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Member of the National League of Cities and the National Association of Counties

The Honorable Natasha von Imhof
Senate Finance Subcommittee: DHSS
Alaska State Legislature

February 10, 2021

Senator von Imhof,

We want to highlight our support of the Governor's inclusion of full funding for the Human Service Community Matching Grants and Community Initiative Match Grants within the DHSS budget. Both of these augment and leverage local government funding in support of service delivery within Alaska's communities.

While most local governments aren't directly impacted by this budget, we know that indirectly local governments depend on the Department's programs to provide essential services to Alaskans. Below is a short list of priorities that AML members identified within that budget, to either restore funding to last year's levels or keep whole:

- Alaska Pioneer Homes
- Behavioral Health Treatment and Recovery
- Youth Facilities
- Public Assistance
- Senior Benefits
- Public Health

Mental health services have been vital during COVID as people struggled with a variety of needs. These services will continue to be needed as we continue to navigate through the pandemic. At the same time, AML would like to voice our support for the State to build on its public health record during the pandemic by applying the same focus to the many other issues that confront us. Attached is a resolution in support of a comprehensive statewide initiative to support public health. We know that falls outside the remit of this subcommittee, but it is worth highlighting as we work to ensure the Department has what it needs to support these goals.

Senator, it may also be worthwhile learning about the Department's efforts to implement the Supplemental Emergency Medical Transport (SEMT) program as required by law (<http://www.akleg.gov/PDF/30/Bills/HB0176Z.PDF>).

Thank you for your attention to these requests, and consideration of the needs of Alaska's local governments.

Respectfully,

Nils Andreassen
Executive Director