



THE STATE  
of **ALASKA**  
GOVERNOR BILL WALKER

## Department of Corrections

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### Press Release

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The Department of Corrections (DOC) is pleased to announce that Alaska recently became one of three states awarded the federal Second Chance Grant. This funding will further enhance efforts to reduce the state's steep recidivism rate and to cultivate stronger and safer communities statewide.

The grant, awarded by the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ), Office of Justice Programs and Bureau of Justice Assistance, allocates \$1 million over the course of two years to Alaska's correctional system. Utah and Delaware are also recipients.

"We are thrilled about the opportunities we now have to enhance reentry department-wide," DOC Deputy Commissioner of Transitional Services Karen Cann said. "Reentry really begins the day an offender walks through the doors of one of our facilities. For the Department of Corrections to truly correct behavior, we must have well-trained staff, offer programming, teach job skills, and provide behavior health services. And when offenders are getting ready to release, we must have a system in place that connects reentrants to community resources capable of assisting in that often-challenging transition."

DOC has been developing a strategic reentry plan with statewide community partners since 2017, when the department was awarded the \$100,000 Second Chance Act Statewide Adult Recidivism Reduction Strategic Planning Program grant. This summer, the plan was submitted to DOJ for their consideration to allocate DOC the additional implementation funding. Alaska DOC accepted the Second Chance Grant on October 4, 2018.

As detailed in the strategic plan, funding will be used for training, programming, case planning tools, direct services, peer support in and out of our institutions, modifications to the Alaska Correctional Offender Management System, as well as to pay the wages of the required grant manager and research partner.

"This plan is really dependent on communication and coordination, not just within DOC but with our communities," DOC Reentry Program Manager Morgen Jaco explained. "There needs to be communication with offenders about their needs and goals, between line staff and superintendents, and between probation officers and community partners. The goal is for every incarcerated person to have one case plan – disseminated out to all relevant parties, so everyone knows that person's requirements, the programming they're enrolled in, and the services they need."

Alaska has a recidivism rate of 66.41 percent, with two-thirds of those individuals returning to custody within the first six months. The state defines recidivism as any return to custody within the first three years of release.

Lowering the re-offense rate by using evidence-based practices will have wide-reaching impacts that will improve public safety across the state.

