

Anchorage Reentry Coalition
Meeting Minutes
9/29/22
Hosted online via Zoom

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

Alaska Department of Corrections (Anchorage Probation; Spring Creek Correctional Center); Southcentral Foundation, Family Wellness Warriors; Alaska VA; Alaska Native Justice Center (Youth Reentry Program; Adult Reentry Program); ACLU of Alaska; Dept. of Health (DBH; Breast & Cervical Cancer Screening); Recover Alaska; NeighborWorks Alaska; Alaska Public Defender Agency; Christian Health Associates; Alaska Mental Health Board; Get By; Project Rebound; Henning, Inc.; Running Free Alaska; Alaska Legal Services Corporation; Alaska CHARR; UAA; Kenai Peninsula Reentry Coalition; CITC, Recovery Services; Oak House; Geo, Midtown Center; YWCA Alaska; Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

Estimated Total Attendees: 44

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

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

Amanda Woody, Program Coordinator for Reentry and Recidivism Reduction Grants, SOA Division of Behavioral Health (Amanda.woody@alaska.gov)

Ms. Woody gave a presentation about the Recidivism Reduction Grant and provided an overview of what it entails, and how the Division of Behavioral Health (DBH) is involved in supporting reentry efforts across Alaska. Ms. Woody began by emphasizing the fact that the reentry population moves around and can be transient, and that there are resources located around the state to help this population. Ms. Woody proceeded by covering the five practice areas of reentry case management that guide the program: connecting with people pre and post-release; utilizing risk assessments to guide service delivery and engagement based on the needs of the individual; providing participant-centered financial and non-financial services and support; and facilitating a plan for aftercare. Ms. Woody explained that each case manager connected with this grant has different access to resources and services, which ties back both to the organization that they operate out of and also the communities in which they are working; the intention is that case managers help facilitate access to a comprehensive range of services and resources.

Ms. Woody shared a snapshot of the intended timeline by which a case manager and client work together, starting with a referral to this program 90 days before release, pre-release contacts between case manager and client, followed by post-release services and engagement, followed by aftercare planning. Ms. Woody explained that COVID-19 has disrupted the ability to engage in pre-release contacts between clients and case managers. Ms. Woody explained that there are case managers funded through this grant in Anchorage, Mat-Su, Fairbanks, Nome, Kenai area, Bristol Bay, Juneau and that they are all currently active in their respective communities. It was explained that client eligibility is based on releasing to a community with a case manager, and having an LSI-R score of 19 or higher or having a sex offense conviction. It was stated that the intention is to engage with higher risk and higher need individuals.

Ms. Woody explained that funding for this grant originates from taxes on Marijuana sales: 50% of tax revenue goes to different departments for recidivism reduction efforts and is inclusive of this particular grant. Ms. Woody

Anchorage Reentry Coalition
Meeting Minutes
9/29/22
Hosted online via Zoom

explained that these grants would become competitive again for FY24, and that there is an intention to expand this grant to include the Bethel community. It was stated that there has been an effort to enhance data collection and reporting, including recidivism rates and a deeper examination of client needs. It was stated that food insecurity has been cited as a priority area of need among clients. Ms. Woody reiterated that the program is fully staffed again and that efforts are underway to get people connected and build the necessary relationships in order to implement the program. It was stated that this resource and this network is being implemented in collaboration with DOC to promote and facilitate reentry.

[slides will accompany the notes and are available upon request]

- *Original ADN Article* - <https://www.adn.com/alaska-marijuana/2021/08/13/curious-alaska-where-does-the-money-from-marijuana-taxes-go/>
- *Non-paywall link to article* - <https://correctsuccess.com/taxes/curious-alaska-where-does-the-money-from-marijuana-taxes-go/>

Introduction to Henning, Inc. - Shawn Hayes, Founder (shayes@henninginc.org), Sam Garcia, Peer Support Manager (sgarcia@henninginc.org), Rob Seay, Community Support Advocate
Website: <https://www.henninginc.org/>

Ms. Hayes explained that she has been working in the field of homeless services for almost 10 years, and in December, 2020 Henning, Inc. became a full 501c3 organization. Notably, Henning was approached to oversee 80 units of transitional housing at the Aviator Hotel. Currently, Henning provides services to over 200 people at the Aviator Hotel, to 130 people at the former Guesthouse Inn, and will be overseeing operations at the Sullivan Arena which is set to begin Oct. 1, as well as the Golden Lion.

Ms. Hayes explained that what is unique about their program is that all staff and all board members (with the exception of a board supervisor) are all people that have some form of lived experience, whether they have been formerly incarcerated or involved in the legal system, living in recovery, or having behavioral health challenges. It was explained that these perspectives and experiences helps staff to connect with clients and build relationships, and that those experiences help to shape and grow the organization to meet the needs of those they serve.

Ms. Hayes stated the importance of housing and the need for wrap-around supports, and stated that they also recognize that people with convictions have to compete for housing and that a prior conviction can make it very challenging to secure housing. In that context, Ms. Hayes expressed an interest in pursuing a pilot project that provides housing, peer support and immediately engaging clients in services post-release. It was expressed that there is interest in collaboration with existing programs and services.

Sam Garcia introduced himself and explained that he is living in recovery and has prior involvement with the criminal legal system. Mr. Garcia explained his experience and perspectives on the need for peer support, and stressed the value and importance it can have for those reentering the community and sustaining that support over the long-term. He talked about the value that peer support can have with a client as they are working on building a support network and stability in the lives and that Henning was in a position to take that approach with clients.

Anchorage Reentry Coalition
Meeting Minutes
9/29/22
Hosted online via Zoom

Rob Seay also introduced himself. He stated that he first entered into this work as a peer support specialist and is someone in long-term recovery; he has worked at CITC and also with the Municipality of Anchorage to help oversee operations at the Aviator Hotel. Mr. Seay explained that his experiences in the criminal legal system and his own recovery, helps to shape his engagement with clients and to walk along side clients and help them in tangible ways to navigate systems and access resources. Mr. Seay talked about the professional network that Henning has created, including with the Muni, various services providers, and landlords around the city. Mr. Seay stated that they have master lease agreements and are helping families stay in housing; he shared the story of one particular family and the efforts to help keep them housed. Mr. Seay explained that they want to create partnerships and utilize existing resources in creative ways, and that organizationally there is interest in building out supports for reentry.

Mr. Pistotnik expressed his support for creative solutions to help bridge the gap that exists between the homeless response system and the reentry support system. Ms. Pistotnik asked about Henning overseeing operations at the Sullivan; Ms. Hayes reconfirmed and stated that they would be taking a new approach and put an emphasis on peer support, having housing specialists at the facility, and taking an active role so as to not just warehouse individuals. Ms. Hayes stated that pets would be allowed inside the Sullivan, and that people would begin to be transported from Centennial Park to the Sullivan starting Oct. 1. Mr. Seay re-iterated they have relationships with smaller landlords and are continuing to build those relationships. He explained further that in the very short-term, there was going to be a priority on transitioning people from Centennial Park and into the Sullivan Arena and that the Aviator and Guesthouse are at capacity or very close to it; if there is someone looking for a place to live, discussing it further with the Henning team is an option. It was reiterated that much of this work is new and a lot of it is still being developed. Ms. Hayes spoke further about master leasing, about incentivizing the agreement for the landlord, and that leases could run from 1-5 years if that is appropriate.

Updates & Other Business

*Tony Wallin-Sato & Steve Ladwig, Project Rebound, Cal-Poly Humboldt
(707-477-6640 / projectrebound@humboldt.edu)*

Tony Wallin-Sato expressed gratitude for the ability to share space with folks in this meeting and to hear about the work of the Anchorage community to support reentry. Mr. Wallin-Sato explained that Project Rebound services and provides wrap-around support to formerly incarcerated students across 15 college campuses in California. He stated that his counterparts, including himself, have been formerly incarcerated themselves and emphasized how that is of benefit when connecting with new students and helps to create a welcoming space on campus. Mr. Wallin-Sato stated further that formerly incarcerated people belong in the spaces of higher education; he himself has applied for a PhD program and advocates for others to pursue pathways in higher education. He also explained that they teach inside jails, juvenile hall, and help people “from G.E.D. to PhD.” Mr. Wallin-Sato stated that they have been working collaboratively with UAS, the Juneau Reentry Coalition, and the former Juneau reentry case manager to create a similarly-modeled program in Juneau and to submit an application for a grant. It was stated that this program has been adopted by Rutgers University, UNLV, and that there is interest in Washington and Oregon; he stated that this program can be molded and shaped. Mr. Wallin-Sato stated that he enjoyed the experience of visiting Spring Creek Correctional Center, speaking with staff and the Superintendent, some of the incarcerated men; he observed that both staff and the incarcerated men were hungry for engagement, information, and opportunities. He was moved by prisoner-led efforts to do positive things. He stated that much of the

Anchorage Reentry Coalition
Meeting Minutes
9/29/22
Hosted online via Zoom

programming in CA institutions has been brought back online and that it was hard to hear about the isolation and dearth of programming options in Alaska.

Steve Ladwig explained that he is in a position to further support Mr. Wallin-Sato and the students that he is working with, and so there are other layers of support associated with Project Rebound. Mr. Ladwig stated that the visit to Spring Creek was invigorating. Mr. Pistotnik added that he was grateful to the staff at Spring Creek, particularly POIII Monica Hinders that helped facilitate the visit; Mr. Wallin-Sato echoed the sentiment. Mr. Pistotnik explained that he has attempted to connect with staff at UAA for the purposes of exploring implementation of a Project Rebound model in Anchorage but has yet to make the right connection. Ms. Teri Tibbett stated that an important reason that there is interest at UAS is that the Chancellor has been supportive and a champion of the effort. Mr. Carey Brown stated that there could be an opportunity to work through the Human Services Department at UAA to bring something akin to Project Rebound to this community

Jonathan Pistotnik, Coalition Coordinator, Anchorage Reentry Coalition (jpistotnik@nwalaska.org) Mr. Pistotnik shared that prior to the most recent visit to Spring Creek, he last visited the institution in June, 2021 when we were emerging from the lock-down period of the pandemic. During both visits he heard the incarcerated men at Spring Creek express a desire for information and engagement; it is also likely that there is similar sentiment at the other institutions in Alaska. Mr. Pistotnik shared that based on his experiences engaging in the community, that there is a need for information about where to access resources at the institutions, in the community, and by all the people connected to this work and by those seeking services. In an attempt to try to respond to some of this need Mr. Pistotnik created an online partner directory and resource guide for entities that are supportive of working with justice-involved people and champions of reentry. Mr. Pistotnik is still seeking information and responses from programs and services, and is actively maintaining this resource; it is intentionally a simple resource so that it can be easily maintained and updated as necessary. It can be accessed at the following link: <https://reentry-coalition-pa-3cps.glideapp.io/> You're your program or service can be added to this resource please email Mr. Pistotnik to be included.

Teri Tibbett, AK Reentry Partnership (akreentrypartnership@gmail.com) - Ms. Tibbett stated that the AK Reentry Partnership is a coalition of coalitions, and is a group that meets to share information and engage in advocacy. Ms. Tibbett stated it is a group focused on advocacy and networking, and that people are welcome to join in this network. The website for this group is www.akreentry.org.

Jess Angel, Certified Trauma Specialist/Peer Support Specialist (vivid907pss@gmail.com) - Ms. Jess Angel explained that she is working with Keys to Life on a project called "What is the Meaning of Home" which is geared towards sharing the stories of those experiencing homelessness or housing insecurity. There is an intention to compile stories and share them, possibly via a video. Ms. Angel is seeking stories from incarcerated and formerly incarcerated people to be added to this collection of stories. Details for the project are still be worked out. Ms. Angel is interested in being connected with people that may have a story to share and can be contacted at vivid907pss@gmail.com.

**Anchorage Reentry Coalition
Meeting Minutes
9/29/22
Hosted online via Zoom**

Amanda Woody, SOA DBH – Ms. Woody shared information about an opportunity to provide public comment regarding opioid settlement money; it was a meeting scheduled for 9/29/22 and Ms. Woody encouraged others to testify and provide input because the insights from community members that have been impacted can be very impactful to policy makers. Mr. Pistotnik had previously shared in an email links to the recently published recommendations. Ms. Woody also shared that the Reducing Recidivism Conference is scheduled for February 6 and 7 and will be in-person again.

Jonathan Pistotnik, Reentry Coalition – Mr. Pistotnik stated that he was approached recently about where to find SUD treatment opportunities and where one can go to complete an SUD assessment. It was stated that he was aware of where to find a list of approved treatment providers but did not have up to date information about where to go to complete an assessment. He asked community members to pass along information about where one might be able to access an SUD assessment so that he in turn could pass that information along.

**Next Meeting
TBD (Possibly December)**

CALLS TO ACTION & FOLLOW UP

- DBH helps to fund reentry case managers around the state; utilize these resources and make referrals as appropriate.
- Follow up with Jonathan Pistotnik (jpistotnik@nwlaska.org) to be included in the Anchorage Reentry Coalition Partner Directory & Resource Guide. It can be accessed: <https://reentry-coalition-pa-3cps.glideapp.io/>
- Reach out to Jonathan Pistotnik or Project Rebound if you know a champion that could help advocate for a Project Rebound-type effort at UAA in Anchorage.
- Follow up with Jess Angel if you know someone that has been/is justice-involved that has a powerful story about being homeless or experiencing housing insecurity
- Follow up with Jonathan Pistotnik if you know of locations/resources for completing an SUD assessment in Anchorage.
- Add the Alaska Reducing Recidivism conference to your calendars for Feb. 6 & 7, 2023; it will be in-person at the Captain Cook Hotel in Anchorage.