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Feds award \$224,000 to Alaska for adoptions

Funds will be used to enhance services for foster child adoptions

(Anchorage, AK) — The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has awarded \$224,000 to Alaska to help increase the number of children adopted from foster care.

A 2008 law, the Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act, revamped adoption incentives to encourage states to find loving adoptive homes for foster children who need them — particularly older children and children with special needs.

This is the second year in a row that Alaska has received Adoption Incentive funds. The state's Office of Children's Services received \$194,000 in Adoption Incentive funds in 2008.

That year, adoptions in the state increased 12.6 percent, from 247 to 278. In 2009, adoptions increased 18.3 percent, to 329.

“Alaskans should be proud that our state has received this award for the second year,” said Tammy Sandoval, Director of the Office of Children's Services. “All children deserve safe and healthy homes. These funds will help us continue our work to make that a reality for every child in need.”

Once a state receives adoption incentive dollars, it is free to use the money on anything related to adoptions, such as recruitment, adoption services or training.

This year, Adoption Incentive awards totaling \$35 million were given to 38 states and Puerto Rico. States use the funds from the Adoption Incentive award to enhance their programs for abused and neglected children. The Adoption Incentives program was originally created as part of the Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997.

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