



Alaska Reentry & Justice Partnership

A statewide coalition of individuals and organizations that support justice-involved Alaskans at all phases of their justice involvement. Members include people with lived experience, family members, reentry coalitions, reentry case managers, community providers, local and statewide organizations.

SUPPORT ACCESS TO DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY TO BETTER SERVE JUSTICE-INVOLVED ALASKANS

The Alaska Reentry & Justice Partnership supports expanding access to digital resources in Alaska’s judicial and correctional systems, including working with communities, to better serve justice-involved Alaskans at all phases of their justice-involvement—pretrial, incarceration, and reentry.

Jurisdictions across the United States are using digital technology to safely and securely deliver rehabilitative programming and activities through video-conferencing, closed circuit television channels, tablets, distance learning, and more. Improved digital solutions means improved access to education and training, treatment and recovery services, housing and employment assistance, reentry and transitional planning, faith-based, peer support, tribal, visitation, and more.

Access to community supports and services increases the likelihood of stability and success in the community, reduced recidivism, safer communities, and reduced need for more costly services, like emergency medical services, law enforcement, hospitals, jails, and prisons.

BACKGROUND:

Before COVID, community providers and volunteers were partnering with DOC, DHSS, and the Courts to provide access to an array of rehabilitative “in-reach” services and supports for incarcerated Alaskans, Alaskans awaiting trial or returning to the community after incarceration. These community supports were suspended or curtailed in March 2020, and have not returned to their previous levels.

DOC has worked hard throughout the pandemic to provide access to rehabilitative programming within the facilities—including self-study, books, entertainment, arts and crafts, video programming, and more, but restrictions on small gatherings has curtailed in-person classes and group sessions inside the facilities.

Justice-involved Alaskans continue to experience difficulty accessing housing, employment, treatment, and recovery services, which impacts their ability to fulfill the conditions of their release/probation/parole. In-person appointments, substance use testing, accessing ID and social security cards, and other activities, are difficult to manage without a phone or computer.

These challenges put justice-involved Alaskans at greater risk for relapse, homelessness, and/or recidivating.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Identify technological gaps and barriers in current systems that impact timely access to community access to supports, services, and rehabilitative programming for justice-involved Alaskans.
- Research and implement safe and secure digital solutions for improved community in-reach, visitation, and reentry planning.
- Identify funding sources for digital infrastructure, hardware, software, and technical assistance.