

**Anchorage Reentry Coalition
Quarterly Meeting Minutes
1/24/19**

Representatives in attendance from the following organizations/groups: New Hope Compassionate Ministries; Division of Juvenile Justice; Nine Star Education & Employment Services; GEO Group; Cook Inlet Tribal Council; Dept. of Labor & Workforce Development; Southcentral Foundation; Food Bank of Alaska; Partners Reentry Center; Agnew::Beck; Alaska Advisory Board on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse; Alaska Nations Reentry Group; Alaska Native Justice Center; Alaska Department of Corrections; Public Defenders Agency (AmeriCorps); NAMI Anchorage; Alaska National Guard, Counterdrug Support Program; NeighborWorks; Akeela.

1. Introductions.

2. Presentation: Heather Hagelberger, Alaska Native Justice Center (ANJC).

Ms. Hagelberger presented on Human Trafficking. This month is Human Trafficking awareness month. Reentrants are at an increased risk of being previously trafficked and/or for being trafficked after their release. In order to be considered trafficking there has to be one area of each portion of the AMP (Action, Means & Purpose) Model represented. Actions can be inducing/recruiting people into trafficking etc., Means can be transporting people etc. and for Purposes such as exploiting them for financial gain. Trafficking must have an element of Force, Fraud or Coercion. Signs of a trafficking victim can be avoiding eye contact, having few or no personal possessions, no control over their own money etc. Most victims don't know they are being trafficked. When spoken to youth who are trafficked will be very vague about things like why they are in Anchorage or how they got here. ANJC is advocating for more statistics/data collection from the state on this issue but what they know so far is that trafficking is a statewide issue, Alaska Natives are at a high risk for trafficking, and in particular youth from the villages are at a high risk for being trafficked for commercial sex trafficking. ANJC encourages you to contact ANJC or the National Hotline for Trafficking Victims when you suspect that someone may be a trafficking victim. ANJC and their partners also offer resources for trafficking victims, they offer case management, legal services and more to victims. *[Presentation is available via the Coalition Coordinator]*

3. Presentation: Anna Brawly, from Agnew::Beck Consulting on behalf of Recover Alaska.

Recover Alaska is an organization that seeks to change policy, create positive social norms (that encourage sobriety), create partnerships around health and supporting prevention, treatment and recovery from substance abuse. Ms. Brawly who is from Agnew Beck has been contracted by Recover Alaska and presented on their behalf. Ms. Brawly presented on the proposed 5% retail (sales) tax on alcohol that would be effective in January 2020. Research has found that as the price of alcohol goes up the rate of drinking and deaths attributable to drinking decrease. Youth are especially sensitive to changes in drinking so it is very effective at reducing underage drinking. Currently alcohol costs Alaska \$1.84 Billion (a conservative estimate) and causes 285 deaths in Alaska per year. The proposed sales tax would increase the price of alcohol significantly and is estimated that it would generate \$11-15 million per year that would be dedicated to substance

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use/misuse prevention and treatment, community behavioral health programs, public safety, homelessness prevention and response, and/or camp abatement (clean-up). The intersectionality between homelessness, alcohol misuse and treatment, and the reentry population makes this a relevant issue for the reentry community. Other locales in Alaska already tax alcohol, including Juneau and Fairbanks. The proposal will be on the April 2nd ballot in Anchorage (mail-in election).
[Presentation is available via the Coalition Coordinator]

4. Presentation: Indianna Turkisher and Eve Van Dommelen, Food Bank of Alaska.

Ms. Turkisher presented on food insecurity and possible changes to the SNAP program due to the expected repeal of SB 91. One in seven adults in Alaska experience food insecurity. The SNAP Program, at its heart, is an anti-poverty program. Prior to SB 91 Alaska did not allow people convicted of felony drug offenses to access SNAP benefits, being one of only six states to do so. SB 91 contains a provision that allows those with a drug felony to have access to SNAP benefits; rolling back SB 91 could do away with the provision. Another issue is that currently those who are incarcerated cannot apply for food stamps and can only apply on their release date (or afterwards). There is a waiver that could be sought to allow for incarcerated individuals (at a correctional facility or a halfway house) to apply for SNAP benefits up to 30 days prior to release. Enactment of the waiver could potentially relieve a large burden upon reentrants releasing to the community that must seek and engage with numerous services on a nearly simultaneous basis. Approval of the waiver would involve DPA and DHSS. The Alaska Food Coalition advocates for food security and is interested in multi-sectoral engagements and will be engaging with policy makers to educate them on these issues. The Alaska Food Coalition is interested in data relating to food security/insecurity, and client anecdotes that can be used to advocate for policies that promote access to food in Alaska.

5. Presentation: Adam Ziegler, New Hope Compassionate Ministries.

Mr. Ziegler from New Hope Compassionate Ministries F.K.A. as New Hope on the Last Frontier presented on how the Ministry could help reentrants. The Ministry is committed to fighting poverty. Their new program, Celebrate Recovery, is holistic in nature and supports those suffering from addictions, anxiety, depression, trauma and other problems. It is faith based but you do not have to be a Christian. The program is one night a week, two hours long with the first hour being a teaching session and the second hour for sharing. They are also starting step studies which is where people break into small groups and support each other through recovery. There is no age requirement, most are adults but they have a few teens. They have a food pantry that is open 10:30am – 1:00pm (bring your own bags; participants can come every week), and offer hot meals on Saturday evenings starting at 4:30pm when most food services are closed. The Ministry is open to having volunteers, even those who are mandated to do community service but they must interview the person first to see if they meet the Ministry's volunteer requirements. More info can be found on their website: www.newhopeak.org

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6. Upcoming Events:

- Reentry Job Fair, April 24th is going to be for those with a criminal background and will take place at the Midtown Job Center. Job preparation activities will be offered before the job fair (resume prep; dress for success; interviewing skills, etc.); details are TBD. Contact Demetria Veasy (demetria.veasy@alaska.gov) or Jonathan Pistotnik (jpistotnik@nwalaska.org) if you know employers that may be interested in participating in this event. *[More details about the event can be found in the Employment & Education Work Group Meeting Minutes from January]*
- City-Wide Job Fair, February 8 at the University Mall from 10am-4pm.
- CITC Job Fair, March 7 at the Northway Mall from 11am-3pm. Employment First Job Fair, March 29th at the University Mall; there is a specific focus on employment opportunities for veterans and individuals with disabilities.

7. Coalition Coordinator Updates: Jonathan Pistotnik

- Current proposals at the State level to roll back/modify SB 91, or enact new measures related to crime and public safety that is likely to impact those programs and services that provide services to incarcerated individuals and reentrants. Programs that support the work of the Reentry Coalition or reentry services more generally are encouraged to voice their support to policy makers (local and state levels). There are opportunities to inform policy makers about the importance of reentry, and about the network of providers and programs that are engaging with reentrants when they return to our community in Anchorage.

Next Quarterly Coalition Meeting:

April 25th at the NeighborWorks Alaska Office, from 9:30am-11am