



Alaska Reentry Partnership

A statewide coalition of individuals and organizations promoting success for justice-involved Alaskans at all phases of their involvement—pretrial, incarceration, reentry. Members include people with lived experience, family members, reentry coordinators and reentry case managers, community providers, state and local agencies.

Reducing Recidivism through Community Support Services

Supporting access to supports and improved supervision to increase public safety

About 95% of all incarcerated Alaskans will serve their time and be released back to a local community.¹ The key to their stability and success after incarceration is access to community supports and services.

Justice-involved Alaskans are best served with community reentry support—such as housing and employment assistance, treatment and recovery, education and training, peer support, family reunification, faith-based, and Tribal support, all of which have shown to reduce the likelihood of new criminal activity (recidivism).²

An Alaskan study published in the *Journal of Community Safety and Wellbeing*, showed that evidence-based community-based programs can result in “significant improvement” and lower re-offense rates— 21.8%, down from the statewide recidivism rate of 66.4%. The study showed roughly a \$5.27 value for every \$1 spent.³

With 80% of incarcerated Alaskans experiencing a substance use disorder,⁴ and 65% experiencing a diagnosable mental health disorder,⁵ the Alaska Department of Corrections (DOC) is, by default, the largest provider of behavioral health services in Alaska.

The Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority reports that Trust beneficiaries (people with behavioral health disorders, brain injury, intellectual-developmental disabilities, and dementia) are at increased risk for involvement with the criminal justice system. Trust beneficiaries account for more than 40% of Alaska incarcerations each year, with the median length of stay being significantly longer than for other inmates⁶—making it more likely they will be served long-term in institutional care.

It is less expensive and more stabilizing to serve people through community supports and services, than institutional care, such as Alaska Psychiatric Institute (API) or the Department of Corrections.

Comparing outpatient services provided by community behavioral health centers, clinics, and psychologists (average cost per day, \$174 per person) to inpatient psychiatric treatment at API (average cost per day, \$1,445 per person)⁷ or \$223 average daily cost for prison bed,⁸ it is less expensive to serve people with disabilities in the community than in institutional care.

While DOC can provide in-custody rehabilitative programs and reentry support, it is through their expanded with other state agencies and community providers that improve outcomes through the “warm hand-off” and access to supports and services in the community, resulting in reduced recidivism, increased public safety, reduced spending, and safer communities.

The State of Alaska Division of Behavioral Health (DBH) manages the state’s Recidivism Reduction funds for community-based support services, which increase the likelihood of successful reentry to the community and reduced likelihood of re-offending.”⁹

Current efforts underway in Alaska:

- **Community Reentry Coalitions** in Anchorage, Mat-Su, Fairbanks, Juneau, Kenai, Dillingham, Kodiak, Ketchikan, and Nome, support individuals by addressing individual needs for successful reentry. Reentry coalitions provide coordination with local agencies, housing, employment, and treatment resources, Tribal, faith-based, and business

organizations, to address barriers and promote practices that increase the likelihood of stability and successful reentry.

- **Reentry Case Managers.** Both DOC-funded institutional probation officers and DBH-funded community reentry case managers partner to provide pre-release planning and the link to community support services.
 - **Treatment Inside Prisons and Halfway Houses.** DOC provides mental health and substance use treatment inside prisons and halfway houses. Treatment services are the foundation for sobriety and success after returning to the community.
 - **Improved Prison Population Management Practices.** DOC prioritizes, when appropriate, separating low-level offenders from serious violent offenders, to prevent exposure to more serious anti-social and criminal behaviors. A large body of research shows that mixing low-level misdemeanants with high-level criminal offenders results in the low-level offenders returning to the community at higher risk for committing new crimes.¹⁰
 - **Strengthened Community Supervision During Pretrial Phase.** DOC's Pretrial Enforcement Division provides supervision
- to defendants awaiting resolution of their criminal case, including access to stabilizing factors that increase the likelihood of stability, including housing and access to treatment, increasing the likelihood of compliance with conditions of release.
 - **Therapeutic Courts.** Therapeutic courts offer court-supervised probation and rehabilitation support for people with mental illness, addiction, and other disorders. Specially-trained probation officers offer intensive case management and assistance for maintaining housing, employment, treatment and recovery, to support court participants in carrying out the obligations of their probation.
 - **Recidivism Reduction Fund.** 50% of the revenue collected from the state's marijuana taxes has been directed to services and programs that provide: 1) reentry case management funded through DBH for reentry planning and support; 2) substance use disorder treatment within DOC facilities; and 3) violence prevention programs through the Council on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault. These funds promote access to rehabilitative treatment and support, improved public safety, and reduced criminal recidivism.

¹ Alaska Department of Corrections presentation to Alaska State Legislature, March 2025.

^{2, 3} "Reducing Criminal Recidivism in Alaska: The Set Free Model," Ryan Ray and Alli Madison, *Journal of Community Safety and Wellbeing*, September 2023. https://www.akleg.gov/basis/get_documents.asp?session=33&docid=44645

⁴ Alaska Department of Corrections presentation to the Alaska House State Affairs Committee, March 4, 2025. https://www.akleg.gov/basis/get_documents.asp?session=34&docid=2265

⁵ *Trust Beneficiaries in Alaska's Department of Corrections*, Hornby Zeller Associates (May 2014), (pii). <http://mhtrust.org/mhtawp/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/ADOC-TrustBeneficiaries-May-2014-FINAL-PRINT.pdf>

⁶ *Trust Beneficiaries in Alaska's Department of Corrections*, Hornby Zeller Associates (May 2014), (pii). <http://mhtrust.org/mhtawp/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/ADOC-TrustBeneficiaries-May-2014-FINAL-PRINT.pdf>

⁷ *Division of Behavioral Health Overview*, Presentation to the Alaska Legislature, March 11, 2019.

⁸ *The Cost of Crime: Could the State Reduce Future Crime and Save Money by Expanding Education and Treatment Programs* ISER Report, UAA, January 2009.

⁹ "Recidivism Reduction: Increasing the Number of Community-Based Support Services Available to Reentrants," State of Alaska Department of Health, February 2026.

¹⁰ "Policy Reforms Can Strengthen Community Supervision" Pew Charitable Trusts, April 2020.