

**Anchorage Reentry Coalition**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**8/25/23**  
**Hosted online via Zoom**

**Representatives in attendance included those from the following organizations/groups:**

Alaska Department of Corrections (Anchorage Probation; Spring Creek Correctional Center; Reentry Unit; HARS); Alaska VA; Running Free Alaska; NeighborWorks Alaska; Cook Inlet Tribal Council (Adult Reentry Program & Chanlyut); Partners for Progress/Partners Reentry Center; Alaska CHARR; Henning, Inc.; Get By; Project Rebound, Cal-Poly Humboldt; The Arc of Anchorage; Dept. of Health (DBH; Breast & Cervical Cancer Screening); Mat-Su Reentry Coalition; Fairbanks Reentry Coalition; True North Recovery; GEO Group, Cordova Center; Southcentral Foundation, Four Directions; Alaska Public Defender Agency; Alaska Behavioral Health; Alaska Digital Equity Project; Supporting Our Loved Ones Group; Restorative and Reentry Services; Anchorage Health Department; Alaska Works Partnership; State of Alaska (Sen. Claman & Office of Sen. Dunbar); New Life Development, Safe Families Project; Anchorage Public Library; AK Reentry Partnership; Prison Fellowship Academy; UAA, Alaska Center for Human Development

Total Attendees: 51

**Jonathan Pistotnik (jpistotnik@nwalaska.org), Coalition Coordinator, Anchorage Reentry Coalition**

Mr. Pistotnik opened the meeting and introduced the speakers and meeting agenda.

**Sen. Matt Claman (sen.matt.claman@akleg.gov) - Alaska Criminal Justice Data Analysis Commission Overview -**

Firstly, Sen. Claman expressed his appreciation for the work of the community to help those returning from incarceration. Sen. Claman explained that the Alaska Criminal Justice Data Analysis Commission (DAC) cannot totally be separated from the Alaska Criminal Justice Commission (ACJC) which preceded it; a brief history was given regarding major policy events going back to 2014 when the AK Legislature established the ACJC for the purposes of examining criminal justice topics and making recommendations to improve public safety outcomes and to increase efficiencies within the criminal justice system. Sen. Claman described the state of the system at that time and stated that the ACJC also had a role in monitoring enacted changes and reporting out to the Legislature. Sen. Claman stated that subsequent to the establishment of the ACJC, at least nine criminal justice bills were passed including SB 91, SB 54, SB 55, HB 312, SB 120, HB 14, HB 172, HB 325, HB 226, HB 291.

Sen. Claman explained that the ACJC sunset and there was a recommendation that it continue to function as a body with a focus on data analysis, but halt with making recommendations. It was explained that since the passage of major justice reforms in 2016 that many recommendations coming from the ACJC were not being implemented or pursued; therefore, the recommendation was for the DAC to continue with the data analysis function but for the body to not suggest recommendations unless specifically asked to do so. Sen. Claman explained how members of the body are assigned (including fewer Governor appointments), and that there is a representative that has lived experience and successfully reintegrated into the community. Sen. Claman explained that he is the Chair of the DAC however does not have a voting seat and that the sunset date of the DAC is 2029. The DAC is working to complete a year-end report that will be published Nov 1.

Sen. Claman explained that at DAC meetings there are public comment periods for people to weigh in and provide feedback, however a more effective method for providing feedback or suggested areas of focus would be to submit

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letters from the reentry coalitions as a body may; it was stated this could be more impactful than a few individual people providing suggestions or testimony. Sen. Claman stated that the DAC has discussed program evaluation and that it is an area of interest. The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday August 31.

[More information about the DAC can be found here: <https://www.ajc.state.ak.us/datacommission/index.html>]

**DOC Reentry Data for CY22 & Feedback Activity- Jonathan Pistotnik (jpistotnik@nwalska.org), Coalition Coordinator, Anchorage Reentry Coalition**

Mr. Pistotnik explained that each year DOC provides the reentry coalition coordinators with a dataset containing reentry data. Data is organized by community/geographic area; it is relatively simple and therefore one should be cautious making inferences into the data. Mr. Pistotnik stated that he has four years of data and is able to make some comparisons and examine some trends. Mr. Pistotnik reviewed several slides which contained data from CY22 on: unique releases from DOC on an annual basis; annual unique releases annually by AK community; Anchorage-specific releases based on age, race, sex, offense level (misdemeanor vs felony), and type of offense (violent vs non-violent); and also a graph pulled from the “Recidivism Reduction Joint Annual Report Fiscal Year 2022 July 1, 2021 – June 30, 2022” which detailed the state’s current recidivism rates and is current at about 58%. Mr. Pistotnik emphasized that the primary takeaway of the data is that it justifies the need for continued investments in services and supports for reentry, and most certainly validates the need for such services in Anchorage. Mr. Pistotnik encouraged people to use this data when seeking grant funds or justifying programming to support reentry; this data can be shared and used freely.

Ms. Rhoades commented that the uptick in the number of women releasing sounds right, and explained that it is her understanding that there are people that may be moving through the system (e.g. pre-trial, EM, bailing out, etc.) and because of the circumstances and duration inside, may not be meeting with DOC staff or receiving reentry assistance planning prior to their release. Ms. Rhoades added that housing for women is severely lacking, and for those that are trying to release or are released on PED that there are serious challenges with accessing services, particularly without an advocate; there are some serious holes and impediments within the DOC system that continue to limit access to services such as DOC Reentry funding and other sources. Ms. Rhoades stated that she believes this coalition and DOC have been very conservative in defining “reentry” and that it should be inclusive of other people that are involved in the justice system in other forms; Mr. Pistotnik concurred. Ms. Schenkenberger also acknowledged the need to help those out on bail or in a pre-trial status.

*[The presentation has been included with the meeting notes]*

Mr. Pistotnik also utilized the poll function on Zoom to query the audience. It was explained that he had received a letter from a group of men at one of the institutions, and in it there was a request for advice on “the most important information for releasees to have when stepping out the door.” Mr. Pistotnik explained that he wanted the audience to weigh in and provide their own insights to this query; a few minutes were given to the audience to provide responses to this topic. Mr. Pistotnik explained that he would take the results and share them with both the coalition and also the group that requested the information. Mr. Pistotnik also explained that he thought this feedback could also prove useful to staff and advocates that serve as

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“gatekeepers” and are based inside the institutions, particularly those institutions outside of Anchorage. The 27 responses are provided below; note that some responses have been edited for clarity.

***What are some of the most information pieces of information that someone should have prior to their release to the community?***

- Housing resources
- Resources available in the community (both government & private/non-profit) that can guide them to housing and employment. Preparing those incarcerated for reentry should start the day after they are sentenced. Their entire term of incarceration should be about preparing them for reentering society.
- Information on vouchers for bus passes, clothes, phone. Clear application processes, including contact numbers and drop-off places, for the resources available re: housing, support.
- What to expect, addresses of where to go if they need particular services.
- How to collect their forms identification (DL, SSC, BC). How to access resources; housing, counseling, general assistance.
- A list of local resources to reach out to for support. Information on housing and re-entry agencies. Who to ask for help and support from. A list of local places that offer meals and shelter (if needed). How to apply for medical insurance and or who to contact for a social security card, ID and birth certificate if needed.
- Housing, Employment, Food Security (food banks, SNAP), Clothing/Tools for the job, Personal identity documents, Community connectivity (Family, Sponsors, Mentors, Local Church).
- Information regarding emergency housing options if they do not have a place to release to and access to medical and mental health services they can qualify for
- Recovery Support Information, including meetings, support organizations and networks. Employment and career path information and connection to resources that specifically help with this. Information for resources based on eligibility so the individual doesn't waste time and resources applying for assistance to programs they won't be approved for.
- Support services available, Job training, community support like Churches and recovery services like AA or NA.
- Housing (Placement and Funding identified, short term or long term) -Self Sufficiency (Benefits, Employment Identified, next steps to achieve) -Treatment (Physical, Subx, BH,) -Community Orientation (where's the PO Office, where applicable programs are, Bus Lines)
- Access to care, housing , and employment. More often than not individuals do not have permanent supportive housing in place which contributes to our homeless population and recidivism rates.
- Peer Support Group/Organization information for the diferent release areas across the State. Also, folks have asked us about organizations that provide clothing for those returning.
- Name and contact of Reentry Center/Coalition to assist them before release. Released with AK ID that is accepted by banks, Social Security, etc.. Released with a change of basic clothing, phone, and food card
- Yes, to apply for Public Assistance. Sometimes a Client/release Inmate. Have trouble getting into treatment because they don't have a active Medicaid and sometimes if they get into a transitional housing they need food stamps to get something to eat.
- Access to non-judgmental support, especially for SO's. One of the things I've noticed the most is that oftentimes they are the ones who end up with the least amount of support due to their criminal history.

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- It would be helpful if the institution would provide a list of contact names and numbers for any groups that are providing services inside the institution as part of a release packet.
- Resources for support groups and mental health, organizations that help with families-family reunification can be hard without the proper resources, knowing where to go when walking out the door is important too. someone to follow up with if they have questions and resources for families for those getting out.....
- If there is a case management program in your community that can provide reentry case management services. They are available in Nome, Anchorage, Wasilla, Fairbanks, Juneau, Dillingham and Ketchikan and soon to be Kenai.
- ID, who to contact for assistance, where to report, the list goes on.
- Emergency access info if you leave with nothing: Bus routes and where to get bus pass 3rd Ave Nav Center Partners Reentry Center If you have more time to plan: Housing info, funding for housing info, how and where to continue any meds you are released with, how to get Medication Assisted Treatment meds either before leaving custody and once out
- Housing Options; Transportation, Getting back to their village if need to;
- 211, reentry assistance contact info, and other "How to find assistance" resources
- A case manager who can facilitate reentry services, including education
- community resources for their particular community- food banks, health info, job services. Ideally it's prescriptive to the info they want/need. Everyone is so different and they release everywhere.
- More than what information, just have a plan for what you need to complete and accomplish when you release. Everyone is going to be in a different situation when they release so giving it some thought and preparing for your return as best you can, that is what will help you set yourself up for success. Expect that things won't go exactly as planned and that you will encounter barriers; prepare yourself mentally for some hardship and for the fact that things will not always proceed as planned. At times you will have to be persistent and strong in the face of hardship.
- What we've struggled the most with lately with some of our recently released clients is getting their personal documentation (birth certificates, state ID, social security cards, etc.). These docs are the gateway to all services and programs. The DOC ID works for a lot of purposes but not all of them so we've found that the need for a state ID card is still there. Having a plan in place for obtaining these documents prior to release is pretty critical and that plan should include how to pay the fees for getting those. For example, DOC will cover or arrange a waiver of DMV fees for getting the state ID for a period of time (I think it's 30 days after release) but after that they can't help.

**Other Updates & Other Business**

**Paul Williams, Reentry Case Manager at NeighborWorks Alaska (pwilliams@nwalaska.org)** - Mr. Williams introduced himself and explained that he is excited to start implementing this new reentry program at NeighborWorks Alaska. Mr. Pistotnik added that literature and more details about this program are forthcoming and told the audience to be on the lookout for more information.

**Barbar Mongar, Coalition Coordinator for the Mat-Su Reentry Coalition (barbara.mongar@valleycharities.org)** – Ms. Mongar announced that the Mat-Su Reentry Summit will be held in Wasilla and in-person at the Menard Center on Sept. 21-22. It is free and is an all day-event. There are four out-of-state, national speakers that are coming in for the summit including: Dr. Tolliny Rankins, Rodney Rankins, Ian Bick, Sheila Bruno. DOC Commissioner Jen

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Winkleman is also scheduled to speak as well. Registration link: <https://whova.com/web/5mXqWINUk--OEFq5xIErLX9epJ%40IK%40Q0kGXxGzYzPUs%3D/>

**Daniel Perkins, Program Manager at Chanlyut (dgperkins@citci.org)** – Mr. Perkins reminded the group that the Chanlyut program is now a co-ed program, and that they frequently have open beds for females. Chanlyut is a level 3.1 program; someone coming out of incarceration or on ankle monitor are able to participate in the program so long as they have an assessment demonstrating they are eligible for a 3.1 program. It is an 8-week program, with high intensity support with a focus on stabilization, treatment, workforce readiness and development.

**Amanda Woody, Program Coordinator at Division of Behavioral Health, State of Alaska (amanda.woody@alaska.gov)** – Ms. Woody oversees the Recidivism Reduction & Reentry Grants administered through DBH. She stated that she has begun the process of making site visits to grantees around the states, with the intention of listening and becoming more familiar with the staff, programs, partners, and communities being serviced by these grants in the lead up to the grant RFPs becoming competitive for FY25.

**Amy Hankins, Alaska Digital Equity Project (ahankins@alaskacf.org)** - Ms. Hankins explained that the project is focused on reducing the barriers that underserved populations face in terms of accessing digital technology, and one of the target populations of this project are incarcerated people. It was stated that she has had the opportunity to gather information from community stakeholders and also conduct some focus groups with formerly incarcerated people to inform the Digital Equity Plan, but because of IRB rules they were not able to go inside any correctional facility. Ms. Hankins stated that the initial draft of this plan will be issued in about three weeks and that there will be a public comment period of 30 days. Ms. Hankins encouraged people to provide feedback on the draft. Website: <https://broadbandforalaskans.org/>.

**Michael Fletcher, Director of the Cordova Center (michael.fletcher@geogroup.com)** - Mr. Fletcher explained that the Cordova Center is a halfway house that houses about 105 Alaska DOC residents, as well as Federal BOP residents. Mr. Fletcher offered that he is welcoming of partnership and feedback. He stated that they have five case workers and a drug and alcohol counselor that work with residents.

**Joanna Jardin, Alaska Works Partnership (joanna@alaskaworks.org)** - Alaska Works Partnership (AWP) offers pre-apprenticeship training for construction industry jobs. Training is free and AWP offers wrap-around supports (e.g. rent, funding for tools, etc.), resume writing, and job placement assistance. Ms. Jardin stated that AWP has restarted carpentry training inside Hiland as of July. Currently there are many employment opportunities within the skilled trades, and AWP has active connections to employers that will hire people despite a possible conviction. Website: <https://www.alaskaworks.org/>

**Angela Hall, Supporting Our Loved Ones Group & Alaska Prison Project (sologrouplady@gmail.com)** – Ms. Hall introduced an upcoming training, “Don’t Look Back. Advocate Forward” scheduled for September 12 from 9-4PM.

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It is a specialized training for formerly incarcerated people, with the intent of training people with lived experience how to advocate for themselves. There are 15 slots available, however there will be other opportunities to participate in the future. Hoping to build a network of advocates with lived experience that can speak to proposed legislation. Event link: <https://www.acluak.org/en/events/dont-look-back-advocate-forward>. Also upcoming is DEcarcerated 2 on Oct 27 at Williwaw Social, which aims to of bring the community together and to humanize people that are currently incarcerated; more details to follow.

**Kara Nelson, COO True North Recovery (kara@tnrak.org)** - Ms. Nelson stated that True North Recovery has programs in both Wasilla and Fairbanks; it holds the Reducing Recidivism grant in Fairbanks, operates out-patient treatment in Fairbanks, and will be opening a new 3.1 treatment program in the next few months. Currently in Wasilla, there is the Day One Center which houses Dylans Place, a 3.2 withdrawal management program; Ms. Nelson stated that 100 individuals have accessed this program and that it is really uplifting to see people successfully move through detox into other treatment programs. Ms. Nelson stated that they have a total of 23 treatment beds (men & women), and they have recovery housing for men and women. Ms. Nelson stated that True North is also engaged in providing crisis response services in the Mat-Su Borough, and that they also have the Launch Pad which offers people an opportunity to drop in and connect with a case manager or peer support. Ms. Nelson stated that their program accepts people currently in a treatment program, on EM, pre-trial, and both men and women.

**Amanda Hillberry, Public Defender Agency (amanda.hillberry@alaska.gov)** - The AmeriCorps Program is a part of the Holistic Defense Project; there are AmeriCorps volunteers located throughout the state that are helping justice involved folks with linking to local resources and aiding in the stabilization of those they are assisting. Assistance is usually aimed at people in pre-trial, but can include some people on parole.

**Kuuiipo Miramontes, Adult Reentry, CITC Recovery Services (kuuiipo.miramontes@anjc.net)** - Ms. Miramontes stated that the Adult Reentry Program has moved from ANJC over to CITC within the Recovery & Reentry Services. Ms. Miramontes explained that has two new staff members, Paul Fellner and D'Coursey Reynolds, who works on-site at PRC and serves as the bridge between PRC and CITC Recovery Services. Ms. Allizon Urrita, Case Manager, also introduced herself to the group and is with CITC . It was explained that their team is interested in engaging in outreach and going inside the DOC facilities to connect with individuals pre-release and to support their return to the community, and added that she and Paul are people with lived experience and that her team is passionate about this work. Ms. Miramontes added that ANJC still exists however reentry services are not a part of their work, and that their team will receive new email addresses at the start of the new fiscal year.

**Steve Ladwig, Project Rebound at Cal Poly Humboldt (sml4@humboldt.edu)** – Project Rebound supports formerly incarcerated students in higher education and is bringing a bachelors degree program to their local maximum security prison. Mr. Ladwig, along with two staff working with Project Rebound (Mark Taylor and Tony Wallin-Sato) will be visiting Anchorage in September, and while they are here they are interested in connecting with housing

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programs to help inform their own efforts; there is interest in creating a supportive transitional housing component for Project Rebound students and they are interested in learning about the different ways of approaching the work.

**Shanda Smith, Project Manager, Safe Families Project (ssmith@newlifeak.org)** – Ms. Smith explained that the Safe Families Project is a new program through New Life Development and that the cohort consists of 6 women with children 13 years and younger. It is a residential service that also makes available other wrap-around services, including facilitating connections to employment, parenting courses, HS Diploma/GED, transition to long-term housing placement upon completion, and more. It was explained that the target population includes women that have been formerly incarcerated, exiting treatment, otherwise homeless, or those fleeing domestic violence. It was stated that the cohort is currently full.

**Doreen Schenkenberger, CEO at Partners for Progress (dschenk@pfpalaska.org)** – Ms. Schenkenberger explained that Partners Reentry Center can assist individuals with housing, employment, and access to other service for up to six months; there is also a housing stability program and support for individuals that are homeless. There is also support for the Therapeutic Courts and for a statewide peer support network. It was announced that the 2023 Success Inside Out event is upcoming; this event is like a large resource fair put on inside Hiland Mountain and is sponsored by the National Association of Women Judges, DOC, and Partners For Progress. It was added that another component of the event is connecting women that will be releasing to mentors in the community. It was suggested that a similar type of event would be useful inside the men’s facilities. It was stated that over 1,000 people were served last year at PRC, and that there is interest in further expanding services. Lastly, it was stated that there is an open NA meeting that takes place at PRC every Thursday at 6:30pm.

**Christina Shadura, Reentry Planner at ACC/Partners For Progress (christina.shadura@alaska.gov)** - It was stated that there is a Resource Board that is located in the entry way at ACC, and that it has flyers and program descriptions for various services for people to access as they go in or out of the lobby of the jail. Mr. Pistotnik added that he had the opportunity to visit ACC after about 3.5 years and that Ms. Shadura also is making resources and information available on the inside for the men there as well; those classes occur on Wednesdays. Resources and applications currently available span the array of safety net programs and services in the community that this population may need. Ms. Schenkenberger added that PRC has a resource planner located at Palmer Correctional and that there is another position (yet to be filled) at Goose Creek.

**Stacie Williamson, Program Coordinator with DOC Reentry (stacie.williamson@alaska.gov / doc.reentry@alaska.gov)** – Ms. Williamson added that there are still reentry services available through the DOC Reentry Unit and that they still have two open positions (Program Manager and Criminal Justice Planner); there is a 1-page application that one can submit for assistance through DOC Reentry and submitting that directly to Ms. Williamson is currently the best method at this time.

**Next Meeting**  
**October 26, 2023**