

Data Update: Early Childhood & Youth



Trust
Alaska Mental Health
Trust Authority



Early Childhood & Youth: Program Data Update

- How Alaska children and youth are doing
 - Data sources:
 - Alaska School Health Profiles,
 - School Climate and Connectedness Survey,
 - ALCANLink → PRAMS, CUBS, and
 - YRBS
- What key Trust-supported projects are helping
 - A2P2 Help Me Grow Alaska,
 - DEED Trauma Informed Schools, and
 - DPH data collaborations.



Alaska is great place to grow up.

Photo: Sam Ogden Photography

Alaska continues to rank among worst states for child well-being, report finds

By Wesley Early
Published June 15, 2023 at 10:59 AM AKDT



Alaska News

Data links Alaska's sky-high maternal mortality rate to domestic violence

By Claire Stremple, Alaska Beacon
Published: November 29, 2023

As the pandemic wears on, the kids are not OK — and the support they need is hard to find in Alaska

Around the state, young Alaskans and the adults in their lives described barriers to getting help for their mental health.

By Annie Berman | Published: April 22, 2022

US surgeon general hears from 'terrified' providers about Alaska youth mental health crisis

By Alex DeMarban
Published: June 27, 2023

ALASKA | News

Survey of Alaska youth reveals more mental health problems, but also some positive trends

HEALTH CARE | Aug 14, 2024 | 10:22 pm ET | By Yereth Rosen



Even some teens say social media is hurting their mental health

A Pew survey highlights the pressures that social media, academics and gender norms create for teens.

April 25, 2025

Health officials: Youth mental health issues, suicides worsened by pandemic

Nationwide trends worse in Alaska

By Peter Segall
Thursday, December 9, 2021 6:31 pm | NEWS CORONAVIRUS LOCAL NEWS
STATE & LEGISLATURE



How do we measure progress and identify solutions?



Photo: Sam Ogden Photography

Key Alaska Childhood & Youth Datasets

Dataset	Age Range	Topics	Frequency	Methods	Household Challenges	ACES	Latest Data
ALCANLink	0-3	13 ACEs & outcomes	Pooled, multi-yr	Linked admin survey	Yes	Yes	2022
NCHS (NSCH)	0-17	Child health, ACEs, supports	Annual/Biennial	Parent survey	Yes	Yes	2022-2023
YRBS	12-18	Mental health, suicide, substance, bullying, violence	Biennial	School survey	Partial	Partial	2023
CDC School Health Profiles	Grades 6-12	School health policies, suicide prevention, services	Biennial	Principal and lead health teacher surveys	No	No	2024
School Climate & Connectedness	Grades 3-12	School climate, safety, adult support, peer connectedness, belonging	Annual	Student survey	No	No	2024



ACEs & Household Challenges— Why They Matter

- ACEs (Adverse Childhood Experiences) include abuse, neglect, and household challenges like:
 - Financial hardship
 - Parental job loss
 - Mental illness/substance abuse in the home
 - Parental separation/divorce
 - Incarceration, domestic violence, or parental death
- Why it matters: ACEs and household challenges like financial hardship, parental separation, substance use/mental illness, and witnessing domestic or intimate partner violence increase ACE scores and long-term risks.
- Addressing these risks early supports healthy development and can break cycles of adversity for Alaska children.

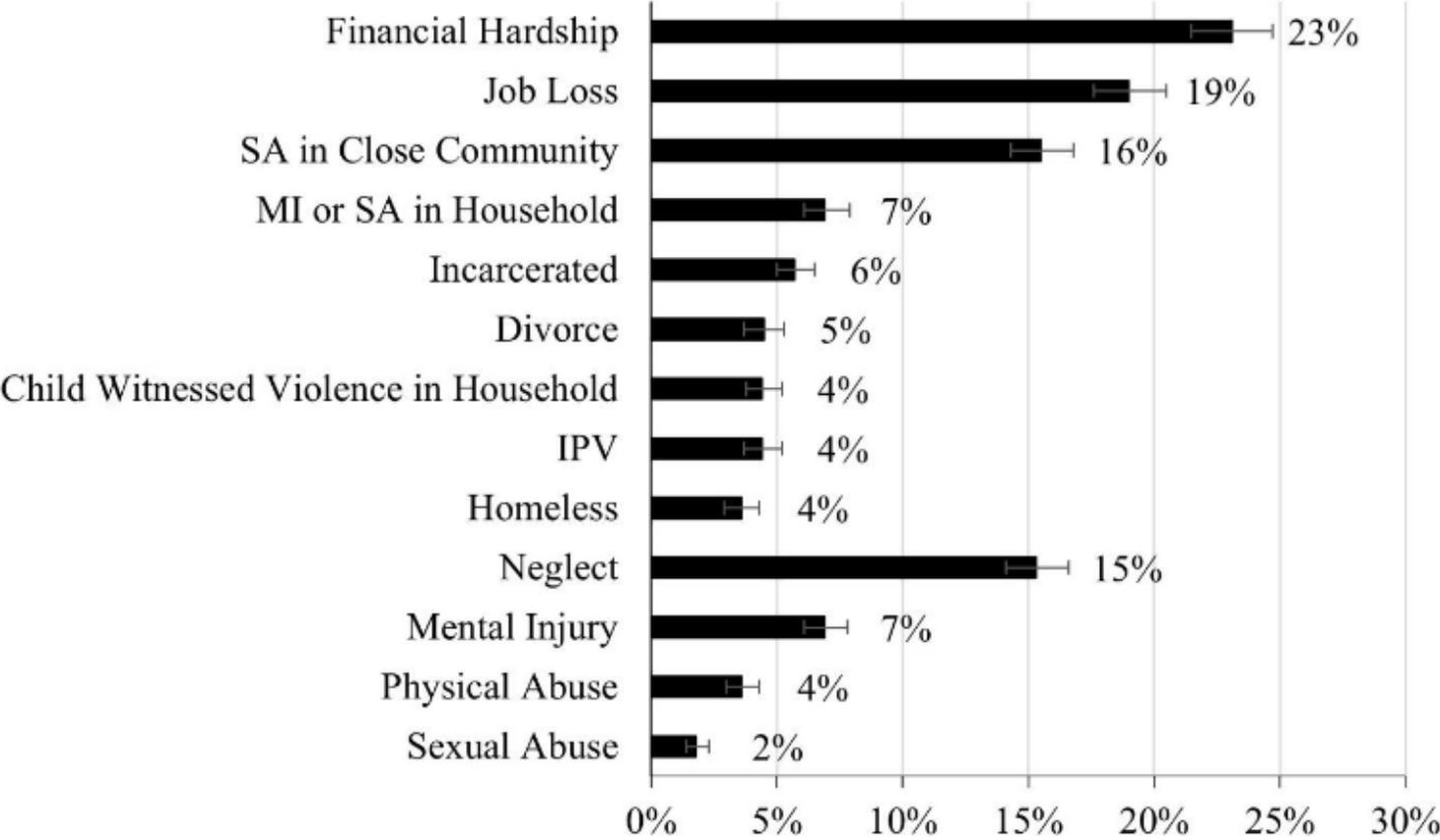
Adverse Childhood Experiences in Alaska: At-a-Glance

- Nearly half of Alaska's 3-year-olds (2012-2020) had at least one ACE and about 1 in 10 had four or more, with financial hardship and parental job loss the most common early childhood ACEs.
- Among children 0-17 (2016-2021), about 4 in 10 had at least one ACE and 8% had four or more, with parental divorce/separation, financial hardship, and intimate partner violence common; Alaska Native/American Indian children and those enrolled in Medicaid had substantially higher ACE burdens.

Source: Epidemiology of Adverse Childhood Experiences in Alaska, Alaska Department of Health, 2023.

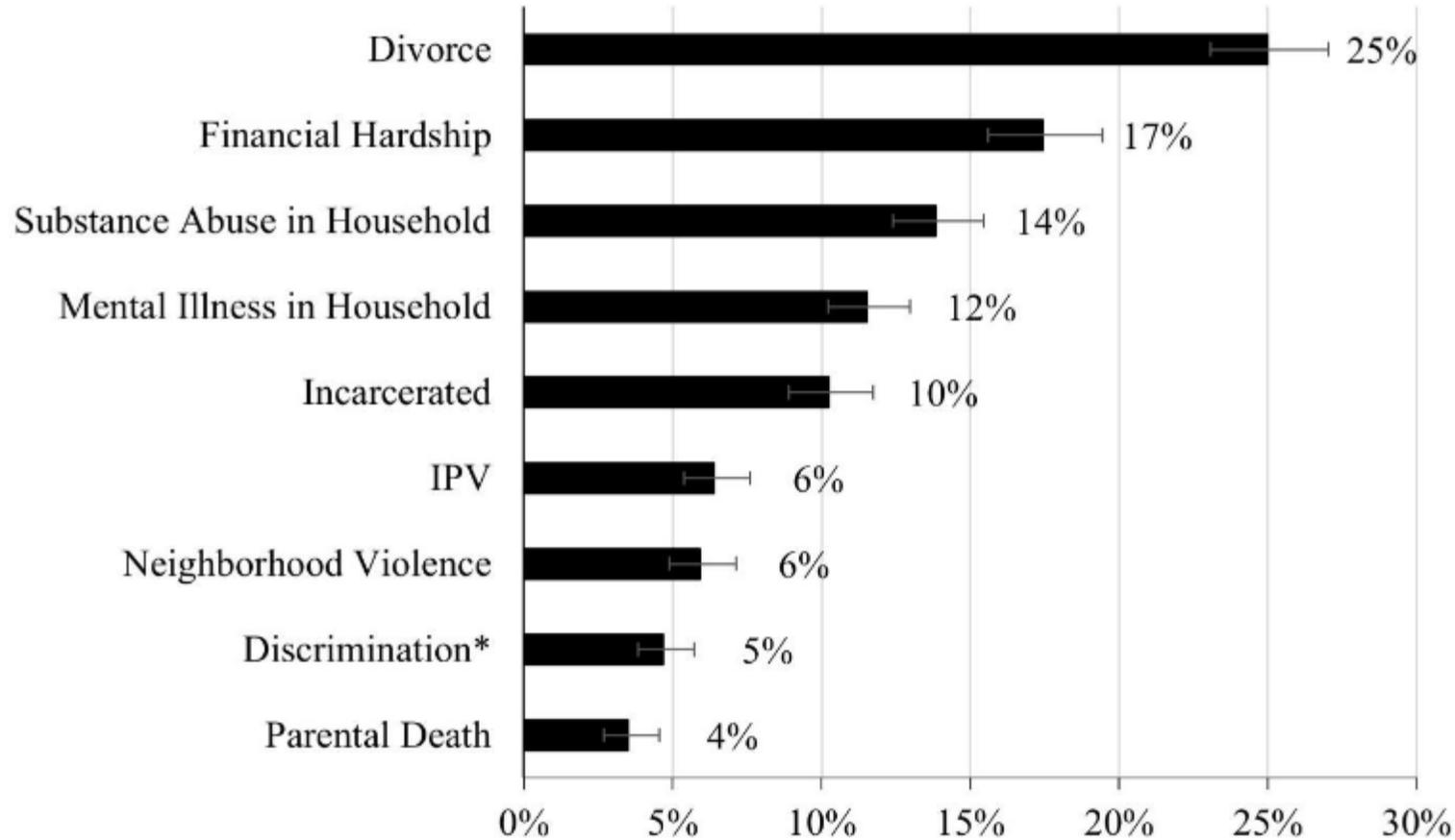


Weighted percentage of individual ACEs, among 3-year olds, ALCANLink, 2012-2020



Source: Epidemiology of Adverse Childhood Experiences in Alaska, Alaska Department of Health, 2023.

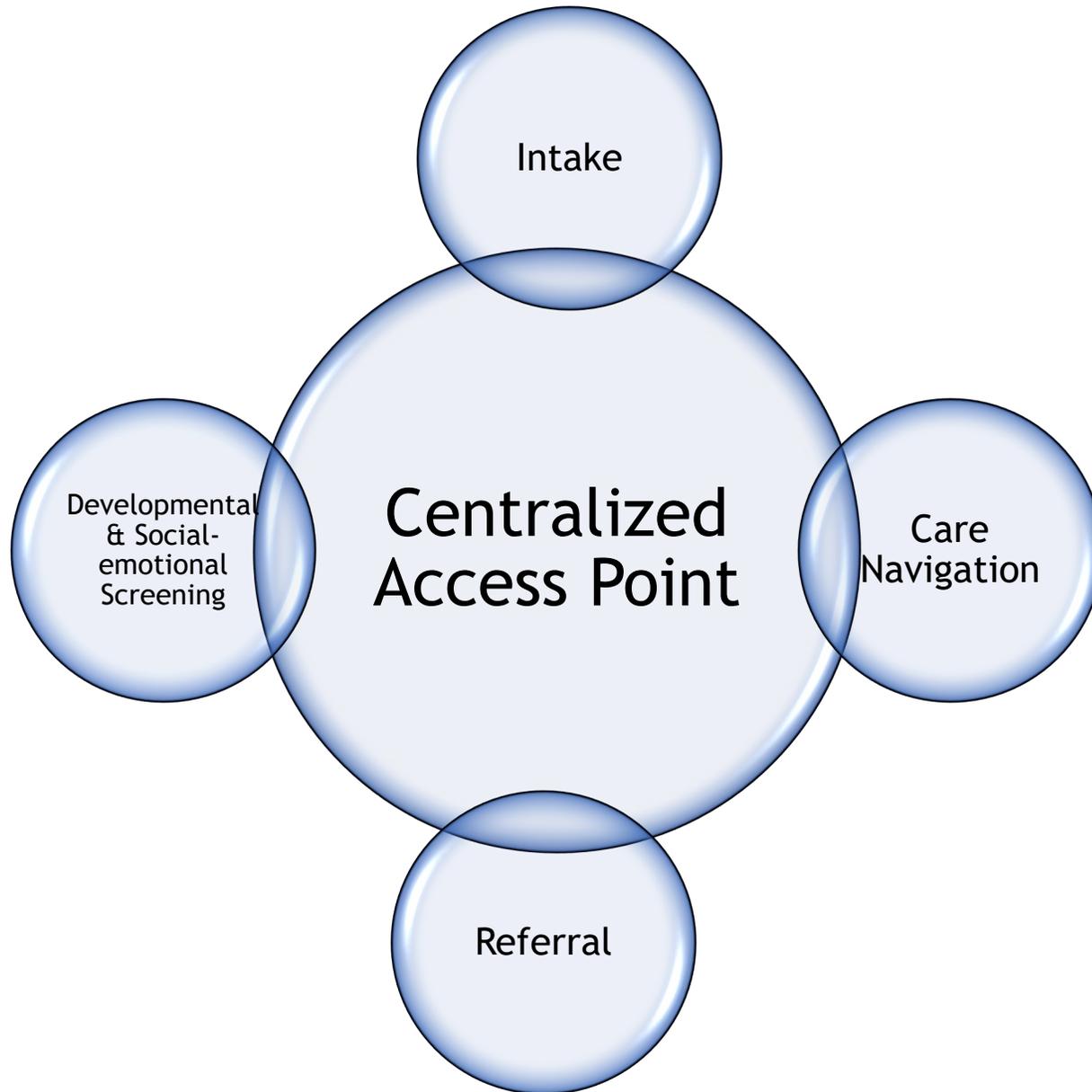
Weighted percentage of individual ACEs, (Ages 0-17), Alaska, NSCH, 2016-2021

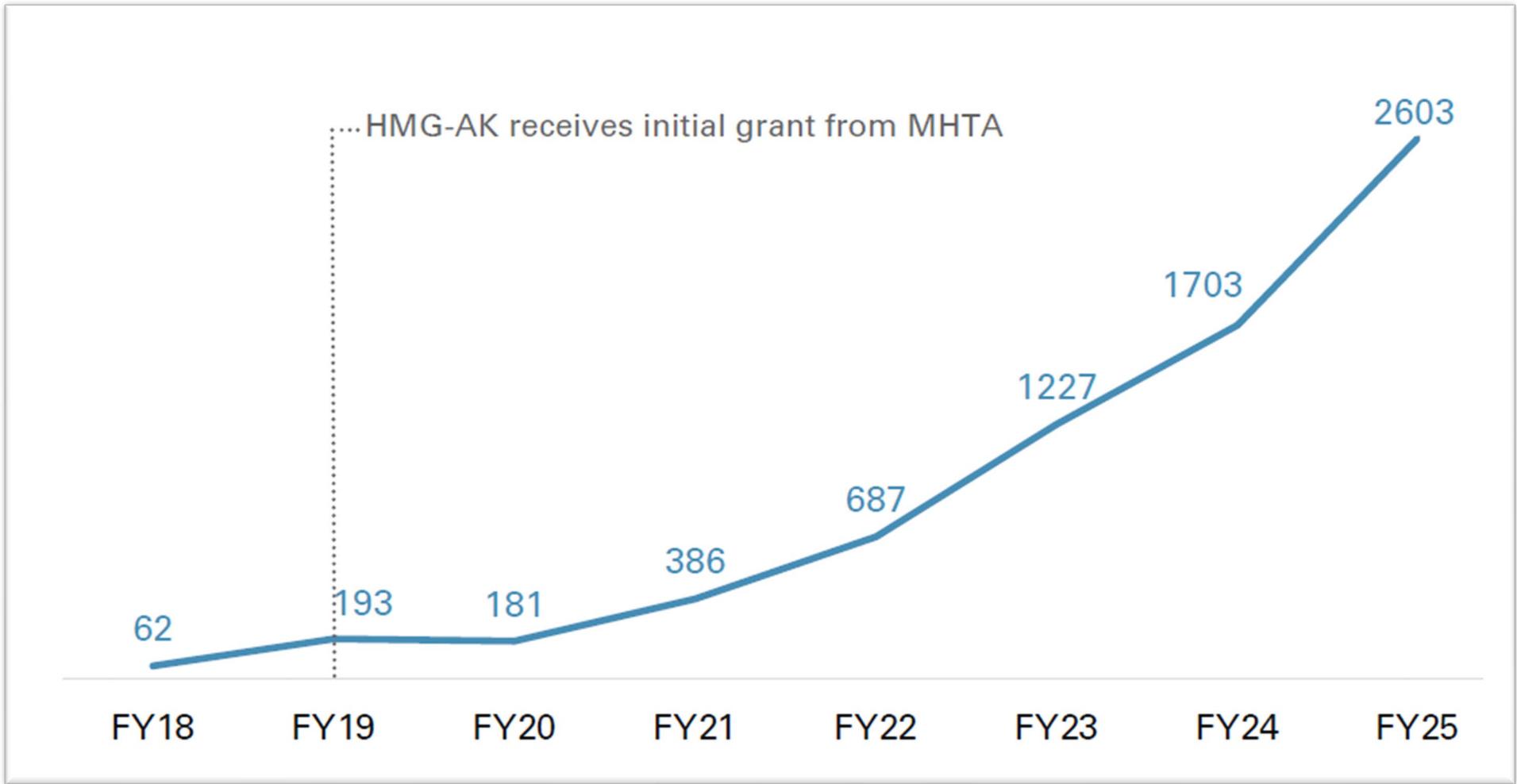


Source: Epidemiology of Adverse Childhood Experiences in Alaska, Alaska Department of Health, 2023.

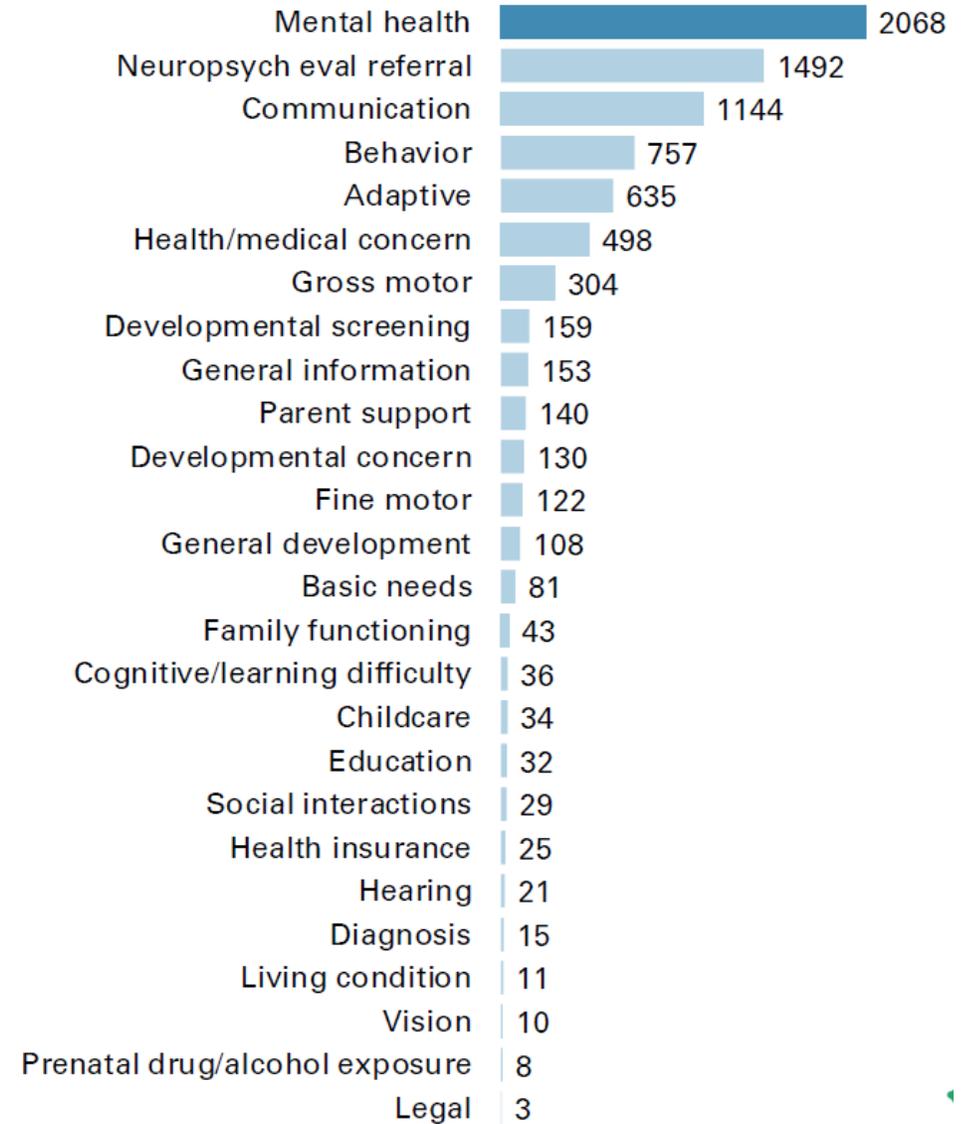
Program Data: A2P2 Help Me Grow



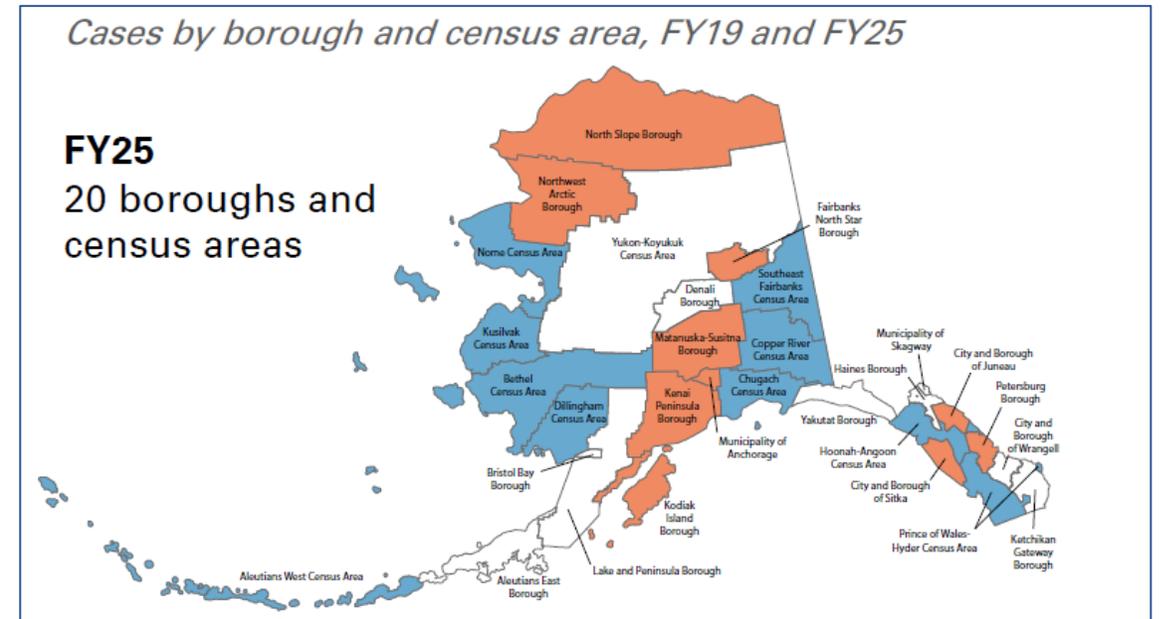
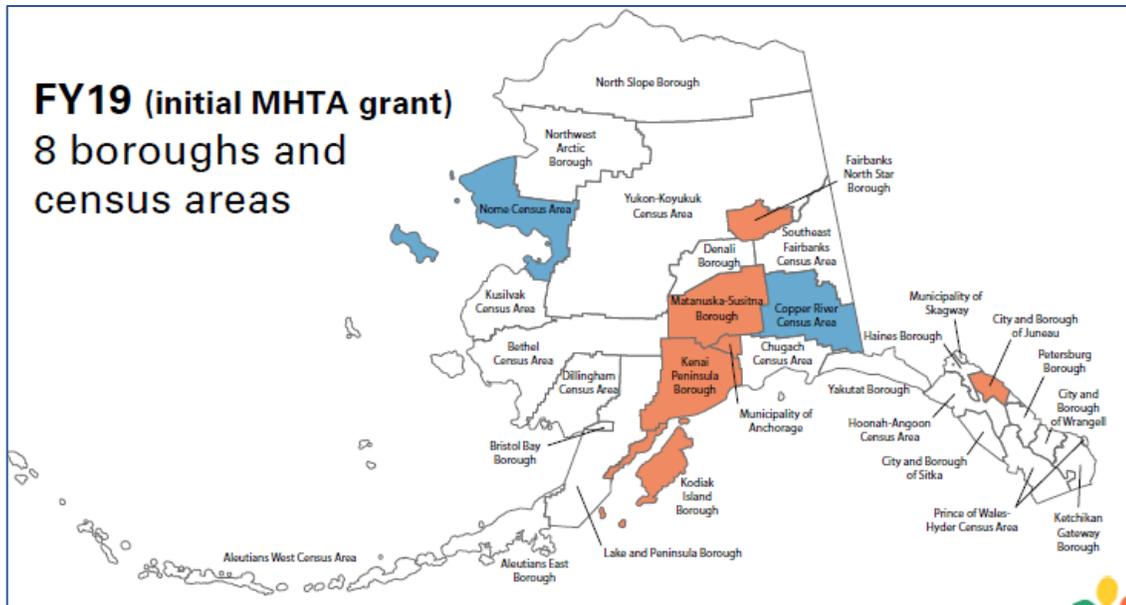




A2P2: Strengthening Families Program Data



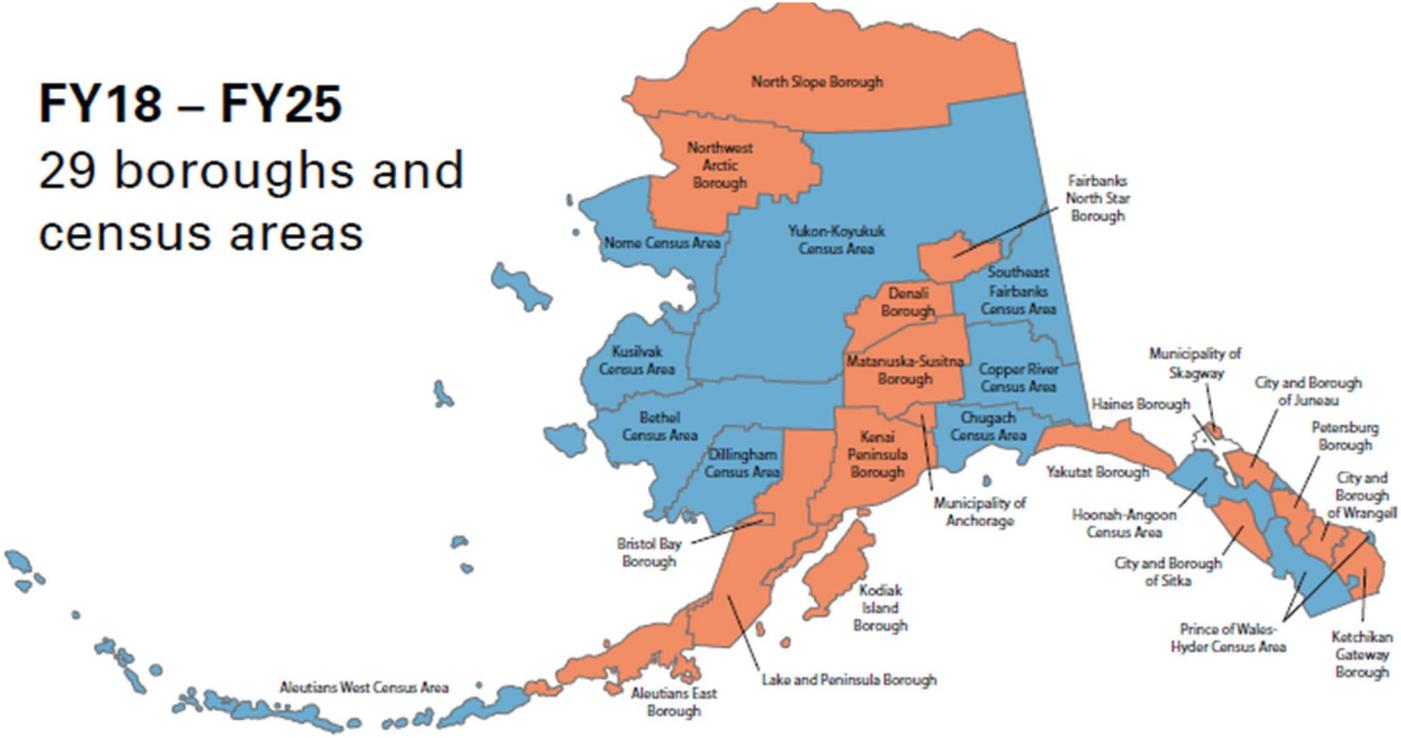
Help Me Grow Growth, FY19 - FY25



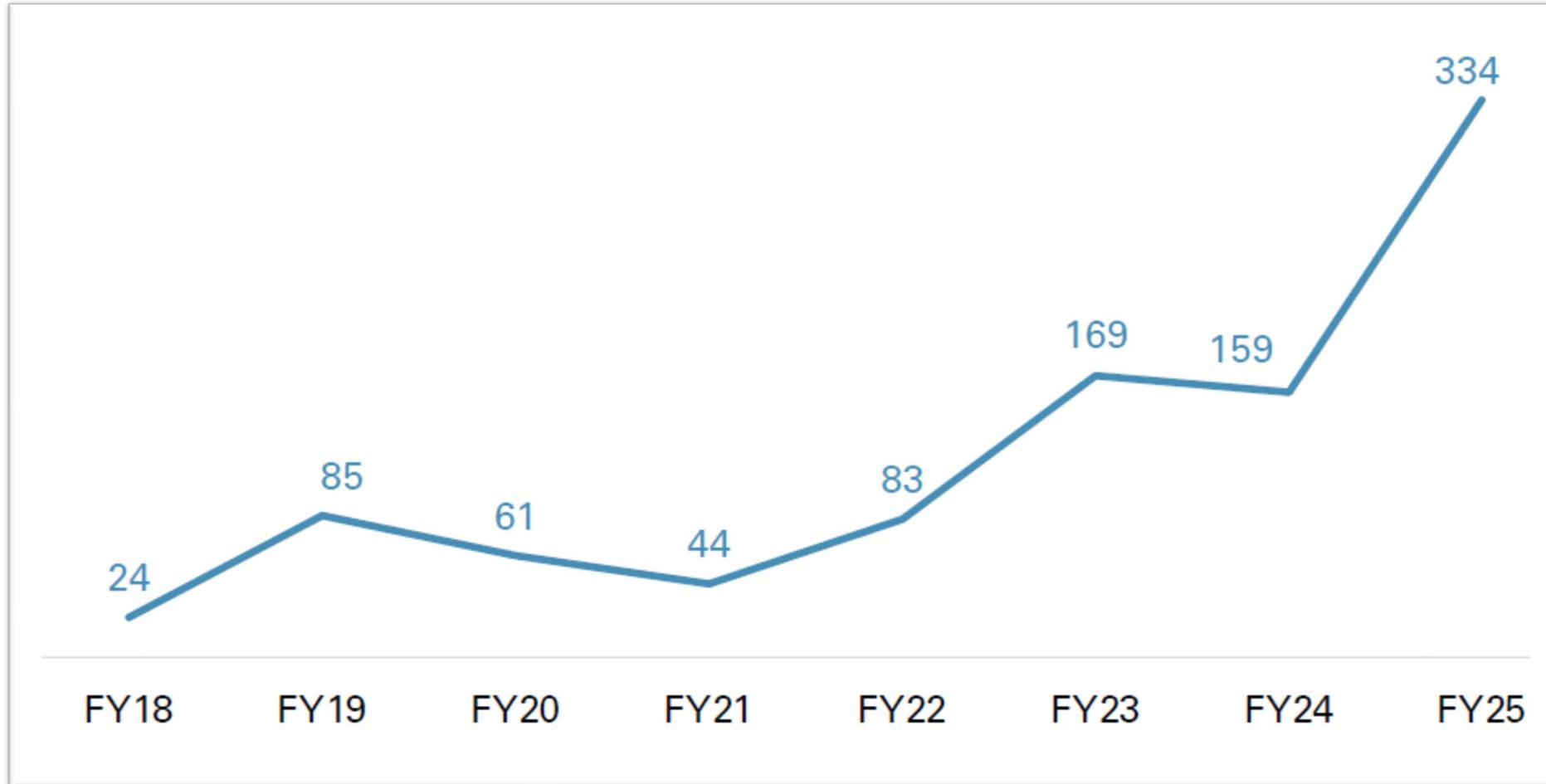


HMG-AK has served families from 29 of Alaska's 30 boroughs and census areas since its launch in FY18.

FY18 – FY25 29 boroughs and census areas



Case counts FY18 – FY25, outside Anchorage



Youth Data





Youth Mental Health & Social Media Trends (YRBS & CDC 2023)

- YRBS 2011-2023: persistent sadness/hopelessness rose from 26% to 43%; anxiety affecting daily functioning reported by about one-third of youth; suicide ideation and attempts increased.
- Social media findings (CDC 2023 YRBS):
 - 77% of U.S. high school students use social media at least several times a day; frequent use is higher among girls and lower among some groups such as American Indian/Alaska Native students.
 - Frequent users are more likely to report bullying (especially electronic), persistent sadness/hopelessness, suicide ideation, and suicide planning, with stronger patterns among female and LGBTQ+ students.
- Substance use trends: declining alcohol use, relatively stable marijuana use near 18%.

Mental Health Trends (YRBS, Alaska, 2011–2023)

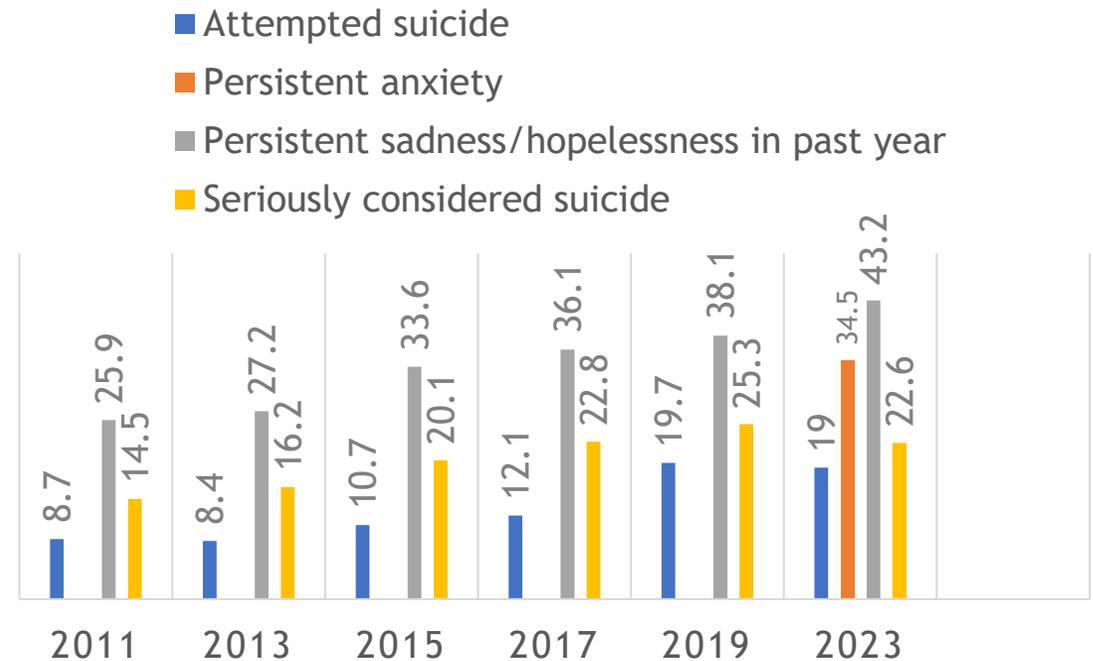
Persistent sadness/hopelessness and anxiety among Alaska high schoolers have increased steadily.

- 2011: ~26% reported feelings of sadness;
2023: 43%

Anxiety interfering with daily functioning (2023): 35%

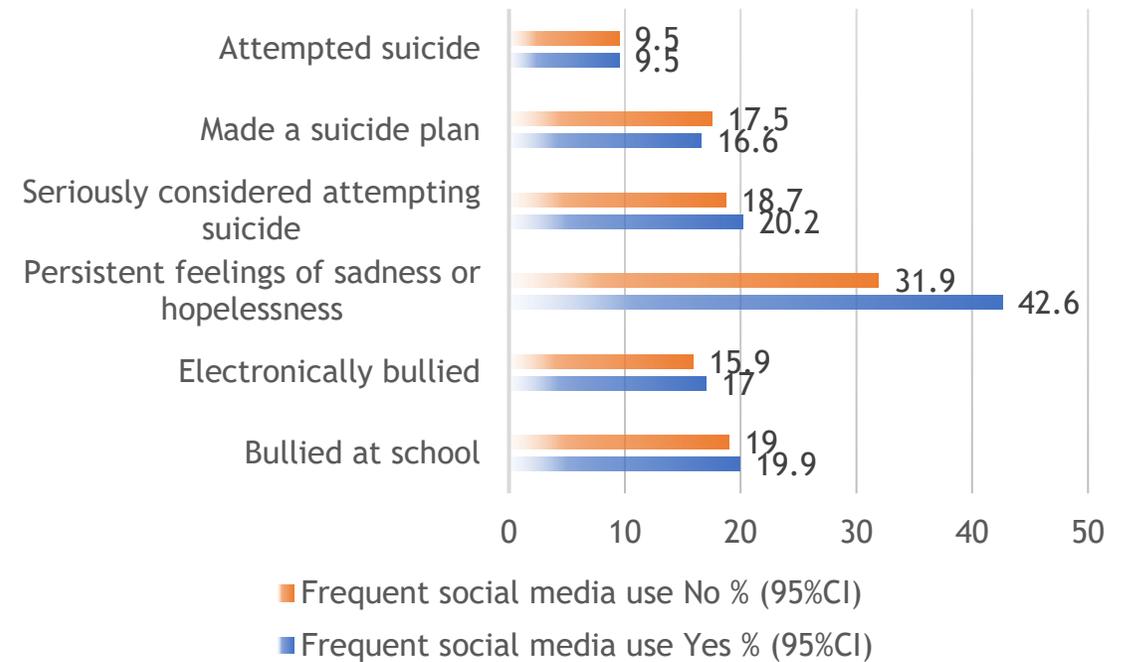
Suicide-related behaviors have worsened since 2013; Alaska far exceeds national averages.

- 2023: Seriously considered suicide - 22.6%; Attempted suicide - 19.0%



Youth Social Media Use, Bullying, and Mental Health (2023 YRBS, Nationwide)

- 77% of high school students used social media several times a day; frequent use was higher among girls than boys, LGBTQ+ students.
- Social media users are more likely to report bullying at school and online.
- Teens who used social media frequently were more likely to report persistent sadness or hopelessness and to say they had seriously considered suicide and made a suicide plan.
- Stronger suicide ideation/planning among frequent users (esp. females/LGBTQ+).
- Suicide attempt rates did not differ.



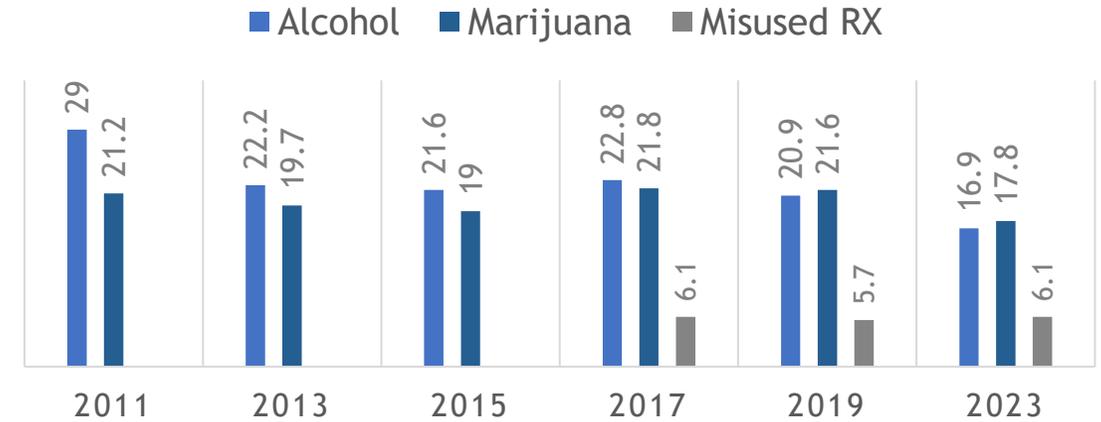
Source: CDC YRBS Data Summary & Trends Report: 2013-2023

Substance Use Trends (YRBS, Alaska, 2011–2023)

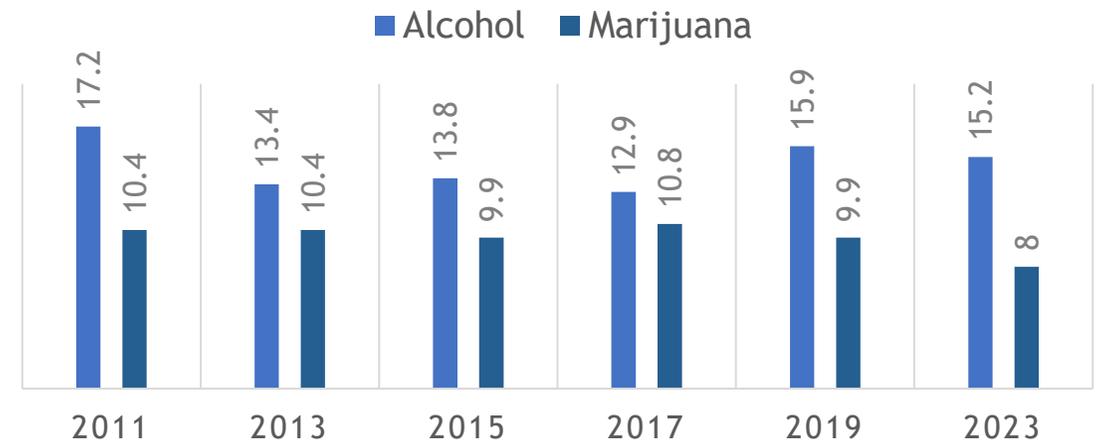
Declines in alcohol use overall, past 30-day marijuana use remains flat despite legalization.

- Current (2023):
 - Alcohol - 17% (decline over time)
 - Marijuana - 18% (slight decline)
 - Misused RX - 6% (no change)
- Early use (before age 13) declines slowly over a decade.

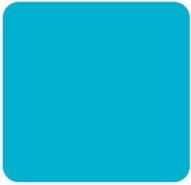
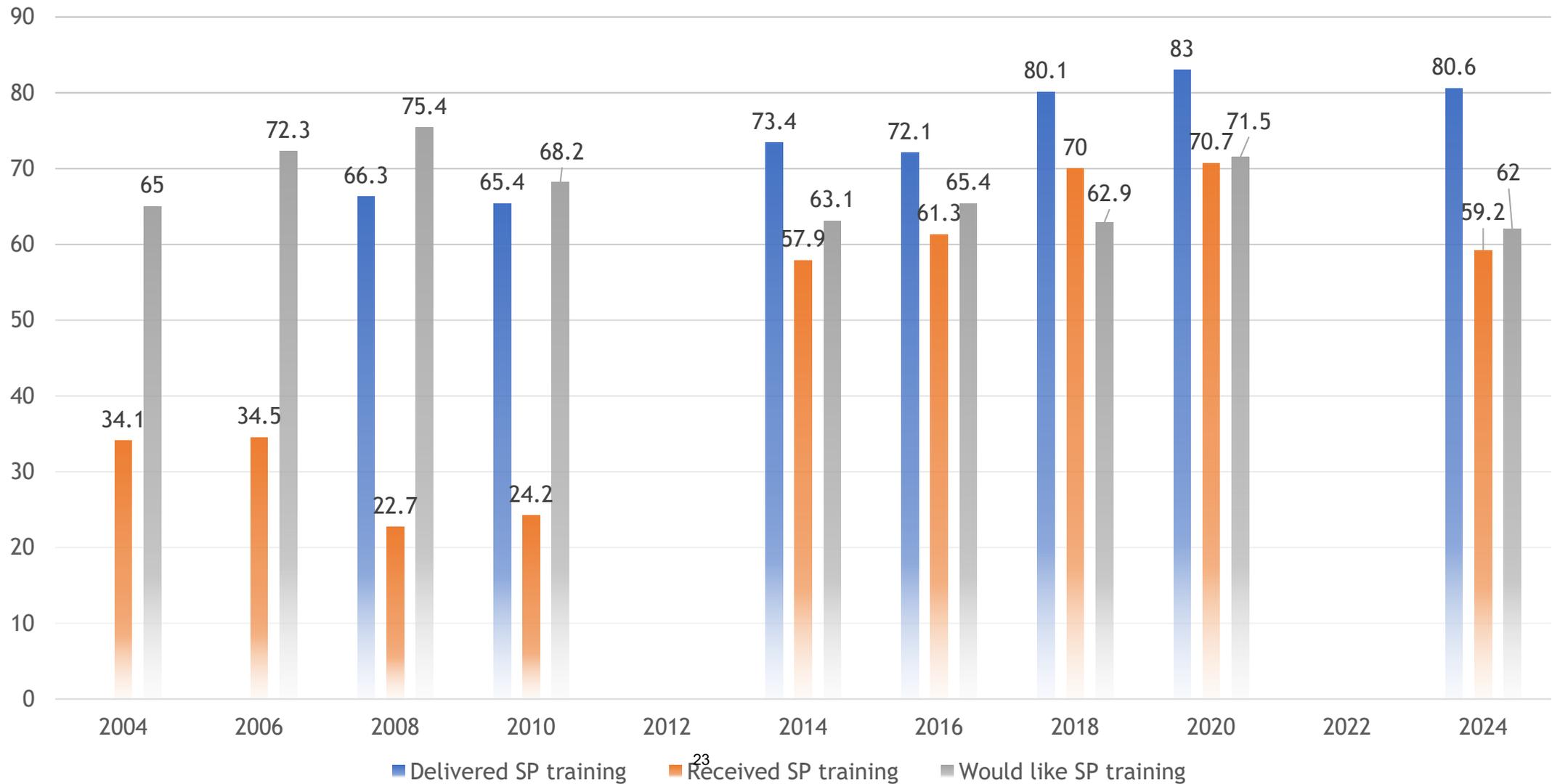
PAST 30-DAY USE



AGE OF FIRST USE



School Health Profiles: Suicide Prevention Training (2004-2024)



School Health Profiles: Written Suicide Protocols by School Type (2024)

Suicide Protocols	Middle Schools (Urban)	High Schools (Urban)	Jr/Sr High Schools (Rural Proxy)
Assessing risk	93%	86%	79%
Notifying parents	100%	91%	87%
Refer to mental health	100%	86%	90%
Responding to attempts	92%	91%	79%
Support after attempts	89%	86%	72%
Death by Suicide Response	93%	86%	68%



Department of Education and Early Development Program Data



Project Information

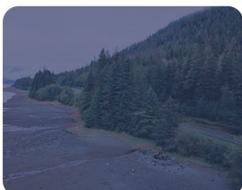
Assist school districts to develop mental health supports for students of all ages prioritizing rural and remote districts.

Workforce Training
(core component: PBIS & Trauma Engaged coaching)

Trauma Engaged
Schools PBIS
Coaching

Monthly support & coaching
for rural school counselors &
social workers

Health & Safety Needs
including crisis response



Training Focus Areas by Fiscal Year



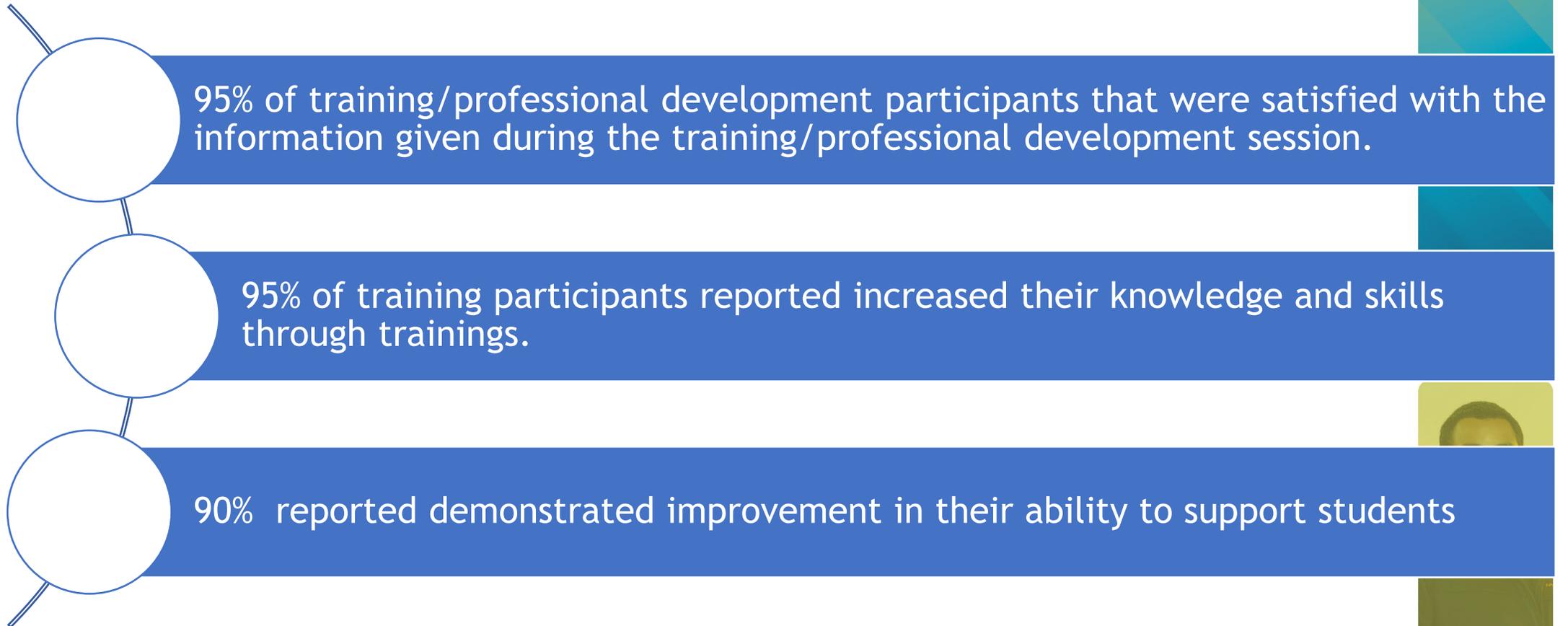
	FY23	FY24	FY25
Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports (PBIS)	★	★	★
Self Care	★	★	★
Trauma Engaged Schools	★	★	★
Rural Counselor Support	★	★	★
Restorative Practices			★
School Wide Information System (SWIS)	★		
Mental Health in Schools Landscape	★		
Assessment Reports	★		
Ethics		★	★
Mental Wellness			★

How Much: Participating School Districts FY24-FY25



School District / School	FY24	FY25
Bristol Bay Borough School District	☆	★
Kashunamiut School District		★
Ketchikan Gateway Borough School District		★
Kodiak Island Borough School District	☆	★
Kuspuk School District	☆	★
Lower Kuskokwim School District	☆	★
Nome School District	☆	★
North Slope Borough School District	☆	★
Kenny Lake School	☆	
Sitka School District	☆	★
Southeast Island School District		★
Southwest Region School District	☆	★

Post Training Survey Results



The PBIS trainings have significantly enhanced my staff's ability to support students and contribute to the district as a whole... We have been able to collaboratively work with students, staff, and community members to build routines and expectations that create a transparent, trauma-informed, impactful school environment where all learners can succeed.



*We have witnessed significant growth in how staff approach students—with positive intent and consistent reference to schoolwide behavior expectations... This has led to a noticeable increase in positive student behavior and fostered a culture where errors are corrected appropriately without damaging the strong relationships within our school community.*³⁰

Illustrations copyright 2019 by Kristin Link,
<https://www.kristinlink.com/transformingschools>

I have been able to go back to my school and share with students similar activities. Especially after Covid, the students are dealing with a lot of tough emotions and experiences. Being in rural Alaska, we are already isolated, but teens are especially susceptible... Talking with each other in small groups helped them build community.



The positive impact of the PBIS Project is clearly reflected in the strengthened relationships, increased student success, and greater sense of community within our school. This journey has also empowered our teachers and staff to thrive as they create a supportive and nurturing environment for all. We look forward to continuing this work and growing together to ensure everyone in our school community succeeds.

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Alaska Scorecard 2024

Early Childhood and Family Wellbeing

Developmental Screenings

- 42% of children (ages 9-35 months) received a parent-completed screening – slightly below the prior baseline but ahead of national levels.

Social-Emotional Readiness

- 47% of incoming K-1 students can regulate feelings and impulses \geq 80% of the time, showing steady early skills.

Postpartum Support

- 78% of women with recent births report strong social support, a +5.6% increase since baseline – an encouraging trend.

Foundational Assets at Birth

- Mean index score across 12 well-being indicators remains stable (9.7 vs. 9.8 baseline).

ALASKA SCORECARD 2024

Key Issues Impacting Alaska Mental Health Trust Beneficiaries

INDICATOR	LATEST U.S. DATA	LATEST ALASKA DATA	AVG. BASELINE ALASKA DATA	CHANGE FROM AVG. BASELINE
EARLY CHILDHOOD				
1. Percentage of children who received a developmental screening using a parent-completed screening tool in the past year (ages 9 months to 35 months)	35.6% (2022-2023)	41.7% (2022-2023)	43.6% (2016-2019)	-1.9%
2. Percentage of incoming students who regulate their feelings and impulses 80% of the time or more (grades K-1)	*	47.1% (2023-2024)	47.3% (2017-2020)	-0.2%
3. Percentage of women who recently delivered a live birth who have a strong social support system during the postpartum period	*	77.8% (2022)	72.2% (2016-2018)	+5.6%
4. Mean index score of (12) indicators associated with child health and well-being that are present at birth	*	9.7 (2023)	9.8 (2017-2019)	-0.1
5. Mean index score of (12) indicators associated with child health and well-being that are present at birth	*	9.7 (2023)	9.8 (2017-2019)	-0.1



Alaska Scorecard 2024

School-Age Well-Being

♥ 70% of students report favorable connectedness and belonging

🏠 59% of students report favorable school safety and peer climate



A majority of Alaska students feel connected and safe at school – key protective factors supporting youth mental health.

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Forecast

- New Strategic Plan to guide our work & projects
 - Screening
 - Culturally grounded prevention
 - Family-centered Supports
 - Access to treatment and crisis services
 - Workforce development

- FY28-FY29 budget



Questions?

