

Grant Approval Memo



Grantee: Alaska Association for Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health
Request Amount: \$20,000.00
Project Title: AK-AIMH Looking Forward: Growth and Sustainability
Grant Term: 7/1/2026 to 6/30/2027
Trust Staff: Tina Voelker-Ross

Staff Analysis:

- What does this project do?
This project supports the Alaska Association for Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health (AK-AIMH) in securing consultant services to strengthen organizational capacity. The consultant will facilitate strategic planning, succession planning, executive recruitment, business development, and board capacity-building. Trust funds support consultant services only.
- Who is receiving the funds?
AK-AIMH is a non-profit organization established in 2009 to support the goal of the Early Childhood Comprehensive System (ECCS) to build the capacity of those working with the 0-5 population to support their social-emotional development. The organization is dedicated to promoting the social-emotional well-being of infants, young children, and their families across Alaska. AK-AIMH is recognized as the leading agency in infant and early childhood mental health (IECMH) in Alaska. The organization strengthens infant and early childhood mental health by supporting the professionals, organizations, and systems that interact with young children during their most critical developmental years. AK-AIMH advances this work through workforce development and credentialing via the IECMH Endorsement®, training, consultation, and capacity-building for infant and early childhood mental and behavioral health providers, and cross-sector collaboration among health, education, and social service partners statewide.
- Why is staff recommending this project?
This project strengthens AK-AIMH's ability to support early childhood mental health promotion, prevention, and early intervention across Alaska. The organization is entering a leadership transition and requires structured support to ensure continuity of services and long-term sustainability. By improving board governance, establishing a clear strategic direction, preparing for an Executive Director transition, and building a sustainable business model, AK-AIMH will be better positioned to expand and maintain essential IECMH supports for young children and families at risk of or experiencing mental health or developmental challenges. The products of this work—strategic plan, recruitment strategy, succession plan, governance tools, and business development roadmap—will create lasting organizational capacity beyond the grant period.
- Will this be a multi-year project?
This proposal is for a one-year (12-month) grant project.

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Trust Five Year Funding History

Fiscal Year	Project Title	Amount	Status	Final Expended
2026	Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation Project	\$113,620	Active	Grant ends 12/31/2026
2023	Project Compass: Leading the Way in Workforce Development for Infant & Early Childhood Mental Health Services in Alaska	\$50,000	Closed	\$47,979
2022	Project Compass: Leading the Way in Workforce Development for Infant & Early Childhood Mental Health Services in Alaska	\$50,000	Closed	\$48,230

Comp Plan Identification

Area of Focus	Objective	Comments
Area of Focus 1: Early Childhood & Youth	1.2 Ensure accurate identification and support of social-emotional needs for children and their families, congruent with their cultural identification	a. Strategy: Increase access to Infant & Early Childhood Mental Health services and consultation through an expanded, highly qualified, and credentialed workforce. b. Strategy: Provide training on social-emotional development and behavioral health to providers, caregivers, and educators serving children.
Area of Focus 9: Workforce	9.2 Advance the competencies of the healthcare, behavioral health, and public health workforce	

Trust Focus Area Connection

Budget Area	Strategy	Comments
Early Childhood & Youth	Early Childhood - Ensure accurate identification and treatment of social-emotional needs for children, youth, and their caregivers	

Project Description (from grant application)

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AK-AIMH is a statewide nonprofit dedicated to promoting the social-emotional well-being of infants, young children, and their families across Alaska. The Association was formed in 2009 to support the goal of the Early Childhood Comprehensive System (ECCS) to build the capacity of those working with the 0-5 population to support their social-emotional development. AK-AIMH is recognized as the leading agency in infant and early childhood mental health (IECMH) in Alaska. The organization strengthens infant and early childhood mental health by supporting the professionals, organizations, and systems that interact with young children during their most critical developmental years. AK-AIMH advances this work through workforce development and credentialing via the IECMH Endorsement®, training, consultation, and capacity-building for infant and early childhood mental and behavioral health providers, and cross-sector collaboration among health, education, and social service partners statewide.

AK-AIMH is entering a critical period of organizational transition as it has historically been a volunteer organization with little or no paid staff. The current president has been with the organization since its inception in 2009 and has acted as both the board president and volunteer Executive Director. The organization is preparing to recruit a paid Executive Director while continuing to be governed by a small, hands-on board and limited administrative capacity due to the impending retirement of the current volunteer Executive Director. This transition presents both risk and opportunity. Without planning, leadership change could disrupt critical programs and partnerships; with the right structure and support, it can strengthen governance, clarify priorities, and position the organization for long-term sustainability.

At this stage, AK-AIMH requires structured, external support to address four interrelated needs. First, the board must establish a clear strategic direction aligned with available capacity and statewide demand for IECMH services. Second, the organization needs a practical recruitment, succession, and onboarding plan to ensure a smooth leadership transition and to support the incoming Executive Director with clear expectations. Third, the board seeks to strengthen its governance and operating practices by clarifying roles, decision-making authority, and accountability between the board and staff. Finally, AK-AIMH must develop a realistic business development and fundraising plan to diversify revenue sources and sustain its core programs statewide.

With Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority Partnership funding, AK-AIMH will engage in a facilitated board planning and capacity-building process grounded in best practices for small, mission-driven organizations in transition. This work will include targeted stakeholder and leadership interviews to surface organizational strengths, risks, and priorities; a structured, facilitated board workshop focused on strategy, governance, succession, and sustainability; and a short post-workshop check-in to reinforce accountability and implementation. Finally, AK-AIMH will implement a strategic, targeted, and intentional recruitment process to fill the Executive Director position.

The process will yield concrete, actionable deliverables that the board can use immediately. These include a written succession and leadership transition plan; a recruitment strategy tailored to the organization's unique needs; a business development and fundraising roadmap tailored to AK-AIMH's size and mission; clarified board roles, responsibilities, and decision rights; and a 30/60/90-day implementation plan that assigns owners, timelines, and next steps. Together, these outputs will strengthen organizational stability, support successful Executive Director recruitment and onboarding, and ensure AK-AIMH is positioned to continue advancing infant and early childhood mental health across Alaska.

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Target population and beneficiaries: Trust beneficiaries include Alaskans who experience mental illness and intellectual/developmental disabilities, along with individuals at risk of becoming beneficiaries through prevention and early intervention. AK-AIMH's primary impact is early and upstream—supporting the providers and programs that serve infants, young children, and families statewide, including rural communities. The field of infant and early childhood mental health provides the roadmap for "going upstream" to stop the continuous flow of multigenerational maltreatment. Many adult issues, including substance abuse, mental health conditions, family violence, and other multigenerational adversities, are now understood as disorders that began early in life and can be reduced by the promotion of infant and early childhood mental health.

Community support: AK-AIMH is an established statewide partner with a history of collaborating with Alaska's early childhood systems, including workforce and consultation initiatives. AK-AIMH is recognized across Alaska for its ongoing contributions and trusted relationships with various organizations and agencies that serve young children and their families. Support for AK-AIMH initiatives comes from both urban and rural Alaskan communities, and AK-AIMH has engaged with providers across the state.

Endorsement®: AK-AIMH provides the Infant Mental Health Endorsement® (IMH-E®), the Early Childhood Mental Health Endorsement® (ECMH-E®), and the Endorsed Reflective Supervision (ERS). Endorsement® does not constitute a license in Alaska; rather, it is intended to encourage, recognize, and document the development of infant and family professionals within an organized system of culturally sensitive, relationship-based infant and mental health learning and work experiences. The Endorsement® promotes best practices, guides professional development in the infant and early childhood/family field, and provides a standard for workforce competence and excellence. Endorsement® is offered at four levels, reflecting the different needs and areas of expertise for each practice level. Although the competencies are similar across levels, the training to meet those competencies must be consistent with the level of endorsement; that is, the training is increasingly advanced for higher levels of endorsement. To date, 98 individuals have earned Endorsement® in Alaska, and another 25 individuals are in the process of becoming Endorsed. AK-AIMH is a member of the Alliance for the Advancement of Infant Mental Health, a global leader committed to promoting the healthy emotional and social development of infants, young children, and their families, and joins 36 other states and 3 countries in using the same Endorsement® system.

Other community collaborations include:

- **Workforce Initiatives:** AK-AIMH helps train and support professionals who work with young children, such as mental health specialists, early interventionists, and related disciplines, educators, early care and learning providers, and infant and early childhood mental health consultants. This strengthens the quality and capacity of the infant and early childhood workforce statewide.
- **Consultation Initiatives:** AK-AIMH provides leadership in a cohort-based Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation (IECMHC) training program to increase the number of individuals prepared to provide high-quality consultation services to infant and early childhood programs and practitioners, helping them address complex challenges related to infant and early childhood mental health.
- **Reflective Supervision/Consultation (RS/C):** AK-AIMH provides RS/C to groups of professionals providing IECMH services or supports to programs. Reflective supervision is a requirement for several categories of Endorsement® and is a cornerstone of the infant-early childhood

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mental health field. The purpose of reflective supervision is to support the supervisee's development and use of reflective practice skills.

- Finance Policy Project: AK-AIMH provides leadership for a statewide committee supported by the national organization Zero to Three to identify and implement state strategies for aligning financing policy with IECMH best practice initiatives across the promotion-to-treatment continuum.

Grantee Proposed Evaluation Measures (from grant application)

AK-AIMH will track success through a short set of practical performance measures:

- How much did we do? Number of stakeholder interviews completed; number of board members participating; number of planning sessions held; number of core deliverables completed and board-approved (strategic plan, recruitment plan, succession plan, business development plan, 30/60/90-day workplan).
- How well did we do? Percentage of planned milestones completed on schedule; pre/post self-assessment of board confidence and clarity (roles, decision rights, fundraising readiness); participant satisfaction with the process (through a post-meeting survey and post-recruitment analysis)
- Is anyone better off? Evidence of organizational readiness improvements (e.g., Executive Director success profile finalized; recruitment/onboarding steps completed; governance calendar adopted; fundraising pipeline targets set). Over time, these capacity gains support AK-AIMH's ability to expand IECMH workforce support and consultation access statewide, improving upstream outcomes for infants, young children, families, and the early childhood workforce.

Proposed Project Performance Measures (developed by the Trust)

How much did you do?

- a. Number (#) of stakeholder interviews completed.
- b. Number (#) and percentage (%) of board members participating in strategic planning.
- c. Number (#) of planning sessions held during the grant reporting period.

How well did you do it?

- a. Provide a narrative that describes the timeline, activities, successes, challenges, and any lessons learned during the grant reporting period. Include an electronic copy of the final strategic plan and any supporting materials completed by the consultant.
- b. Number (#) and percentage (%) of core deliverables (strategic plan, recruitment plan, succession plan, business development plan, 30/60/90-day workplan) completed and board-approved during the reporting period.
- c. Number (#) and percentage (%) of participants who were satisfied with the strategic planning process.

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Is anyone better off?

Provide evidence of organizational readiness improvements (e.g., Executive Director success profile finalized; recruitment/onboarding steps completed; governance calendar adopted; fundraising pipeline targets set).

Sustainability (from grant application)

This is a one-time capacity-building investment that will produce durable tools and structures (a recruitment strategy, succession plan, board role clarity, and a business development plan) that remain in place after the grant term. Implementation is sustained through the board's ongoing governance (workplan tracking, quarterly check-ins) and through diversified revenue strategies identified in the business development plan (e.g., training/technical assistance revenue, membership/credentialing-related fees where applicable, targeted fundraising, and future public/private grants).

Who We Serve (from grant application)

This project is a capacity-building effort that strengthens AK-AIMH's ability to serve Trust beneficiaries statewide through promotion, prevention, and early intervention. Trust beneficiaries include Alaskans who experience mental illness, intellectual and developmental disabilities, substance use disorders, Alzheimer's disease and related dementia, and traumatic brain injuries; the Trust also supports prevention and early intervention for individuals at risk of becoming beneficiaries. AK-AIMH's work focuses on infants and young children (prenatal to age eight) and their families by building the IECMH workforce and supporting early childhood programs. By strengthening AK-AIMH's board governance, leadership transition, and business development, the organization becomes more stable and better able to expand access to IECMH supports (including consultation and endorsement pathways) that benefit young children and families who are experiencing—or are at risk of—mental health challenges and developmental delays/disabilities.

Estimated Numbers of Beneficiaries Served Experiencing (from grant application)

Mental Illness:	500
Developmental Disabilities:	500
Substance Abuse	500
Traumatic Brain Injuries:	250
Secondary Beneficiaries (family members or caregivers providing support to primary beneficiaries):	1,000

Project Budget (from grant application)

Personnel Services Costs	\$0.00
Personnel Services Costs (Other Sources)	\$9,525.00
Personnel Services Narrative	Costs other sources:

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AK-AIMH in-kind staff hours for executive committee members (3 members x 15 hours each) & chair (20 hours) for succession planning, recruitment of ED, orientation of ED & board orientation & strategic planning): \$8,625.00 • Consultant in-kind time (5 hours) for meeting and prep for succession planning: \$900.00
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Other Costs	\$20,000.00
Other Costs (Other Sources)	\$0.00
Other Costs Narrative	<p>\$20,000 in Trust funds will be used for consultant services to facilitate board strategic planning, Executive-level recruitment, succession planning, business development planning, and board capacity building.</p> <p>BOARD PLANNING/FACILITATION: Specifically, \$15,000 of this budget will be used for up to five stakeholder interviews, workshop preparation, a board workshop, real-time documentation, a business plan, and an action tracker/workplan.</p> <p>EXECUTIVE LEVEL RECRUITMENT: \$5000 of Trust funding will be used on consultant services to cover the start of the executive recruitment process. This will involve working with the Board, the previous volunteer director, documenting operational details for posterity, preparing recruitment materials, and supporting candidate search and selection. The process will be documented in real time, with action tracking in place to monitor progress and promote transparency.</p>

Other Funding Sources (from grant application)

AK-AIMH (in-kind)	\$8,625.00
Consultant organization staff (in-kind)	\$900.00
Total Leveraged Funds	\$9,525.00