

**Anchorage Reentry Coalition**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**9/30/21**  
**Hosted online via Zoom**

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

Project Rebound, Humboldt State University; House of Transformation; Mountain View Health Services; Alaska Department of Corrections (Reentry Unit; Anchorage Probation; Spring Creek Correctional Center); GEO Group (Cordova); Partners For Progress/Partners Reentry Center; Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development; Southcentral Foundation, Family Wellness Warriors; Alaska VA; NeighborWorks Alaska; Alaska Native Justice Center; Juneau Reentry Coalition; Recover Alaska; Anchorage Faith & Action Congregations Together; Running Free Alaska; True North Recovery; One2One Mentorship Program; RurAL CAP; Dept. of Health and Social Services (Ladies First); Restorative and Reentry Services; United Way; Food Bank of Alaska; Division of Vocational Rehabilitation; Division of Juvenile Justice; Alaska Mental Health Board/Advisory Board on Alcoholism & Drug Abuse; Akeela Development Corporation; U.S. Probation; Bristol Bay Native Association; New Life Development; Anchorage Health Department; University of Alaska, Anchorage.

Estimated Total Attendees: 56

1. *Introduction: Jonathan Pistotnik, Coalition Coordinator, Anchorage Reentry Coalition*  
([jpistotnik@nwalska.org](mailto:jpistotnik@nwalska.org))

Mr. Pistotnik opened the meeting by introducing the speakers for the meeting. Mr. Pistotnik expressed his excitement regarding learning of Project Rebound recently, and stated that he thought it was a program and approach that Alaska could look to for inspiration. Mr. Pistotnik read a short excerpt from an ADN news article from March, 2021 ("[Alaska now spends more on prisons than its university system, and the gap is widening.](#)") and expressed displeasure over the State of Alaska's trend towards increased financial investments in incarceration and lowered investments into higher education. Mr. Pistotnik stated that he believed Project Rebound was an example of a program that Alaskans could look to as an alternative, and as a way to invest in people rather than in incarceration.

2. *Presentation: Project Rebound*

*Tony Wallin, Program Coordinator, Project Rebound at Humboldt State University*  
([projectrebound@humboldt.edu](mailto:projectrebound@humboldt.edu); [tw22@humboldt.edu](mailto:tw22@humboldt.edu); 707-477-6640)

*Steve Ladwig, Associate Director of Admissions, Humboldt State University* ([steven.ladwig@humboldt.edu](mailto:steven.ladwig@humboldt.edu))

Prior to speaking a video clip was shown introducing Project Rebound (link is below). Mr. Wallin introduced himself, expressed appreciation for the opportunity to connect, and began by stating that Project Rebound is a California State University-funded program that is specifically for formerly incarcerated students. He explained that one reason Project Rebound is successful is because it is designed and staffed by the formerly incarcerated, like himself. It was stated that John Irwin, a man who was incarcerated himself who also went on to obtain his Doctorate, began the program in 1967 and served as an advocate for the formerly incarcerated. Mr. Wallin explained that when the program was started, it operated out of a broom closet at San Francisco State University, which also served as a safe space for

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formerly incarcerated students to come together. Mr. Wallin explained that eventually there was an effort to expand the program to other Cal State campuses, and as of last year the program was found on 14 campuses around California. Mr. Wallin stated that other institutions and locations outside of California have adopted the program (Rutgers; Oregon; UNLV has expressed interest) and promoted the idea that this model should not be constrained by state borders.

Mr. Wallin stated that Project Rebound also assists students that may need a GED, community college courses, and helps students with educational goals even if they may not yet be ready for four-year college. Mr. Wallin stated that Project Rebound staff (like himself) communicate with currently incarcerated people, assist with crafting education plans, writing parole recommendation letters. Mr. Wallin described that he has been developing a mentorship program to take formerly incarcerated volunteers and put them in a mentorship role with youth involved with the youth justice system; he stated that there is a network of such programs.

Mr. Wallin pointed out that a study released last year found that Project Rebound students had a 0% recidivism rate, and that using mass education as an alternative to mass incarceration is a viable direction to take. He stated that Project Rebound assists with a lot of wrap-around services (e.g. counseling, career training, food, etc.), and that there are many efforts to connect students with other opportunities beyond campus. Steve Ladwig explained that Project Rebound staff will look over a prospective student's entire situation, and work with them to develop a plan that best meets their academic interests and needs; health and wellness are factors that are considered. Mr. Wallin stated that as a formerly incarcerated person and someone in recovery that he has the ability to connect with students that may be struggling; this model, to put people with these experiences into leadership positions within the program contribute to the success of Project Rebound. It was stated that Jason Bell is a director involved in expansion efforts of Project Rebound. Mr. Wallin stated that when he initially started to reach out within his network of alumni and stakeholders, that he didn't easily find personal connections to Alaska

Mr. Wallin stated that Project Rebound does workshops inside correctional facilities in California; there are some opportunities inside the correctional facilities around the state for college-level courses through particular educational institutions. It was stated that while California has reduced its total prison population and that there are efforts to ensure corrections budget is continuing to be invested into education, there is still a great deal of money going towards the corrections budget. Mr. Wallin stated that he works with both probation and parole officers, and that it is his perception that it is a win-win if someone is on supervision and also engaged with Project Rebound.

Troy Buckner (Director, New Life Development) stated that he was the former director of Project Rebound at SF State in 1997, and explained that he found his experience with the program to be very rewarding. In response to some questions by Mr. Buckner, Mr. Wallin explained that expansion has been embraced and that Project Rebound receives \$3.3 million through the CSU budget and that the climate within the university system administration become amenable to the aims of Project Rebound. He also stated that Project Rebound staff are in communication with University Police and that relationship is growing and slowly headed in the right direction.

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Janice Weiss (DOC Reentry Unit) stated that Alaska is applying for a Pell Grant Program, and if awarded, will open up funding opportunities starting in 2023. Ms. Weiss asked about overcoming negative public perception, and Mr. Wallin explained that putting a spot light on the inhumane conditions (e.g. hunger strikes) in CA prisons brought attention; grassroots activism contributed to changing the narrative over time. Lastly, Mr. Wallin stated that Project Rebound staff has an alumni network and that linkages to employment opportunities are always being shared; Tony discussed visits to the local Rotary Club and the implementation of Ban the Box.

Mr. Wallin and Mr. Ladwig will be visiting Alaska (Juneau, Sitka, Ketchikan, Kenai), and spending some time in Anchorage, and are interested in connecting with prospective students that may be interested in Humboldt State and/or other service providers or allies. They will be traveling through Alaska in mid-October and tentatively have availability to connect with reentry coalition partners Oct. 15 & 16.

*Resources and projects that were mentioned:*

- *Project Rebound, Humboldt State YouTube Video:* <https://youtu.be/waFiPc6nYiU>
- *Project Rebound, Humboldt State Website:* <https://projectrebound.humboldt.edu/>
- *Anti-Recidivism Coalition & Ride Home Program:* <https://antirecidivism.org/>

*3. Presentation: House of Transformation*

*Briana Pili, Housing Director (admin@houseoftransformations.com)*

*Gloria Prince, Community Outreach Specialist*

*([communityoutreachspecialist@houseoftransformations.com](mailto:communityoutreachspecialist@houseoftransformations.com); 907-333-2468)*

Ms. Pili stated that House of Transformation (HOT) began offering services in June, 2019; HOT developed out of a church in response to some church members not having a place to live and that there was an increasing number of people coming to them that wanted to change their lives around after enduring challenges associated with drugs, homelessness, and incarceration. Ms. Pili stated the program has faith-based roots but it is not strictly a faith-based program, and expressed the importance of addressing and healing trauma, and addressing other needs: housing, case management, and other wrap around services. It was stated that HOT has partnerships with other organizations including PRC, ANJC, and others. Ms. Prince is newly hired and will help serve as the face of HOT in the community and work alongside clients, community partners, parole, and others in the community. It was stated that HOT offers classes for residents, and that there are efforts to begin apprenticeship and training for clients to expand career opportunities. It was stated that HOT accepts men and women, and has the capacity to house 54-60 people within 3 buildings (two for men; one for women). As of the meeting there were an estimated 11 beds open with no waiting list. Ms. Pili stated that there are aspirations and plans to expand with a hope of having everyone under one roof with step-down tiers for residents as they progress. Ms. Pili stated that HOT was engaging with 99 Plus 1 and Beans Café to house homeless people, and that there are plans to partner with Adult Basic Education and to offer other training opportunities through HOT (e.g. paralegal training, peer support; medical training, salon training; CDL and more). Ms. Prince is a good point of contact for other agencies or prospective clients interested in connecting with HOT.

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4. *Presentation: Mountain View Health Services*

*Felicia Fleming, Director of Patient and Community Relations ([FFleming@mtvhs.org](mailto:FFleming@mtvhs.org)); Dr. Greg Higgins*

Ms. Fleming explained that Mountain View Health Services is expanding, and in addition to urgent care and primary care services, vivitrol shots and behavioral health services are available. She explained that they have connected with some reentry service providers already (New Life Development, PRC). They are located in Mountain View, and are adjacent to the car wash. Dr. Higgins stated that they are open six days a week (closed Sunday); he added that he has had prior experience working with a Hepatitis C outbreak in California's prison system. It was clarified that usually staff don't work with patients on the Medicaid application process. [It was clarified in the chat that health insurance assistance (Medicaid and other) is available at the Anchorage Neighborhood Health Center (907-743-7220) and through United Way of Anchorage (2-1-1)]. Dr. Higgins stated that they are working in an underserved area and that they do not turn people away.

*Mountain View Health Services: <https://mtvhs.org/>*

*Mountain View urgent care: <https://mvucak.com/>*

5. *Updates & Information Sharing:*

*Cynthia Ross (Ladies First, DHSS; [cynthia.ross@alaska.gov](mailto:cynthia.ross@alaska.gov)) - Ladies First is the Alaska breast and cervical health check program, and assists people with financial barriers to screening. Ms. Ross recognized that October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month. She also noted that the website for the Ladies First program is still unavailable due to the compromised DHSS website incident from earlier in the year, however she provided her contact info and is eager to connect with those that may need or benefit from these services. Enrollment is easy, and the phone number is 1-800-410-6266.*

*Stephanie Rhoades, One2One Mentorship Program ([one2onementorship@gmail.com](mailto:one2onementorship@gmail.com); 907-229-3016) -*

*Ms. Rhoades stated that One2One Mentorship Program groups for women are still occurring on Saturday mornings at 11am, and thanked New Life Development for continuing to serve as a host for those meetings. Ms. Rhoades clarified that women don't necessarily have to be housed at New Life in order to participate (so long as they are approved to participate), and added that she brings real good coffee to these meetings. Please contact Ms. Rhoades for more information about joining these support group meetings; she will connect with the prospective candidates to ensure they are a good fit for the group.*

*Ms. Rhoades added that former APM Reporter, Anne Hillman is the Director of a project call Mental Health Mosaics; there are opportunities for people to share their stories and express themselves through this project, so if you are working with someone that may be interested please reach out to Ms. Rhoades and she will connect you. Ms. Rhoades went on to express her gratitude for the service providers engaged in the reentry space, as accessing people while in custody and connecting them to programming, treatment, or assessment opportunities is very challenging/impossible at this time; lawyers are overburdened as well, and these are rough times for people involved in the justice system.*

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*Jennifer Slater-Sursa, Partners Reentry Center ([jslatersursa@pfpalaska.org](mailto:jslatersursa@pfpalaska.org); 907-272-1192)* - Ms. Slater-Sursa stated that PRC is open on both a walk-in and appointment basis between 9am-4:430pm, and that clients can be housed the same day if necessary. It was stated that the Friday Case Management meeting is taking place in-person each week at 1:15pm which is geared towards service providers or staff, and the entrance to PRC is now adjacent to the parking lot. Ms. Slater-Sursa stated that PRC has expanded and it will be sharing the building with other providers, such as Oak House, SCF, Money Management International, and ANJC to enhance service delivery on-site.

*Demetria Veasy, Department of Labor & Workforce Development/Alaska Job Center Network ([demetria.veasy@alaska.gov](mailto:demetria.veasy@alaska.gov))* - Ms. Veasy stated that despite the closure of some government offices and buildings, the job center is still open and staff will be working in the office. No appointment is necessary. There is a job fair coming up on Nov. 10<sup>th</sup> at the Midtown Mall from 10am-2pm, and all are welcome. Ms. Veasy stated that it is a job-seeker market and that there are a lot of opportunities for job seekers, including at some companies who may in the past not have considered hiring reentrants; fidelity bonding is being promoted as an incentive.

Other Information Provided In the Chat Box Separate from Speakers:

- Southcentral Foundation, Family Wellness Warriors engages in this work [ACEs, trauma, healing] as part of their mission through peer support lead groups and trainings. We are currently offering several virtual learning circles, and look forward to connecting with each of you more in the future. <https://www.southcentralfoundation.com/services/family-wellness-warriors/>
- Department of Labor is hosting a Job Fair at the Midtown Mall on November 10th from 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. [https://www.jobs.alaska.gov/jobfairs/flyers/2021-11-10\\_VeteranJobFair\\_Flyer\\_Anchorage.pdf](https://www.jobs.alaska.gov/jobfairs/flyers/2021-11-10_VeteranJobFair_Flyer_Anchorage.pdf)
- Recover Alaska is hiring! Check out the job description here- [https://www.dropbox.com/s/d6t7w598b36le6o/Admin%20Coordinator\\_FY21.pdf?dl=0&fbclid=IwAR08V5WUnGL0ztYHEdOBLjIQXB3ySEJoivC\\_GWsWDsN-4Md1rmMzxMT6E78](https://www.dropbox.com/s/d6t7w598b36le6o/Admin%20Coordinator_FY21.pdf?dl=0&fbclid=IwAR08V5WUnGL0ztYHEdOBLjIQXB3ySEJoivC_GWsWDsN-4Md1rmMzxMT6E78)
- It was suggested that two places currently hiring locally include Alaska Tire Service and Pita Pit.

**Next Meeting**  
**TBD**