

PREVENTION OF INCARCERATION AND RECIDIVISM IMPACTING ALASKA NATIVE PEOPLE

FEB. 2026 PROJECT UPDATE



Thank you for participating in our research study!

With your help, we completed 25 interviews and 83 surveys!

Introduction

Historic and ongoing colonialism has forced Alaska Native people through dramatic changes, resulting in experiences of poverty, trauma, homelessness, and substance abuse that contribute to higher rates of incarceration and recidivism. Leveraging strengths among Alaska Native people, such as culture and community connection, will help reduce rates of incarceration and recidivism among Alaska Native people.

This research study was commissioned by the Alaska State Legislature to investigate pathways to prevent disproportionate incarceration of Alaska Native people.

Survey Participants' Top Priorities

<u>Rank</u>	<u>Intervention Theme</u>	<u>%</u>
1	Mental Health	55.4%
2	Housing Access	44.6%
3	Workforce, Education & Mentorship	41.0%

Selected Interview Quote

"A lot of these people who are incarcerated are in the prime of their lives where they should be out doing traditional hunting, fishing, and gathering. And they're not. Because you're in jail. And then the state of Alaska has to provide food stamps and welfare payments to the parents and survivors. And be basically creating dependency where none existed before. So it's a vicious cycle."

"If you are not properly resourcing your re-entrants for the requirements that you are putting on them, you are setting them up to fail."



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Preliminary Recommendations

Early Interventions with Youth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emphasize support at the earliest possible timeframe, including prenatal care • Support families by offering free or reduced cost culturally-relevant childcare and home visit programs for young children, and culturally grounded parenting support and mentorship • Invest in early childhood and youth mental health screening, especially in rural communities
Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand reentry housing that provides integrated services, such as substance misuse treatment, mental health care, and job support • Provide support for tenant success workshops and similar educational programs • Allow remote probation and parole supervision so individuals can live where housing exists
Mental Health Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emphasize programmatic stability of mental health treatment through adequate and consistent funding and staffing • Support trauma-engaged, culturally responsive services, including Elder involvement and cultural identity programming • Expand Medicaid and other reimbursement pathways to support Alaska Native-led service models
Substance Misuse Treatment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide substance misuse diagnosis and treatment options for all incarcerated persons • Increase funding for community-based, Alaska Native-led treatment programs • Reduce wait times and expand telehealth options, particularly for rural communities
Tribal Courts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand state support for Tribal Courts, therapeutic courts, and diversion programs, including staffing and infrastructure • Expand the case purview of Tribal Courts to include additional types of offenses and probation monitoring • Improve overall coordination between state courts, law enforcement, and Tribal justice systems
Workforce, Education, and Mentorship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broaden recruitment efforts for Alaska Native people in criminal justice and legal careers, and mental health and substance misuse careers • Mandate frequent and effective training on Alaska Native culture at every stage of criminal justice and legal education in Alaska • Facilitate mentorship opportunities for young Alaska Native boys and men to support cultural connections with Elders and community