their personal life adjustments to COVID-19. DOA leadership learned the importance of an agile workforce and the value of modernizing business processes. DOA's success is attributable to the staff's ability to serve as an integrated team with a strong sense of duty to serve the people of Alaska.



BACKGROUND

Department of Administration

Mission: To provide consistent and efficient support services to state agencies so they may better serve Alaskans

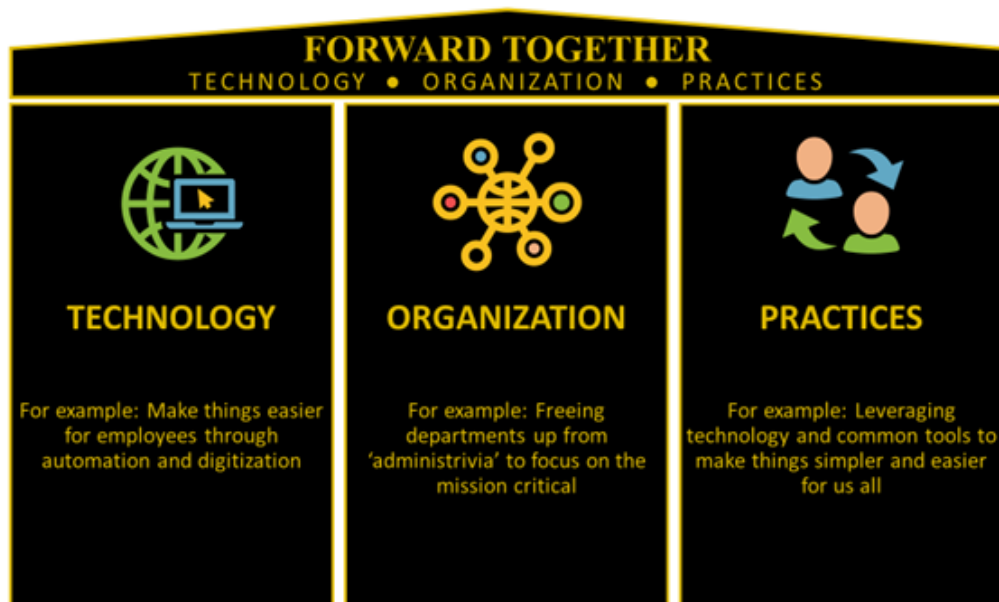
Vision: Championing improvement in the State's performance and results

The Department of Administration was actively managing multiple transformational change initiatives when the pandemic occurred. Throughout Calendar Year 2019, DOA focused on evaluating its responsibilities and effectiveness in meeting the State's business needs as well as the efficacy of its business processes. For example, the Alaska Administrative Productivity and Excellence (AAPEX) project coordinated assessments of the IT and back-office shared services (Shared Services of Alaska). The outcome of the project created a path forward to gain increased customer satisfaction, consolidated services, and cost savings. DOA also established the Forward Together framework in 2020 to clarify the various enterprise level efforts and to ensure all Departments have a voice in DOA changes affecting them.

As of January 2020, seven (7) enterprise level modernizations initiatives were active in the department:

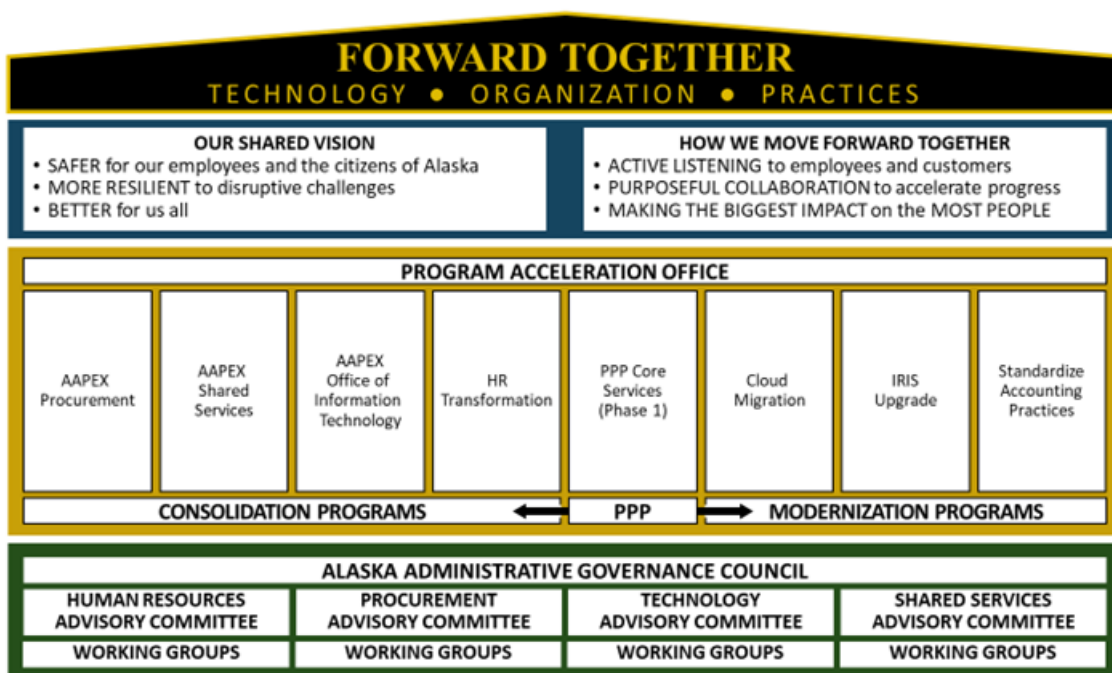
- AAPEX Procurement Consolidation
- AAPEX Shared Services Consolidation
- AAPEX Office of Information Technology Consolidation
- Human Resources (HR) Transformation
- Cloud Migration
- Integrated Resource Information System (IRIS) Upgrade
- Standardize Accounting Practices





To provide insight into DOA initiatives, a separate section on the main webpage called [“What’s New In DOA”](#) was created. This drop down tab allows users to access information about PPP, as well as other initiatives like the APPEX project, HR transformation, Procurement consolidation, and the [Program Acceleration Office](#).

DOA integrated pandemic response and Pandemic Preparedness Plan (PPP) activities into the overall workload of the department, ensuring daily obligations were met, services were provided, and the change initiatives remained active even as the department acquired new pandemic-related tasks. As of January 2021, the change initiatives are on target and PPP CY2020 activities completed.



Forward Together Framework Developed June, 2020

PANDEMIC RESPONSE EFFORTS

Policy

Topic	First Published	Notes
COVID-19 Facility Closure Policy	April 6, 2020	
COVID-19 Leave Policy	March 19, 2020	Latest update: October 16, 2020
COVID-19 Notification Plan	November 6, 2020	Sample plan posted November 12, 2020
COVID-19 Return to the Office / Work Site Guidelines	July 29, 2020	
Telecommuting/Telework Policy	January 17, 2020	Latest update: August 7, 2020

Numerous procedures, guidelines and resources were developed to assist employees, supervisors, and managers: <http://doa.alaska.gov/dop/directorsoffice/covid19/>

In addition, the Labor Relations Unit worked with various departments and bargaining units and established 32 Letters of Agreement specifically related to the pandemic. Topics for the letters of agreement were wide-ranging, from flextime caps to leave cash-in for leave usage to overtime for healthcare workers.

DOA employees also served as resources and subject matter experts for agencies. The Division of Personnel & Labor Relations assisted department HR professionals, supervisors, and managers to answer questions and address workplace concerns related to the pandemic. The Shared Services of Alaska Division worked with several departments to address facility modifications, pandemic-related signage, cleaning and sanitation, and supply acquisition.

The Division of Finance collaborated with OMB to create reports and coordinate federal reporting of the CARES Act expenditures. The Division also created specialized task codes to track pandemic related expenses which included COVID leave.

STATE OF ALASKA RESOURCES

- Admin Order 315
- Coronavirus FAQ
- COVID-19 Leave and Telework Tracking Instructions (PDF) (Last Updated: 03/26/20)
 - Telework Tracking Template (XLSX)
- DRB CARES Act: Coronavirus Distribution Program
- Family First Coronavirus Response Act FAQ (PDF)
 - Payroll Update: COVID-19 Leave Usage (PDF)
 - Form via DocuSign: Employee Verification for Paid Leave Due to COVID-19

If you have trouble filling out the form via DocuSign, here's an alternate PDF version.

 - COVID-19 Pay Difference Estimator (XLSX)
- Hand Wash Flyer (PDF)
- Mental Health Resources (PDF)
- Operational and Workplace Guidance (PDF)
- Payroll Update: Submitting Timesheets (PDF)

Telework for Employees

- Remote Work
- Managing Anxiety and Work Strategies
- Seven Tips to Manage Your Mental Health and Well-Being
- Emotional Wellbeing During the COVID-19 Outbreak

Telework for Managers

- Work Assignments to Consider for Telecommuting Employees (PDF)
- Managing Anxiety and Work Strategies
- 10 Quick Tips to Make Remote Meetings Work

OIT Resources

- NEW** Getting Starting with Microsoft Training (PDF)
- OIT Getting Started With Teams (PDF)
- OIT SOA Printing and Scanning While Teleworking (PDF)
- OIT SOA Remote Working IT Resources (PDF)
- OIT Getting Started with VPN (PDF)
- OIT Website

The Division of Retirement and Benefits (DRB) implemented temporary plan changes and suspensions in the AlaskaCare health plans to support the public health COVID-19 response, assist members in accessing necessary care, reduce strain on the medical system, ease administrative requirements, prevent loss of health insurance coverage, and comply with the CARES Act and State Health Mandates. DRB continues to work closely with the Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development (DCCED) and the Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS) to respond to COVID-19.

- Maintained or reduced 2021 premiums for the health plans, helping to save employee and retiree members valuable money in difficult economic times.
- Extended Employee Assistance Program (EAP) counseling services to retiree plan members.*
- Held a Health Flexible Spending Account (HFSA) Special enrollment to allow participating members to reduce their 2020 monthly contribution.
- Expanded telemedicine coverage in alignment with expansion by CMS.*
- Extended Teladoc general medical services to retiree plan members.*
- Suspended eligibility terminations for retiree dependent children between the ages of 19 & 23 who were previously enrolled full-time but left school because of the pandemic.*
- Suspended disenrollment from AlaskaCare health plan coverage for employees on military leave or family medical leave (FMLA) who failed to self-pay health benefit premiums timely.
- Put measures in place to ease the administrative burden for delivering care.*
- Waived member cost share including deductibles, coinsurance, and copayments for laboratory tests ordered to diagnose and treat COVID-19.*
- Added coverage for COVID-19 vaccines with no cost to members.
- Added coverage for retirees of influenza and pneumonia vaccines.*
- Waived applicable cost sharing provisions including deductible, coinsurance, and co-pays for inpatient admissions and transportation up to the recognized charge at in-network facilities related to COVID-19.*
- Allowed members an additional 90-day supply of most medications.*
- Created a communication strategy that included hosting COVID-19 townhall events to keep members informed.
- Successfully negotiated expanded facility coverage for the health plan, allowing members network access to Alaska Regional Hospital, Providence Alaska Medical Center, and additional in-network ambulatory surgical centers without increasing costs to the plan.
- Through Empower Retirement Services DRB provided an in-service distribution of 25 percent of the SBS or DCP account or a maximum of \$25,000 for COVID-19 purposes only. This requires no mandatory repayment, no early withdrawal tax penalty, and an option to repay within three years under the CARES Act. Limiting the amount of withdrawal is prudent as any withdrawal from a retirement account will place future retirement readiness in jeopardy.
- The DRB Counseling Team implemented additional individual appointment times of 7-8 AM, 8-9 AM, and 12-1 PM. This continues to be greatly received by our members, especially TRS members who normally cannot meet during regular business hours.
- Soon to be added are laptops with cameras so the Counseling team can add another level of service that would be more personable for our members.
- The Counseling Team continues to add educational videos at Alaska Division of Retirement and Benefits - YouTube for all members and employers.

**The temporary administrative changes listed above are in response to a State of Alaska and federally recognized health emergency and do not provide a vested right to coverage for any individual. The Division of Retirement and Benefits retains the sole discretion rescind or modify these temporary administrative changes depending on the circumstances.*

Tactical Support

The Department's tactical support activities focused on continuity of government services while protecting the public and public employees by complying with COVID-19 public health precautions. They are split into three segments:

- Telework Infrastructure
- Facilities
- Modified Business Processes

TELEWORK INFRASTRUCTURE

The Office of Information Technology (OIT), a division of the DOA, was instrumental in the State's ability to transition ~40% of the State's workforce to teleworking in just a few weeks. Primary technology-related activities included:

- Rapid deployment of MS Teams, a collaboration tool that allows employees to meet online, share documents, and work together from remote settings
- Published IT Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) webpage to support teleworking employees – March 11, 2020
- Deployed IT support teams to all departments to support the transition to telework – March 13, 2020
- Procurement and distribution of laptops and related equipment to teleworkers
 - › First bulk round of laptop purchased (540 laptops) – March 20, 2020
 - › Second bulk round of laptop purchased (259 laptops) – June 15, 2020
 - › Third bulk round of laptops purchased – (3,600 laptops) – September 29, 2020
- Virtual Private Network deployment and expansion
 - › Expanded from ~1,200 users before COVID to ~6,000 users who are teleworking
 - › Expanded capacity to ~15,000 VPNs, to allow for additional teleworkers if needed
- Provided online guidance for setting up at home workstations

The Division of Personnel & Labor Relations also played a key role in supporting the successful transition to teleworking by providing guidance and tools related to workforce management. These efforts included:

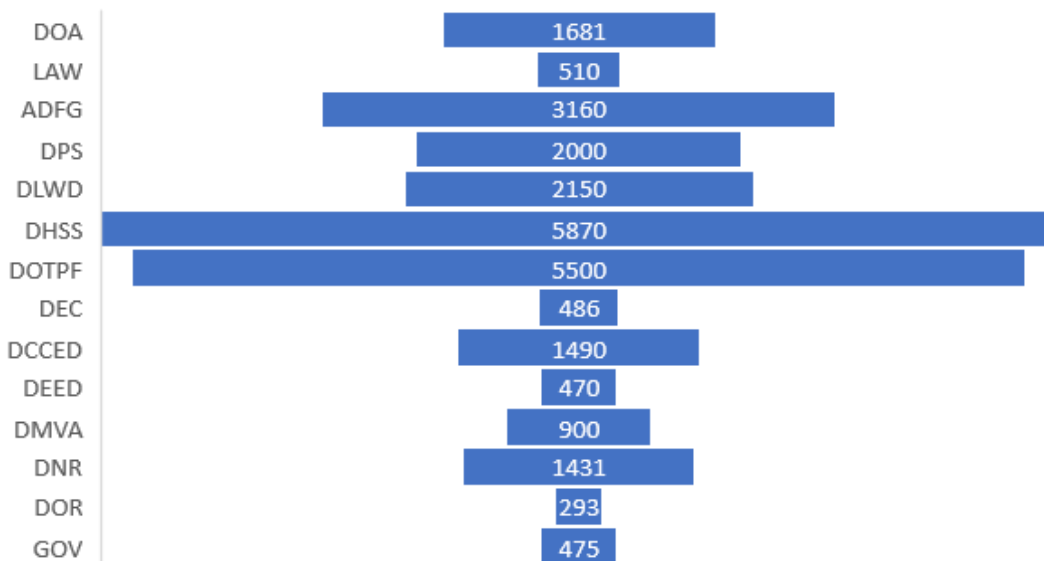
- Provided guidelines and procedures for staggering schedules and identifying alternate work locations for those employees whose work was not viable for teleworking
- Assisted department supervisors and managers in identifying alternative and meaningful duties for those whose jobs could not be fully remote
- Delivered 10 Managing Telework webinar-style training sessions in one week to 1,534 supervisors – March 9-13, 2020 – recording of webinar also published on webpage
- Developed telework after action review (AAR) report for department leadership to use
 - › Departments could use the AAR tool to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of teleworking
 - › AAR was based on feedback from pilot teleworking units from 4 departments – April 14, 2020
- Published telework resources and guidelines on webpage including work options for employees on telework – beginning March 13, 2020

FACILITIES

In conjunction with the Department of Transportation & Public Facilities' Division of Facility Services, the Leasing and Facilities Section of the Shared Services of Alaska Division in DOA served as a point of contact for departments' questions regarding SOA facilities and COVID. Highlights are provided below:

Topic	Activity	Date
Cleaning and Sanitation	Increased cleaning and sanitation of facilities – additional day janitor buildings for which DOA manages the lease	March 16, 2020
Social Gatherings	Cancelled DOA in-person training sessions and seminars (public and employees)	March 12, 2020
Public Access	Closed Juneau and Anchorage Retirement & Benefits offices to public in-person traffic	March 16, 2020
Public Access	DOA Anchorage warehouse changed to appointment only – no walk-in traffic	March 17, 2020
Protective Barriers	DOA installed protective barriers for four DOA divisions (Retirement & Benefits, Office of Public Advocacy, Alaska Public Offices Commission, Motor Vehicles)	March - June 2020

Total Masks Distributed between 4/27/2020 and 9/9/ 2020



The Leasing and Facilities Section also worked with the Department of Corrections in the distribution of 26,632 cloth face coverings (masks) to State employees who continued to work in offices and State worksites.

DATES	AGENCIES													
	DOA	LAW	F&G	DPS	DOLWD	HSS	DOT	DEC	DCCED	DEED	DMVA	DNR	DOR	GOV
4/27/2020	366	455	1150							50				
5/4/2020	701	55	1200	1050	600	1620	500	268	340		500			
5/8/2020						580								
5/27/2020	100		810			3670	5000	8	640	420		697	233	375
6/5/2020					700			50						
6/18/2020	414							160						
7/23/2020	100													
7/31/2020					850				110				60	100
8/24/2020									400			734		
9/9/2020				950							400			
Total:	1681	510	3160	2000	2150	5870	5500	486	1490	470	900	1431	293	475

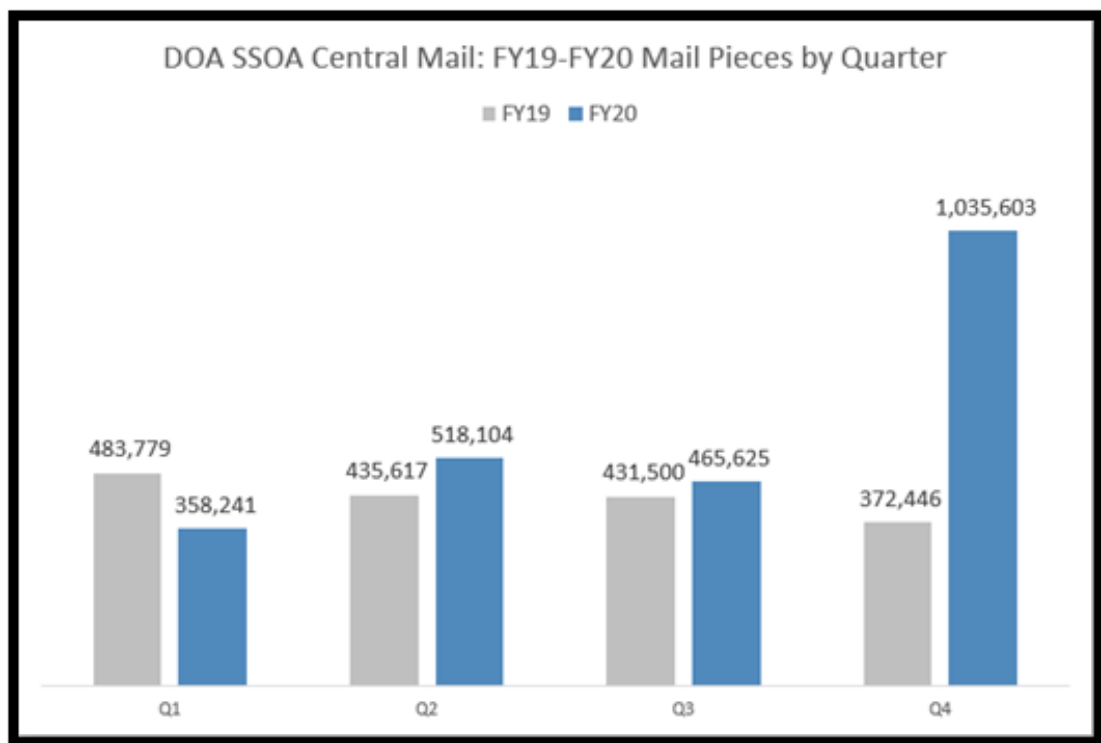
MODIFIED BUSINESS PROCESSES

DOA revised many business processes to better serve departments and Alaskans during the pandemic. Please note, some activities reported in the Telework Infrastructure and Facilities segments represent business process changes and augment the examples below. In addition, the Department's COVID reports in Appendix B provide additional detail and examples.

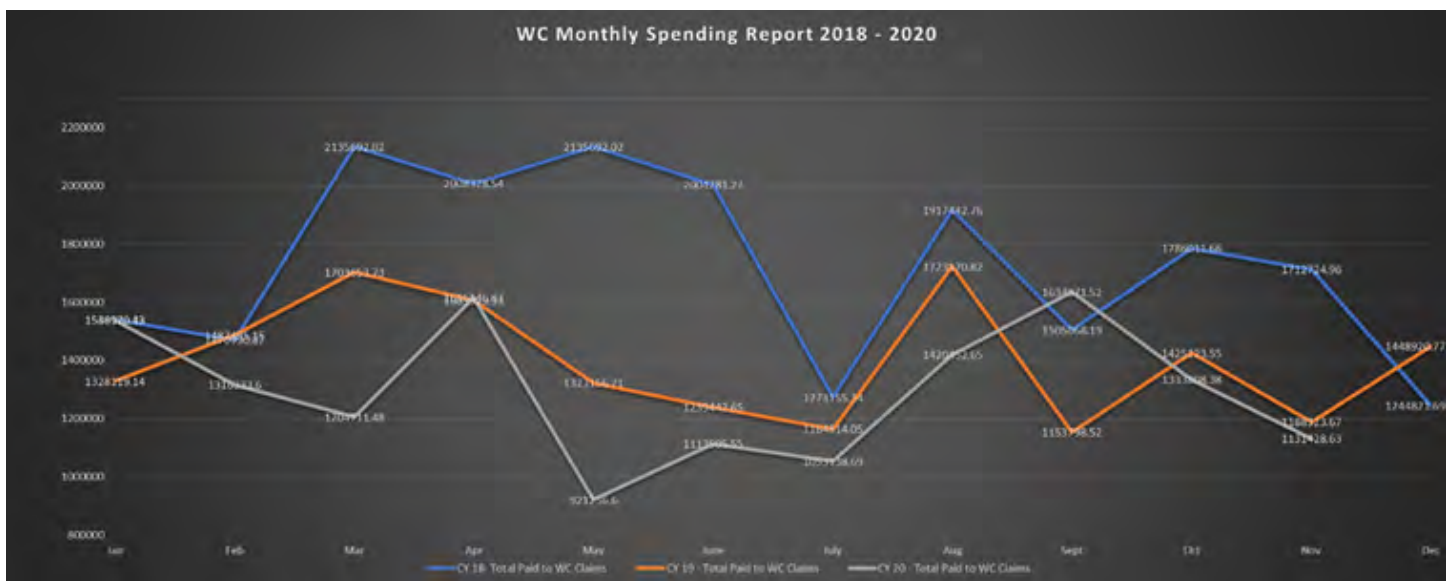
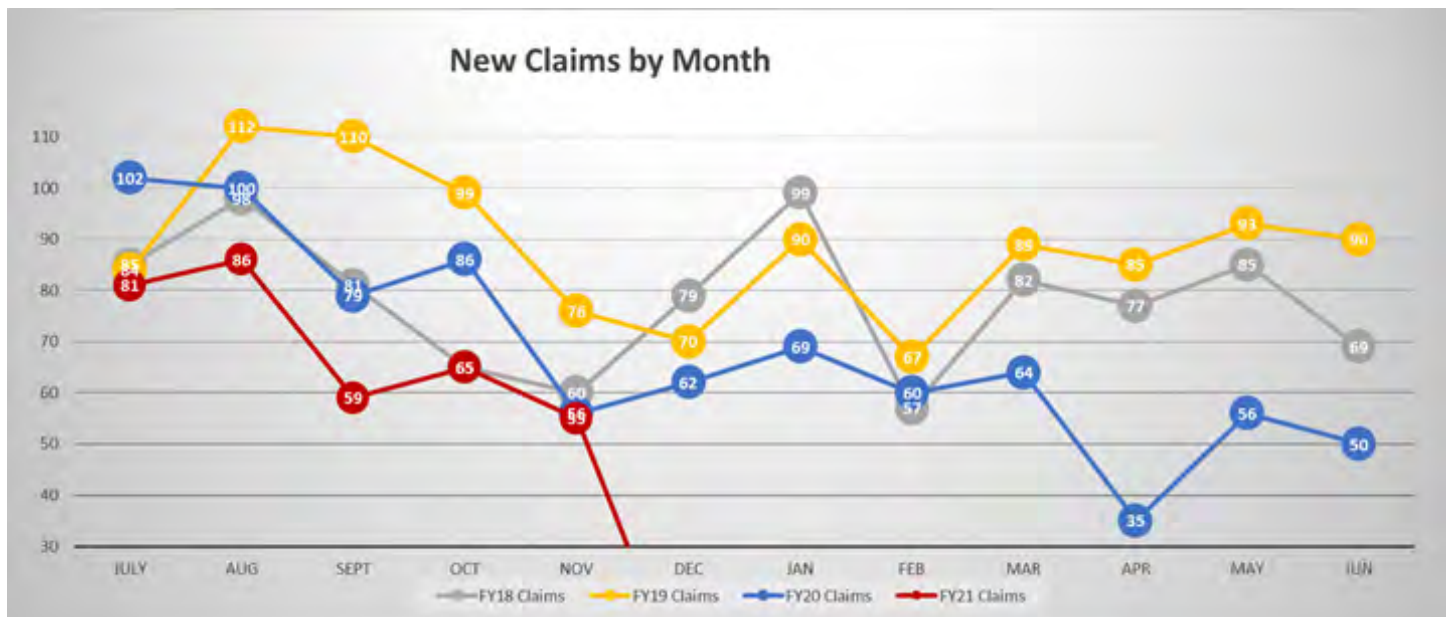
Topic	Activity	DOA Division	Note
Statute Suspension Review	Compile list of services and activities that could be suspended on a temporary basis	All	Information to Governor's Office May 6, 2020
Public Access	Shift to appointment only process	Motor Vehicles, Retirement & Benefits, Shared Services	Modifications began March, revisions made as needed
Process Method	Shift from in-person process to phone, email, or online - example: DMV Customer Portal = greater online access	All	DOA continues to review processes for additional revision
Process Method	Shift to 100% virtual new employee onboarding process	DMV – customized in-house	DMV led the way – DOA now piloting virtual onboarding through PPP
Program	Launch CARES ACT COVID-19 Distribution Program	Retirement & Benefits	June 3, 2020 25% of SBS or DCP account, maximum \$25K
Program	Establish COVID-related expenditures tracking process	Finance	Worked with Office of Management and Budget
Process Method	Emergency Procurement	Office of Procurement & Property Management	Worked with DHSS and other agencies to expedite procurement requests for pandemic response efforts



DOA Central Mail and Print Services processed approximately 2.4 million pieces of mail in FY2020 compared with 1.7 million in FY2019. The increase in volume of 0.7 million (+38%) from FY2019 to FY2020 was due to COVID-19 related mailouts from agencies such as Department of Labor & Workforce Development, Unemployment Insurance, and DOA, Retirement & Benefits.



The Division of Risk Management shows a reduction in claims and costs experienced in workers compensation claims. When compared to the last three (3) years, the State's frequency and severity of claims have either reduced outright or been at the lowest numbers in that timeframe.



Did You Know?

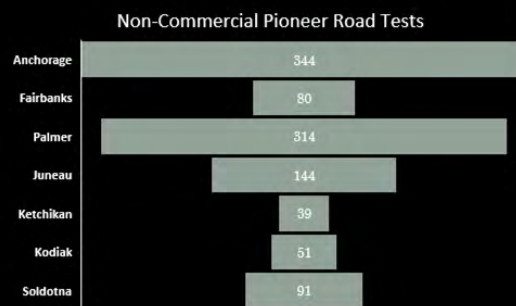
The Division of Motor Vehicles (DMV) modified the non-commercial road test process to accommodate COVID health precautions. Alaska is the first state to be allowed to conduct a similar pioneer solution in the commercial road test sphere.

DMV successfully conducted the first virtual new examiner CDL training, serving Alaskans while also saving the state money on travel, hiring vehicles, etc.



DMV Pioneer Road Tests

The State of Alaska DMV redesigned non-commercial road tests to ensure that Alaskan's safety was at the forefront of their operation. By using video recording and satellite navigation, DMV was able to review tests without having to be in the vehicle.



Coordination with Other Departments

DOA coordinated pandemic responses and collaborated with several other departments throughout 2020. A variety of examples are highlighted below:

Agency	Policy	Product	Service
DHSS	Various	Workforce and Facility policy development, information dissemination	Collaborate on crafting policy and guidelines for State employees
LAW	Workforce	Policy development	Review policy and guidelines to ensure accuracy
DHSS, DCCED	AlaskaCare health plans	Implement temporary plan changes and suspensions to support COVID-19 response	Ease administrative requirements, prevent loss of health insurance coverage, reduce 2021 premiums, expand telemedicine coverage, etc.
DNR	Employee timesheets in IRIS	Transition state employees from manual timesheet process to online timesheets in IRIS	Division of Finance successfully added 66 DNR employees to the IRIS timesheet process – June 1, 2020
DL&WD	Mass mailouts	Increased volume of Unemployment Insurance mailouts	Division of Finance and Central Mail were involved in making sure checks and mailouts were timely
DOT&PF	IRIS	Establish special setup in IRIS	Used to process COVID-related funds
DOT&PF, DCCED	Housing	Secure housing in case of need for quarantine	March 3, 2020
DOC	Face Covers	Coordinate mask distribution	Over 26,000 face coverings delivered to State employees
ALL	Laptops	Coordinate purchase, configuration, and distribution of over 4000 laptops	Assist departments with telework equipment
OMB	IRIS	COVID relief reimbursement	Issue process guidance – joint Finance and OMB project
DNR, DRM	Mobile testing site	Establish MOA mobile testing site at Geo Materials Facility	Obtain Unified Command approval for Municipality of Anchorage mobile testing site; Expedited Risk Management review
DHSS	Coronavirus Hub website	Maintenance and daily updating of the website	Big Data Analytics Services provided over 240 hours of technical support
DHSS	Open Date Portal	Establish State's Open Data Portal – public access to COVID-related datasets – updated daily	~200 data downloads in first two months of operation and availability

Communication

DOA strove to provide accurate and timely information whenever and wherever possible. One primary source of communication was the State's website. DOA published a central website for COVID-19 policies, guidelines, communications, FAQs, and tools. Information was updated regularly and served as a point of contact for many State employees, supervisors, managers, and HR professionals. Content included but was not limited to:

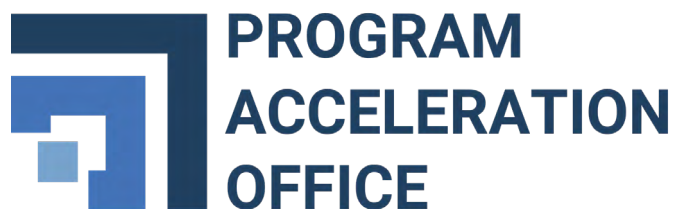
- Telework resources
- Mental health resources
- COVID information and updates (related to state workforce and facilities)
- Policies, guidelines, and forms
- Mask and social distancing education
- Retirement & Benefits educational videos for members and employers - [Alaska Division of Retirement and Benefits - YouTube](#)

Other types of communication efforts utilized email, videoconference, and other virtual tools to share information:

- Over 20 official email notifications to State employees, Commissioners, and agency leadership from DOA Commissioner and/or DOA Director of Personnel & Labor Relations (DOPLR)
- Regular meetings with union leadership (DOPLR)
- Administrative Services Director briefing on COOP/COVID-19 readiness (DOPLR) – March 10, 2020
- COVID-19 Townhall for Retirees (Retirement & Benefits) – March 13, 2020
- Weekly/biweekly reports to Governor's Office on efforts surrounding the COVID-19 health crisis preparedness and response – began March 25, 2020

After securing pro bono assistance through the United States Civilian Corps, DOA also established the Program Acceleration Office (PAO), which provided communication and change management training and support.

The PAO has played, and will continue, to play a key role in coordinating multiple and concurrent PPP projects, overseeing PPP phases 2 and 3 activities, and managing PPP quality assurance and project management.



PANDEMIC PREPAREDNESS PLAN (PPP)

Project Description

In April 2020, Governor Dunleavy requested the DOA develop a plan to ensure worker safety and maintain continuity of government operations during the coronavirus pandemic. To achieve both objectives, DOA developed the PPP, to improve telework capabilities for public employees to enable compliance with COVID-19 health precautions. DOA presented the plan outline in late April and received approval for Phase 1 of the PPP on May 4, 2020.

<https://doa.alaska.gov/ppp.html>

The PPP was split into six phases:

Phase 1: Completed	Core Services Evaluation
Phase 2: Ongoing	Pathway Project: Personnel Management Tools
Phase 3: Ongoing	Enabling Technology within DOA
Phase 4: On Hold	Short-term Enabling Technology within Other Departments
Phase 5: On Hold	Mid-term Enabling Technology within Other Departments
Phase 6: On Hold	Long-term Enabling Technology within Other Departments

PHASE 1: CORE SERVICES EVALUATION

The first phase of the PPP was to assess and analyze what the SOA is doing and how those tasks, services, and business processes could be modified so they can best be performed from home offices in a telecommuting environment. This would enable us to disperse, protect, and equip our workforce while also maintaining government services.

An evaluation of the SOA's core services started on May 7, 2020, ended July 31, 2020, and cost \$714,915¹. In 12 weeks, 15 departments' operations were assessed and analyzed to learn how tasks, services, and business processes can be modified to allow quality performance in a telework environment. This allowed the SOA to determine, in priority order, what processes and services to automate and digitize in order to maximize worker safety and continuity of government operations during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Phase 1 outcomes included:

- A list of constituent services and employee tasks that can be digitized, prioritized based on the cost/benefit analysis of the reduction in time and costs through increased productivity
- A list of business processes and tasks that can be automated, prioritized based on the cost/benefit analysis of the reduction in time and costs through increased productivity
- A plan for what IT and constituent services and channels are to be revised, including how and estimates of effort to complete

¹ Contract 02-0200-05-20.

- A prioritized and sequenced plan for implementing enabling capabilities and technologies, as well as a list of services and tasks for automation with estimated technical needs
- A revised AAPEX IT plan to incorporate the full set of tools and management capabilities needed to support a pandemic-prepared government
- A business plan for the overall implementation that includes both costs and estimated savings, as well as recommendations for digital, automation, and remote work opportunities that would be provided to the SOA for possible action/decision
- A catalog of ongoing, active IT projects in the State identified during the assessment

Phase 1 identified and prioritized a list of 128 tasks, services, or business processes that could be modified for improved function during the COVID-19 pandemic. These initiatives are the substance of PPP Phases 4, 5 and 6². Phase 1 also provided an in-depth analysis of 11 constituent services and internal processes, and it developed future state conceptual designs for each.

Findings from the Phase 1 assessment and change management process helped identify priority tasks in Phases 2 and 3 such as:

1. Telework employee performance management needs to be digitized across departments
2. Feedback from departments that supervisors quickly need training and tools to manage teleworking employees in order to successfully manage sustainable, long-term teleworking for the duration of the pandemic
3. Internal access to hardware in teleworking environment can be improved (laptops, printers, monitors, scanners, etc.)
4. Remote work policies and standard operating procedures need to be improved
5. The need for constituents to have technology access (scanners, printers, etc.) needs to be reduced
6. Adequate connectivity and Virtual Private Network (VPN) to enable access to remote desktop and secure emails, especially in rural areas, needs to be improved

Additional findings from the Phase 1 assessment and change management process include:

1. For more constituents to use digital services, broadband access across the state needs to be improved
2. The SOA possibly can provide more constituent forms and applications digitally, when applicable

² Phase 4 is enabling technology that can be implemented short-term in agencies other than DOA; Phase 5 is enabling technology that can be implemented mid-term in agencies other than DOA; and Phase 6 is enabling technology that can be implemented long-term in agencies other than DOA. All three phases cannot be performed unless DOA receives additional CRF funding approval and more time.

Quality Assurance & Project Management

Due to the large scope, complexity, and short timeframe for PPP, DOA engaged quality assurance and portfolio management services to ensure the State received high quality products and service, and that costs and outcomes from PPP contracts were in the State's best interest. Many of DOA's resources had been reallocated to address immediate pandemic-related responses as well as to maintain continuity of government services.

QUALITY ASSURANCE FOR PHASE 1

On May 5, 2020, the DOA awarded a contract to Wostmann & Associates, a Juneau-based firm, to provide Quality Assurance for work performed by contractors assigned to Phase 1.³ The contract had a total cost of \$61,330.

QUALITY ASSURANCE FOR PHASES 2 AND 3

To provide quality assurance for work performed by contractors assigned to Phases 2 and 3, DOA awarded a contract via the RFP process to Wostmann & Associates for August 15, 2020 – February 28, 2021, with an option for two 1-year renewals. The total value of the contract if all renewals are exercised is \$5,377,580. The first term value committed by the SOA is \$1,453,400. The DOA does not have authorization to spend any amount beyond the first term, nor does it have plans to perform work on this contract past the first term, unless there are extenuating circumstances that delay the contractor's performance on the contract.

- Wostmann & Associates provided Quality Assurance, Project Management and Portfolio Oversight for the projects performed under Phase 2 and 3, including:
- Phase 2 Pathway: focused on equipping State employees, supervisors, and executives with outcome-based performance management, and learning and development tools and curricula.
- Phase 2 AspireAlaska: implementation of Cornerstone OnDemand Learning and Performance Management system.
- Phase 3 AlaskaNow: implementation of ServiceNow IT Service Management, Human Resource Service Delivery, Customer Service Management, Configuration Management Database, Knowledge Management and Document Management system(s).
- Phase 3 Teams Voice: deployment of Microsoft Teams Phones to 500 users with supporting infrastructure and architecture and design work that will expedite large scale deployment.
- Other Phase 3 Projects: Firewall upgrades, myAlaska helpdesk, endpoint management, deployment of 4,300+ laptops, acceleration of cloud migration, and Microsoft Security Suite.

3 Contract 02-0200-04-02.

OrgShakers, an international Human Capital and Organizational Design firm, provided expertise on building telework infrastructure and support for change management, communications services, and preparing the SOA workforce and HR staff for sustainable telework.

On May 4, 2020, the State of Alaska was provided the opportunity to partner with the US Civilian Corps (USCC) to acquire tangible resources and/or skilled professionals to address shortfalls due to the COVID-19 crisis in Alaska. Working through the Governor's Office, the DOA submitted a request for up to five fulltime equivalent (FTE) volunteer personnel with change management expertise to help Alaska's workforce adjust to long-term telecommuting, technology and business changes due to COVID-19 response efforts and significant workplace and workflow changes due to the COVID-19 environment.

This request was granted May 15, 2020, and an initial meeting was held on May 18, 2020. OrgShakers provided the volunteer personnel in response to DOA's request and began working with the department immediately. OrgShakers has provided invaluable assistance in managing the multiple workforce changes that occurred and continue to occur with the pandemic. The initial scope of work focused on a shorter term need for remote work, primarily through June 2020.

As the pandemic continues, the SOA is encountering additional, and increasingly complicated, challenges, particularly in relation to successfully managing sustainable teleworking and ensuring continuity of government operations while social distancing and other COVID-19 public health precautions remain in effect. The transition from short-term to longer-term telecommuting required additional assistance, beyond the original scope of work.

In response, DOA sought additional assistance in implementing Phase 2 of the PPP to help Alaska's workforce adjust to long-term remote working under COVID-19, including technology, telecommuting and business changes, as well as the significant workplace and workflow changes that have arisen as a result of the pandemic. DOA awarded a contract to OrgShakers for August 19, 2020 to December 31, 2020. The contract's total value was \$355,000. The value of the work performed by OrgShakers cannot be overstated. The SOA would have paid 4-5 times as much for similar work offered by other contractors. OrgShakers' blend of pro bono and discounted deliverables to meet the requirements of the expanded scope of work is unparalleled and of immense benefit to the SOA.

All PPP projects were completed on time, of high quality, and were successful in ensuring contractual objectives were met. Projects were completed in a much shorter time frame than is typical for these types of projects. For example, the deployment of one of the IT systems was originally scoped to take 2 years, but the vendor and DOA team worked together to successfully accomplish it in 12 weeks in order to comply with the CRF fund deadline of December 30, 2020. The success of all PPP initiatives would not have been possible without the close collaboration and unusual amount of cooperation between all parties involved.

PHASE 2: Pathway Project & AspireAlaska

The second phase revised the State of Alaska's personnel management tools and system to better support telework arrangements and enhance the SOA telework infrastructure in order to ensure worker safety. Known as the "Pathway Project," Phase 2 ensures departments and supervisors receive the support and tools they need: 1) to best manage a significant number of telecommuting employees; and 2) to lead and support development of others in a rapidly changing pandemic-affected workplace.

Phase 2 Pathway started on August 17, 2020, the pilot was completed December 30, 2020, and the contract awarded to Tandem Motion cost \$3,374,681. In 20 weeks (which includes holidays), the Pathway Project accomplished the following objectives:

- Establish required competencies, SMART goals, and individual objectives tied to measurable outcomes
- Establish job-specific performance expectations for employees in each Department to create clarity and accountability
- Align the workforce to perform the most valuable work, improve performance, and retain and recruit high performers
- Redefine classifications and position descriptions, as needed
- Establish and deploy a learning management program, system, and software
- Deploy remote training platform(s) for employee professional development
- Develop remote recruitment program
- Develop remote onboarding program
- Digitize the performance management system
- Develop state employees to ensure continuity of service to Alaskans
- Develop customized performance metrics training for staff and supervisors
- Produce customized supervisor skills trainings for managing teleworking staff

The assessment activities and leadership alignment conversations undertaken at the beginning of the contract also led to each department determining which employees would be in-scope for the Pathway Project. The purpose of the Pathway Project is ensuring workers operate effectively during the COVID-19 pandemic by equipping SOA employees with the clarity, structure, training, and ongoing support they need to be adaptable and successful while teleworking. Therefore, departments prioritized their teleworking employees for participation, but some departments chose to apply the Pathway Project exercises to all their employees. Conversely some departments had limited bandwidth given the pandemic and other competing mission priorities, so they prioritized those employees and supervisors who most needed the Pathway Project tools to successfully telework long-term during COVID-19. An estimated total of 7,000 SOA employees were included in the Pathway Project.

Working simultaneously with the Pathway Project, the Division of Personnel and Labor Relations (DOPLR) also implemented AspireAlaska to automate some of the work provided by Tandem Motion and provide enhanced capabilities for employees to work remotely utilizing these automated tools. Tandem Motion provided the requirements for the system in early September 2020. AspireAlaska, provided by Cornerstone OnDemand, was implemented with the help of the Marick Group in 62 days and the system went live on December 30, 2020.

PHASE 3: ENABLING TECHNOLOGY

This Phase significantly advanced efforts to enable greater remote connectivity, collaboration, and productivity in a telework environment. Departments and supervisors received the technology they needed to support a significant number of telecommuting employees, including telework infrastructure and IT upgrades to support more permanent telework arrangements that ensure worker safety.

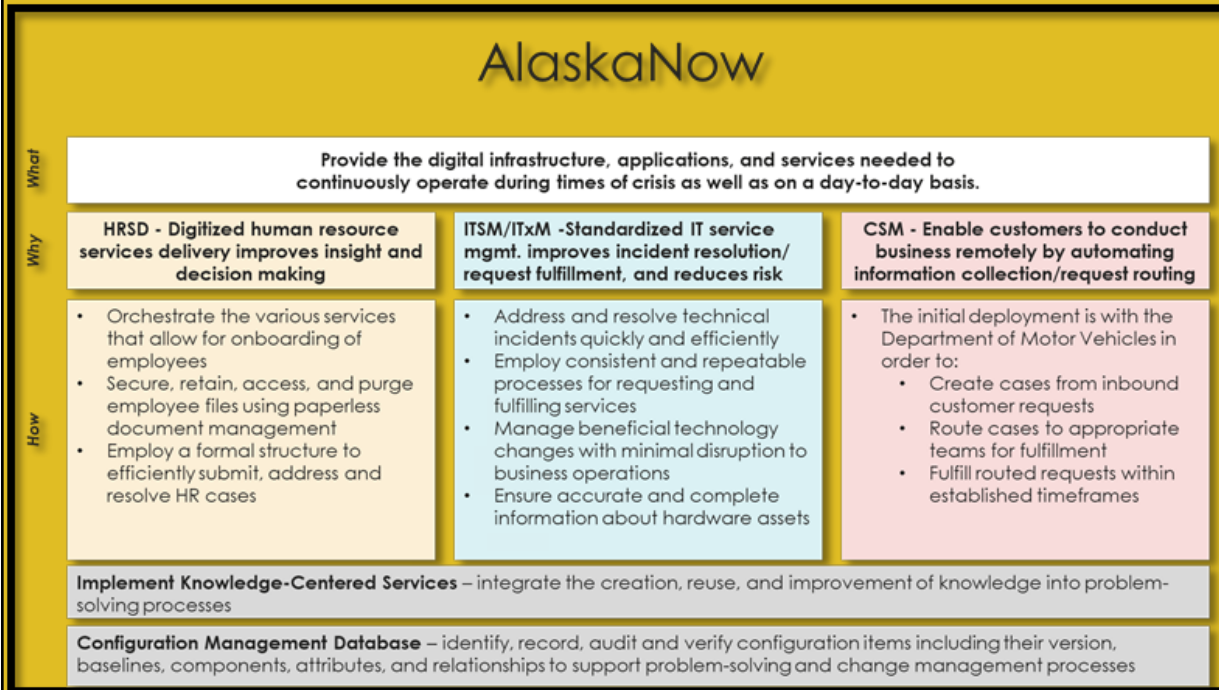
Phase 3 efforts included:

- Implementing a Service Management System;
- Automating onboarding and recruitment for all departments;
- Procuring additional laptops for employees using personal devices or not yet telecommuting;
- Operating a central help desk for myAlaska;
- Accelerating migration to the cloud to promote speed of computing, remote help desk support, telework of on-premise employees;
- Enabling remote desktops and access to information;
- Securing identity and access from remote devices;
- Enabling remote worker security through patching and updating remote systems;
- Migrating to Softphone capabilities, advanced e-discovery, advanced cybersecurity;
- Improving core network capabilities to enable remote workforce by transitioning office-based services to functions that can be interconnected on the network regardless of employee location;
- Increasing network security, speed, and access for remote workers;
- Deploying tools to monitor and alert on resource capacity and usage, metering, enable auditing, cybersecurity threat detection; and
- Developing employees, providing remote learning opportunities, delivering on-line training, and creating remote career path progression for teleworking employees.

Phase 3 is being accomplished using a mixture of new contracts; software or IT equipment acquisition; and outcomes produced by current SOA staff or contractors.

Did You Know?

AlaskaNow is a service management system (SMS) which provides automation of workflows, approvals, and routing to improve customer service, reduce incidents, maximize productivity, and enable employees to work remotely. The system will enable the SOA to perform 160 tasks and services digitally that it previously had to perform or route manually, such as IT service requests, IT change management and self-service, HR service management and self-service, and business process management and automation. AlaskaNow will also support agencies to deliver internal services.



ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Excerpt from the Wostmann & Associates Final Report:

The analysis performed in PPP Phase 1 provided the State with a vision for the future state and a roadmap of how to accomplish this future state in a phased approach. The DOA made a strategic decision to use the information gleaned from Phase 1 to refine and reprioritize the scope for Phases 2 and 3. The State prioritized projects with the highest impact that would yield immediate results, which are covered under the CARES Act. This prioritization allowed the State to use Cares Act Funding to achieve the most value towards pandemic preparedness during the timeframe associated with the funding, which ended on 12/30/2020.

The following table reflects how the Phase 2 and 3 projects impacted or updated State capabilities and/or technologies:

PHASE II

Updated Capability or Technology	How Improved or Impacted
Employee performance monitoring and evaluation (Pathway)	The prior performance management methods employed by most SOA supervisors relied on observable products and behaviors in an office environment. The processes and products produced through this project, provide for employees and supervisors to work together to develop measurable goals and metrics which can be clearly understood by employees and monitored by employees and supervisors in a virtual office environment. In addition, the products developed through this project highlight the importance and promote the process of employee development to achieve better performance objectives.
Remote supervision (Pathway)	Courses developed through this project demonstrate the capability, benefits and responsibility of both employees and supervisors of working together to achieve organization goals and objectives in a virtual environment.
Performance Management (AspireAlaska/Cornerstone on Demand)	A performance management system was deployed during PPP Phase 2/3. This system follows the processes and course curriculum developed through the Pathway project, and automates those processes allowing employees and supervisors to more easily manage and access performance goals and objectives and learning objectives.
Learning Management (AspireAlaska/Cornerstone OnDemand)	During the pandemic, many Departments expressed challenges with distance learning for both employees and constituents. In some cases, Departments could not perform training of constituents which negatively impacted the ability to execute their mission. A learning management system was deployed during PPP Phase 2/3. This system not only allows employees to take courses developed through the Pathway program but also 2000+ courses provided by Cornerstone specifically for public employees and also allows the state to use custom developed courses through Virtual Instructor Lead Training (VILT) for employees working from any location. Therefore, courses specifically designed for State of Alaska employees that were only available through in-person training are now available through VILT.

PHASE III

Updated Capability or Technology	How Improved or Impacted
Portal (AlaskaNow, myAlaska Helpdesk)	<p>The AlaskaNow platform integrated with the existing Alaska.gov portals for CSM DMV, OIT, and HR with a consistent look and feel.</p> <p>The myAlaska project to add the Zammo chatbot improves services by automatically accumulating appropriate answers to frequent constituent questions and extends these services to Smart Home devices.</p>
Workflow (AlaskaNow)	The constituent portal for Customer Service Management improved this capability for DMV by triggering case management activities from a constituent interaction.
Notification (AlaskaNow)	AlaskaNow contains functionality to support notifications through workflows developed for the SOA (e.g., incidents, change, request).
Case Management (AlaskaNow)	The implementation of case management functionality in AlaskaNow for DMV and HR provides a foundation for a shared case management system for the State of Alaska.
Security (ProtectWise™)	<p>The Azure Endpoint Management and Microsoft Security Suite Projects combined to provide the following improvements: endpoint threat protection, cloud application security, continuous assessment of systems health and endpoint vulnerabilities, and integration of security information and event management capabilities.</p> <p>The Wireless Upgrade Project improved wireless security in state office buildings.</p>
Device Management (Intune)	The Microsoft and O365 Security Suite Project increased SOA's ability to control access and manage authorization for remote devices and protect sensitive data.
Desktop tools (Migration of O365 G3 to G5)	Enabled Teams Voice and O365 Security Suite capabilities. Provides full-feature capabilities of O365 services in a segmented government cloud community that enables the state to meet U.S. compliance and security standards.
Laptops	<p>Addressed a significant need across SOA to provide devices to employees that would otherwise not be able to work remotely or were required to use personal devices or relocate office desktop units and introduce significant risk to the enterprise computing environment.</p> <p>Adopting a statewide PC Lifecycle Policy will benefit the budgeting process, improve end user effectiveness, and help maintain effective computing infrastructure security.</p> <p>Wireless upgrade plus laptops improves mobility and ability to social distance within offices.</p>

Unified Communications (MS Teams)	Designed, built and deployed statewide MS Teams Voice (Phone) infrastructure and deployed it to nearly 500 users. The pilot project provided the foundation of hardware infrastructure, technical knowledge, project and process management experience, and organizational change management and training materials that will expedite rollout to the remaining state users.
Engagement	The Zammo Chatbot agent will increase communication channels for residents needing to access the myAlaska site for questions and services. It will reduce cost over time as we build capabilities and services. The capacity includes attendance services and automation tools to help answer questions, reset passwords, create new accounts and send updates to residents with little to no manual intervention.
Constituents	The DMV portal for Customer Service Management provides a constituent communication channel. The Zammo upgrade for myAlaska helpdesk improves constituent communication channels for those needing answers to questions and access to services.
Cloud services (Cloud Migration)	The Azure Cloud Migration Project identified, classified and recommended Azure cloud migration strategies for hundreds of applications currently being managed by 12 separate departments. Once migrated, applications should have reduced operating costs and application management effort. The Edge Network Project will enable Cloud Services migration by moving the network edge to the lower 48 lowering ISP cost, increasing bandwidth and improving reliability. The Azure Endpoint Management Project will enable Cloud Services migration by unifying enterprise End Point Management infrastructure and delivery of services to end users.

DOA's goal is to support and guide the State in maintaining continuity of operations, ensure worker safety and mitigate health risks, to accomplish these goals additional changes included:

- Ensure continuity of government services through modernization of business processes by alleviating unnecessary manual processes and utilizing new technology thus creating a more efficient and effective service to the state.
- Create a telework infrastructure where people are empowered to perform at their best, assisting personnel to identify activities that provide the most value and ensuring there is clarity in job-specific performance metrics and expectations.
- Strengthen organizational objectives through individual SMART goals for all personnel and incorporating into trackable, measurable outcomes.
- Digitize the performance management process to make performance reviews more accessible and encourage continuous improvement, while also allowing personnel consistent feedback, positive input and collaboration on future goal setting.
- Allow for digitized and simplified onboarding and training to increase efficiencies. Create an approachable learning management system to encourage skill-based learning and ongoing professional development.

CONCLUSION

Through partnerships with departments, other state governments, contractors, and stakeholders, DOA's contributions supported worker safety, mitigated public health risks related to COVID-19, maintained continuity of government services, and made significant strides in building a robust telework infrastructure that can flex as needed throughout the pandemic.

The dedication and nimbleness of the Department's workforce was vital to DOA's ability to respond effectively to the pandemic's impact on services and safety. The projects completed during PPP phases 2 and 3 allowed the State of Alaska to keep both State employees and citizens safer and productive during a pandemic event in a short period of time.

As the new year begins, DOA intends to continue moving forward with the implementation of PPP; streamlining processes to create greater efficiency; and completing the other initiatives it has been assigned, including Human Resources Transformation (AO305), Procurement Consolidation (AO304), Shared Services of Alaska and Office of Information Technology implementation of standardized structures, improved processes, operations, and technology (AAPEX). In addition, should the opportunity and funding be available to move further with PPP, Appendix C provides recommendations from the quality assurance experts.



Ann and Michael working in the Juneau State Office Building

APPENDIX A:

DOA PANDEMIC RESPONSE TIMELINE



MARCH

- DOPLR creates a training program to equip supervisors of teleworking employees. On day 1, over 1000 supervisors attended the training.
- OPPM begins vetting vendors offering PP and other COVID response resources.
- Retirement and Benefits implements broad changes to health plan to accommodate impacts of COVID on members.
- DMV goes to appointment-based system.
- March 4th** In anticipation of a mass shift to remote working, OIT Begins ramping up VPN capacity.
- Email from Commissioner Tshibaka to all State Employees – Resources for State Employees –Introducing DOPLR COVID FAQ page.
- March 5th** Email to all DOA Supervisors - Workplace Hygiene and COVID19 Prevention.
- Email to All Commissioners – Telework Readiness – What employees will need to transition to remote work.
- March 6th** Email to Commissioners and ASDs – Update Continuity of Operations Plans (COOP)/Integrate Telework.
- March 10th** Email to All State Employees – Several Resources (Remote working Solutions, Agency Op Guidelines) related to Governor's Disaster Declaration.
- ASD Briefing on COOP/COVID-19 readiness.
- March 16th** OIT Deploys MS Teams to all Departments & additional Day Janitorial services contracted at DOA buildings.
- March 19th** Leave policy updated to reflect COVID considerations.
- March 20th** First bulk laptop order is placed (540 machines).



FEBRUARY

Feb. 2nd Joint Letter from DOA/HSS Commissioners and Dr. Zink to all State Employees RE: Practices to Prevent the Spread of COVID19.



APRIL

- OAH begins remote hearings and mediation via Zoom.
- April 1st** OIT deploys DocuSign to all but one State Departments.
- OIT Remote Work Resource Page goes live.
- April 7th** Facility Policy updated and posted on DOPLR Webpage.
- April 9th** DOPLR Director Email to All State Employees: Mental Wellness Resources.
- DOA COVID-19 Action Team Established – COVID POC for each Division designated.
- April 14th** FFCRA FAQs to Commissioners and HR Managers.
- April 15th** Division of Finance submits application to receive CARES Act Funds.
- April 16th** DOF records receipt of \$1.25 B from the U.S. Treasury in IRIS (First half on 4/16, second half received within the week).
- April 17th** Governor tasks DOA with creating a Pandemic Preparedness Plan.
- April 20th** Number of state employees teleworking reaches 6000.
- April 21st** Shared Services of Alaska Picks up first batch of DOC-produced masks and begins distributing to Departments
- DMV begins offering drop off service for title and registration processing and postpones all road tests.



MAY

- May 4th** GOV Approval for PPP Phase 1 - Assessment (Memo).
- Facilities plans/protocols developed for employees returning to workplace.
- Pandemic Preparedness Plan - Phase 1 Memo/ Presentation to the Governor.
- May 5th** Phase 1 Contract - Wostman and Associates - Signed.
- May 6th** DOA Statute Suspension Review.
- May 7th** Atwood/SOB Mask and Social Distancing materials posted at entrances.
- May 8th** Phase 1 Contract - Alvarez and Marsal Public Sector Services - Signed.
- May 13th** Mental Health Resources added to DOPLR COVID Page.
- May 15th** Telework Resources added to DOPLR's COVID resource page.
- DOA/U.S. Civilian Corps Needs list – prioritized
— Sent to Governor's Office.
- May 18th** OrgShakers Begins Assisting DOA (pro-bono) with Change Management Efforts.
- May 22nd** COVID COOP Template distributed to all Departments
- May 27th** DMV launches virtual road test pilot program.



AUGUST

- Aug. 6th** SS RAP - OrgShakers - Approved.
- Aug. 7th** Telework Policy Updated to account for COVID.
- Aug. 14th** Phase 2 Contract - Tandem Motion - Signed.
- Phase 2 & 3 Contracts - Wostman & Associates - Signed.
- Aug. 19th** Phase 3 Contract (Delivery Order) - Carasoft (Cask - ServiceNow) - Signed.
- Approval expedited (risk review) for MOA Mobile Testing Site at DOA Geo Materials Facility.

- April 22nd** FFCRA rules posted on employee bulletins across the State.
- April 24th** Commissioner Presents Pandemic Preparedness Plan (PPP) to Governor.

JUNE

- June 3rd** DRB CARES ACT COVID-19 Distribution Program Launches.
- June 4th** GOV Approval for PPP Phase 2 - Personnel Management and Leadership Development (Memo).
- GOV Approval for PPP Phase 3 -Enabling Technology (Memo).
- June 8th** HSS Approval for Phase 1 CFR Funding.
- June 15th** Second bulk laptop order is placed using CARES Act Funds (259 Machines).

JULY

- July 3rd** Response to Union Q/A Regarding COVID.
- July 13th** HSS/OMB/COS Approval for Phase 2 & 3 CFR Funding.
- July 29th** Email from Commissioner Tshibaka to All Commissioners RE: Department Return to Office/Worksite Plans.



SEPTEMBER

- Sept. 15th** Phase 3 Contracts - ACS/Enabling Technologies (Microsoft 365 Security & MS Teams Voice Pilot) - Signed.
- Sept. 29th** Third bulk laptops order placed using CARES Act Funds (3600 Machines).

NOVEMBER

- Nov. 12th** DOA Positive Case Notification Plan finalized.



Appendix B: DOA Resources/References

Links

1. [Pandemic Preparedness Plan Website](#)
2. [SOA Pandemic Preparedness Plan](#)

Available Upon Request

3. DOA COVID-19 status reports to Governor's Office (March 2020 – December 2020)
4. DOA COVID-19 Preparation & Prevention report (January 15, 2021)
5. Wostmann final Quality Assurance report for PPP Phases 2/3 (January 15, 2021)
6. Tandem Motion final report for PPP Phase 2/Pathway (DATE)
7. COVID Expenditures report (link to OMB enterprise level report)

Appendix C: Recommended Project Roadmap Activities

The projects completed during PPP phases 2 and 3 allowed the State of Alaska to make great strides to keep both state employees and citizens safer and productive during a pandemic event in a short period of time. Should the opportunity and funding be available to continue where these projects left off, the following activities are recommended:

Roadmap Activities	Expected Outcomes
PHASE 2	
<p>Pathway and AspireAlaska</p> <p>In a series of meetings and interviews with SOA staff, Tandem Motion developed 3 roadmaps designed to give the State clear direction on how best to move the objectives of the project forward and the AspireAlaska implementation for learning and performance management modules into 2021 and beyond. Included is a performance evaluation toolkit so the client team can evaluate submitted Performance Evaluation Worksheets, SMART Goal Worksheets, and Performance Management & Learning and Development Plans, and a focus group toolkit and questions in response to Pathway survey data and facilitate sessions with the DOA participants. It includes a post-test survey to determine the extent to which adoption has taken place. Included in these roadmaps are Governance Models which documents the reporting and approval hierarchy and the roles and responsibilities for each of the recommended activities.</p> <p><i>Following is a high level roll up of the three Roadmap activities with additional specific expected outcomes for each. Also included following the three roadmaps are additional roadmap activities not addressed by the Tandem Motion roadmaps.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved clarity of employee performance objectives through the adoption of Pathway processes • Improved employee satisfaction through the performance evaluation process by the adoption of the new evaluation form • Improved personnel management by supervisors and management through the integration of Pathway processes with the AspireAlaska system • Improved employee performance through the ability for all SOA executive branch employees to utilize the Cornerstone OnDemand course content, course content provided through Pathway, and virtual instructor lead training for courses that were previously only offered in person • Improved employee retention using current technology tools expected by today's employees • Improved SOA training environment over TrainAlaska, the "home-grown" learning platform that was inadequate for most trainers, highly labor intensive to maintain and based on outdated and unsupported technology
<p>1. Learning Management Roadmap</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and validate core curriculum in AspireAlaska for job families. • Develop supervisory curriculum in AspireAlaska. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curriculum that is customized for State of Alaska job families, making it easier for supervisors and employees to sort through the training that is most applicable to their roles and job development • Curriculum that is customized for State of Alaska supervisors to ensure consistent application of Alaska personnel laws, policies, and procedures

<p>2. Performance Management Roadmap</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with departments to update position descriptions. • Pilot Off-Cycle evaluations for state employees. • Validate and revise materials developed and/or enhanced under the Pathway program, such as the statewide competency model, the Performance Management Learning Development form, the Rater's guide and facilitate Pathway Focus Groups to get feedback on Pathway and AspireAlaska programs. • Continue activities to engage stakeholder management for full adoption of the Pathway program. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Position descriptions that accurately reflect job responsibilities and reporting relationships to enhance job satisfaction and to enable automated functions in AspireAlaska • Enable automated functions in AspireAlaska to allow evaluations for employees that may not occur on a standard annual schedule • Better understanding and adoption of materials initially developed under Pathway • Refinement of materials developed under Pathway • The State will fully recognize all the benefits of a digitized, consistently applied performance management system
<p>3. Recruitment and Onboarding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Document the onboarding process for employees, supervisors, and executives. • Enhance and document the recruitment process for recruitment staff and hiring managers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistent and clear onboarding process for new employees that enhances the employee experience and leads to a better understanding of job expectations and the State of Alaska framework • Consistent and clear hiring process for prospective employees that enhances the experience and leads to better recruitment decisions
Fully migrate off and retire TrainAlaska.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AspireAlaska provides a single location for employees to find learning materials • Although there are no license fees associated with TrainAlaska, general upkeep and maintenance still requires staff time and will be eliminated
Identify and migrate other LMS's within the state.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Single location for employees to find learning materials throughout the Executive Branch
PHASE 3	
AlaskaNow	
Allow the organization time for stabilization, provide continued support and change management.	Increased working knowledge of the AlaskaNow tool, better utilization of features
Designate the AlaskaNow Governance Committee and various roles to support ongoing changes, enhancements and process improvements to the AlaskaNow system.	Governance structure and process in place to support continuous improvement of the AlaskaNow system
Create and maintain list of system changes / process improvements / enhancements and prioritize via the AlaskaNow Governance Committee.	Prioritized list of of system changes / process improvements / enhancements
Implement workflows in AlaskaNow to support the system changes / process improvements / enhancements process from idea to completion.	Automated management of the system changes / process improvements / enhancements process
Designate and train AlaskaNow developers in OIT, CSM and DOPLR to work on prioritized system changes/ improvements/enhancements in coordination with Cask sustainment.	The SOA becomes more self-sufficient in management of AlaskaNow platform
Designate AlaskaNow training group.	Trained end users in departments outside of DOA
Develop in-house system administrator skills during period of Cask sustainment contract (6 months).	A step towards the SOA being self-sufficient in maintaining the AlaskaNow system

Create working groups that focus on AlaskaNow modules and functional areas (e.g., Knowledge Management, HR, ITSM, CSM).	Provides a structure to fully realize all the benefits of the ServiceNow platform
Continue conversations with Cask and ServiceNow to more fully understand all the functionality purchased as part of this initial contract.	Better informed decisions about future implementation of functionality
Prioritize and plan implementation of functionality purchased but not yet utilized (e.g., Virtual Agent, Release Management, Predictive Intelligence, Performance Analytics, ITOM Health, Integration HUB were a few discussed in the project closeout meeting).	Additional functionality added to AlaskaNow within and outside of DOA
Schedule business alignment session with ServiceNow in Jan/Feb 2021.	ServiceNow recommendations for increasing utilization of the AlaskaNow system
Complete rollout of AlaskaNow and retire UTS/SDM, other systems per rollout schedule (See Appendix C). Assess cost savings of eliminating previous systems.	Period of coexistence for OIT UTS (12/23/2020 – 1/25/2021) During coexistence new incident and requests will be submitted in AlaskaNow and staff will continue to work and close legacy tickets in UTS. Period of coexistence for SDM (12/23/2020 – 2/22/2021) During coexistence new incident and requests will be submitted in AlaskaNow and staff will continue to work and close legacy tickets in SDM.
Plan for statewide adoption of ITSM by all Departments, including DOLWD, DHSS, DCCED.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Single system to train support staff (fulfillers) as well as end users on when switching departments. • Reduction in license fees, maintenance cost, need for specialized support staff. • Shared knowledge management of support tickets.
Roll out HR, expand from DOA pilot to statewide for AlaskaNow.	One consistent platform for case management, HR knowledge management, employee document management and employee services, including onboarding
Migration of knowledge articles from SharePoint/Wiki and other sources content may reside.	One consistent platform to maintain
Identify opportunities for CSM - expand on DMV, DEC OASys, etc. and use lessons learned from the DMV implementation.	Use the DMV experience into a better and consistent interactions for constituents and employees of other departments
Complete AlaskaNow integrations with IRIS and HRSD.	Reduction of paperwork and manual data entry Keeping the systems up to date in real-time
Revisit myAlaska and develop a strategy to replace or integrate with AlaskaNow.	Full utilization of the ServiceNow tool, streamline portal maintenance
Cask recommends cautiously adding to CMDB; be deliberate about what is put into CMDB. Phase 2 goal could include Service Mapping.	Intentional use of CMDB that provides proper support for OIT.
Standardize, retire duplicative services.	Reduced effort, cost.
Take advantage of Cask's offer of 1 hour/week "office hours".	Continued support in addition to the sustainment contract, somewhere to float ideas and receive informed feedback.

Cask and ServiceNow suggests waiting 1-2 releases before upgrading. ServiceNow typically distributes a new release approximately every six months, as alphabetical cities. The “Paris” version was implemented in December 2020 at the SOA. The next release, “Quebec” is due around March 2021. Following Cask’s recommendation, the first release the SOA should consider is the “R” or “S” release.	Time to stabilize between upgrades, less frequent changes for users and system managers.
Teams Phones	
Analyze any DFG adoption issues remaining after Teams Phone Pilot rollout and transition analog circuits so that Mitel systems, infrastructure and support can be retired.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve DFG communication effectiveness • Eliminate Mitel operating cost
Leverage Teams Phone Pilot experience to continue rolling out phone functionality.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve communication effectiveness • Further standardize support model
Analyze and address any specific DHSS business and technological Teams and Teams Phone calendaring, email, data storage, calling and voicemail requirements so this large block of users can be implemented.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve DHSS communication effectiveness • Further standardize support model
Determine Teams Phone approaches to replace or integrate with existing state call centers.	Further standardize support model
Retire CISCO/Mitel systems, infrastructure and support.	Eliminate CISCO and Mitel operating cost
Deploy MS Teams phone throughout the State.	All departments and employees better prepared for remote work
Other OIT Projects	
Execute on cloud migration strategy developed by Planet/CTG.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue cloud assessments and migrations so departments can begin benefiting from cloud services • Increased partner services are needed to assess all applications being utilized across departments, including more complex ones that currently reside on the State of Alaska’s mainframe computers • Additional partner services are needed over the next few years to assist departments migrate/modernize applications into the cloud
Implement Intune for device management.	Increased ability to secure remote devices and protect sensitive data
Adoption of a statewide PC Lifecycle Policy to establish regular life cycle replacement of personal computers.	Adopting a statewide PC Lifecycle Policy will benefit the budgeting process, improve end user effectiveness and help maintain computing infrastructure security
Execute on security plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved security posture • Continue to expand scope of G5 features across OIT (i.e., Defender and Intune) • Design and Plan for deploying G5 features statewide for up to 15,000 users
Adoption of O365 G5 throughout the State.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prerequisite for Teams Phone deployment • Provides tools for an increased security posture

Excerpt from Wostmann & Associates Final Report