

HB 379 testimony

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee. My name is Vince Beltrami and I'm president of the Alaska AFL-CIO representing 60,000 working families in the state of Alaska.

- Representative Johnson in response to a question from a House Finance Committee member on this bill said: "This is something the majority caucus has been working on since the beginning of this session." And yet this bill was introduced on the 91st day. Its an example of terrible public process, In fact Representative Johnson stated to the press it was done as a bargaining chip for a final budget deal. It's an insult to treat Alaska state employees as desperate bargaining chips. \$18 million (per fiscal note) as a chip against \$775 million in oil tax credits. That is unconscionable Mr. Chairman.
- Previously I was Executive Director of the largest apprenticeship program in the state. New employees with no skills, knowledge or training started at 50% of Journeyman wage. Only after training, improved skills, and satisfactory performance did they move up pay steps, until after 5 years they were fully qualified and finally paid the full wage.
- Same is true of public employees. Steps are progressions to the normal full rate. Not raising COLA at all keeps the floor static. Not having built in progression for new employees stifles incentives to performance. Steps and merit increases are cost neutral and don't even require a fiscal note, as new lower paid employees replace retiring higher paid employees.
- According to DOL statistics, <http://live.laborstats.alaska.gov/ces/ces.cfm?at=01&a=000000&adj=0> , Oil & Gas employees have lost 1800 jobs from October of 2014 to March of 2016, roughly the time period when Gov. Walker came into office until now. The same statistics show the state has lost 1400 jobs during the same period. And after another \$350 million in state budget cuts, state employees are on track to lose another 1000+ jobs over the next year, possibly exceeding losses in the oil industry.
- And 20-30% of oil & gas workers are non-residents who contribute nothing to the Alaska economy. Nearly every penny earned by a state employee is put back in to the state economy and spent primarily at Alaska businesses. Taking away reasonable step increases means more money not going to businesses that are members of the Alaska State Chamber of Commerce. So it boggles the mind that the Chamber's executive director is advocating further cuts to those who patronize his member businesses, and that his inaccurate testimony was the impetus for this bill.

- The bill is extremely flawed. It effectively bans increases forever. If oil is \$91 a barrel for 11 months, drops to \$89 for a month and then returns to \$91 workers are out of luck. Not to mention the price of oil going to \$90 could be 20 years away. Indeed, in the current Department of Revenue 10 year forecast, that never happens. How's that for morale boosting?
- Mr. Chairman and members of the committee please do not pass this ill-advised, poorly thought out bill out of committee

Thank you Mr. Chairman for the opportunity to offer testimony,

Sincerely,

Vince Beltrami
President
Alaska AFL-CIO

April 14, 2016

The Honorable Governor Bill Walker
P.O. Box 110001
Juneau, AK 99811-0001

Dear Governor Walker,

We are pleased to present to you observations and recommendations resulting from the housing summit you held on the University of Alaska campus in Anchorage on January 6, 2016. Your leadership has brought a statewide focus to housing at all levels not previously embraced. We thank you and your staff for their focus, as well as nearly 300 participants from every region of the state who enthusiastically contributed expertise and experience and whose comments are captured in the attached reports.

Alaska Housing Finance Corporation (AHFC) is proud of our role as the state's public housing authority, an offeror of mortgage products and supporter of energy efficient and quality construction. We are aware of the opportunities that can arise when talking with a broader group of people, and we look forward to rolling up our sleeves and getting to work on many of the recommendations that are included in the reports that were authored by subject matter experts and facilitators.

At your direction, areas of focus at the summit include:

- Housing Affordability in Rural Alaska;
- Reducing Recidivism through Housing;
- Innovative Funding and Financing Options for Housing;
- Incentivizing Private Sector Housing Investments;
- Alaskans Experiencing Homelessness;
- Senior Housing;
- Veteran Homelessness; and
- State Building Codes and Energy Efficiency Standards.

Each report highlights areas of opportunity that, at your direction going into the summit, are to be revenue neutral (or strategic investments with costs offset elsewhere in the budget). One of the benefits of the summit itself was the convening of diverse interests from across Alaska and the opportunity to discuss shared issues and find solutions. Housing leaders from Bethel interacted with leaders from Barrow and Juneau to share "lessons learned" and that shared knowledge will likely result in time or cost savings for future projects. We've heard lots of anecdotal evidence that those conversations continue. As a recent example, March 11-13, 2016, Cold Climate Housing Research Center (CCHRC) hosted a Housing Sustainability forum that attracted a large number of Alaskans, as well as participants from Canada. The conference focused on a holistic approach to addressing sustainability.



We'll keep you informed as we hear other stories about successes and unusual challenges. We also look forward to working with your Administration on prioritizing those recommendations that you believe are of the greatest impact.

While much work was accomplished the day of the summit and the time that has followed, we have been asked to spotlight where collaboration in housing is done well. As Alaskans involved in this sector, we have a lot for which we are proud. Alaskan leaders have for decades contributed funding to care for those who are homeless, and they have made financing available in rural areas that national agencies simply don't understand. For example, every year it takes an act of Congress to allow USDA Rural Development and AHFC to finance homes that use cisterns.

Alaskans understand our unique challenges and we are best positioned to tackle them in this austere fiscal environment. CCHRC leads the nation in building science and construction standards for more energy efficient homes. Covenant House has a facility for young adults who find themselves in the most trying and difficult situations on our streets. Our agency has the flexibility to respond to critical unmet housing needs for veterans and Alaskans with disabilities. Regional housing authorities are the mainstay of the housing delivery system in rural Alaska, managing \$98 million in federal funds that flow into the state.

All of the examples cited above are widely known. Here are a few more that speak directly to the collaboration between agencies that support many thousands of Alaskans who we know are still struggling in one way or another with their housing:

- Through the auspices of your Alaska Council on the Homeless, many agencies (Department of Corrections, Department of Health & Social Services (DHSS), Department of Education and Early Development, Department of Public Safety, Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority) support Alaskans through existing partnerships with AHFC. Here are just a few some examples of those partnerships:
 - Empowering Choice – Nearly 250 families are served through the Alaska Network on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault, and the Council on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault. Local shelters serve victims and recommend a voucher for their clients in need.
 - Re-entry – Fifty housing vouchers are available for people transitioning from a correctional institution to the private rental market. Department of Corrections (DOC) probation officers work with clients before they leave the jail system. Recipients are accountable to DOC. The rate of recidivism has dropped dramatically, and other states look to Alaska as a model because of our success.
 - Youth Aging Out of Foster Care – Twenty housing vouchers are available through the Office of Children's Services for young Alaskans transitioning from foster care to the private rental market. Youth participate in an independent living program which builds life skills and encourages continuing education.



- Moving Home and Section 811 – People with disabilities who are transitioning from homelessness or an institutional setting can access one of 150 housing vouchers through a referral from Department of Health & Social Services (DHSS). A recent federal Section 811 Housing & Urban Development (HUD) award will allow this partnership to help as many as 200 more households. Supportive services foster improved health, stabilize housing, and increase self-sufficiency and self-determination.
- Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing Program – Alaskans are proud of our members of the military. This program is a partnership with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs to provide housing vouchers to chronically homeless veterans who accept case management tailored for their needs. Nearly 250 vouchers support this program, and the VA continues to award more to AHFC because of its successful record.
- In total each year, more than \$36 million flows to private apartments in 12 communities because of the federally funded Housing Choice Voucher program (Housing Assistance Payments). If all vouchers and AHFC's public housing are added together, housing is provided to 10,000 Alaskans each night. This program leverages Alaskans in the private rental market who provide housing without large capital investments by state or local government.

In addition to partnerships related to support services and operations, Alaskans continue to build new housing:

- Collaboration with AHFC headlined the story at Ridgeline Terrace where 70 units opened in Anchorage's Mountain View neighborhood. Cook Inlet Housing Authority, the Rasmuson Foundation, Key Bank Development Corporation, and Wells Fargo all played vital roles. The Rasmuson Foundation funded a portion of the Jewel Jones Community Center that includes the only current daycare provider in the neighborhood, thanks to a partnership with Kids Corp.
- Through collaboration with CCHRC, the building industry and banking community, the housing stock is more sustainable in Alaska than it ever has been. Higher energy standards, cost containment, better technology and a willingness to "figure things out" have produced measureable energy savings and construction cost efficiencies.
- Working with the lending community, both for-profit and non-profit, a steady stream of mortgage financing is available to insure that Alaskans can purchase a home regardless of changing economic times, particularly for low-moderate income families and veterans.
- Greater coordination between funding agencies is ongoing and has produced greater efficiencies in the award and management of housing resources: In the past several years, the Municipality of Anchorage (Special Needs Housing Grant Program), Alaska DHSS (HUD 811 Program), Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority (Special Needs Housing Grant and Homeless Assistance program), and the Rasmuson Foundation (Teacher, Health Professional,



Public Safety Program, Senior Housing) have coordinated funding streams, making it easier for organization to access funding.

Thank you for the opportunity to write about the successes that the ongoing collaboration of your cabinet agencies and the private and non-profit sectors are achieving – and we've only hit highlights!

What follows this letter are the individual subgroup recommendation reports from the Housing Summit sessions. We welcome your continuing feedback and the opportunity to work together to ensure that all Alaskans understand that “opportunity begins with a home.”

Sincerely,



Bryan Butcher
CEO/Executive Director
Alaska Housing Finance Corporation



Governor's Housing Summit

January 6, 2016 Workgroup Reports:

The Governor's Housing Summit was held on January 6, 2016 at the University of Alaska Anchorage. Work groups were assigned to eight focus areas and each provided a report on their discussions as shown below. It should be noted that there was some editing for brevity.

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Housing Affordability in Rural Alaska

Facilitator: Bob Poe, University of Alaska Anchorage

Subject Matter Experts:

Jack Hebert, Cold Climate Housing Research Center

Bill Zachares, U.S. Department Housing & Urban Development, Office of Native American Programs

This group asked itself, "What are the unresolved problems and challenges to rural Alaska?"

Priority Issues:

- High Cost of Construction
- Affordability
- Building local economies
- Limited availability of private financing
- Federal and state housing programs targeted primarily for large urban populations that are not available to residents in remote rural communities (i.e. voucher programs)

While there was much discussion about the challenges and potential solutions, the following was agreed upon for action:

High Cost of Rural Construction:

- Work through Denali Commission to update existing project databases that will provide rural communities information about planned regional and local projects. This will allow communities to consider:
 - Consolidation of construction bids
 - Consolidation of materials and equipment shipments to reduce transportation costs and maximize economies of scale
 - Shared use of heavy equipment on multiple projects before demobilizing and backhauling the equipment from the region
- Encourage and educate builders to collaborate with home builders to use reclaimed/unused building materials from other projects to build more affordable homes
- Expand apprenticeship and other proven training programs offered in urban Alaska to rural Alaska
- When possible use local materials to avoid high transportation costs and improve local economy
- Utilize land trusts to reduce land costs for rural housing construction
- University system should coordinate its programs to target rural Alaska to more effectively build capacity
- Use UAA's logistics program to develop possible transportation solutions
- Follow Habitat for Humanity model with volunteer construction and owner sweat equity

- Alaska Department of Administration (DOA) should update procurement rules to be able to take advantage of federal discounts
- Purchasing through the GSA Global Supply store should be used whenever possible
- Work to develop local business capacity through existing state and university programs
- Maintain bypass mail
- Work through congressional delegation to pursue tax credit for rural transportation; e.g. airlines, ferry, barges
- Encourage congressional delegation to bring federal funds to Denali Commission
- Use high performance/lower cost/ lower weight materials guided by the Cold Climate Housing Center
- Make more effective use of alternative construction techniques – modular, prefab walls and SIP panels
- Set up regional centers where land information and other resource information is available about projects in the region; include current and updated as-built information
- Develop a matrix for holistic approach to sustainable communities

Finance and Leverage & Federal and State Agency Program Coordination:

- Devise systems to encourage private investment in rural Alaska
- Increase Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) funding and allocation to Alaska
- Encourage AHFC to use LIHTC in rural Alaska
- Encourage public-private partnerships to invest in rural housing
- Establish Alaska Housing Trust Fund to cover gap between available and needed funding
- Encourage modification of the appraisal process to accurately appraise the value of homes constructed in remote rural communities where appropriate “comparable” may not be readily available

Planning:

- Develop a master plan for communities
- Updated streamlined environmental review
- Increase focus on better “on the ground” planning – reinstitute the Denali Commission Planning Workshop
- Take a holistic approach to planning in each community
- State must evaluate state owned assets in rural Alaska to make land available
- Tie AHFC energy rebate programs and weatherization to local costs in community

Regional Coordination:

- Support the development of the Alaska Native Homeowners coalition

We ranked the five priority areas but did not have enough time to discuss all the priority points and solutions. An additional solution agreed upon was that all state entities should speak with a singular “Arctic Voice”. The Arctic conversation and Arctic development should be done in America’s only “Arctic” state.

Reducing Recidivism through Housing

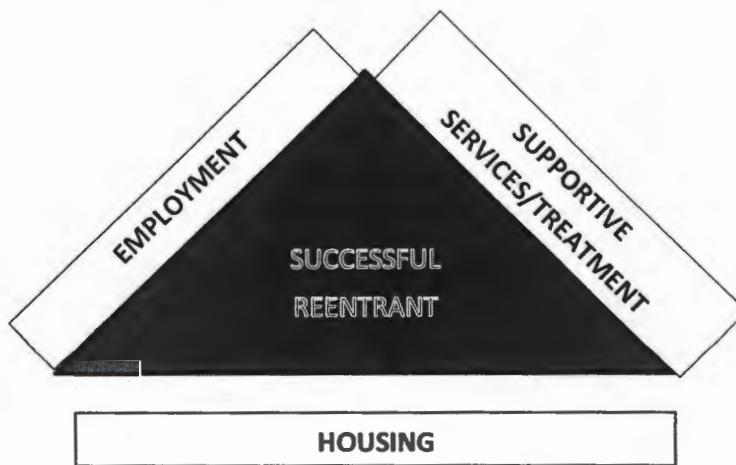
Facilitator: Marny Rivera, Ph.D., University of Alaska Anchorage

Subject Matter Experts:

Bryan Butcher, Alaska Housing Finance Corporation
Jeff Jessee, Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority

Summary:

The Reducing Recidivism through Housing workgroup, led by Bryan Butcher and Jeff Jessee, focused on barriers that exist with individuals coming out of a correctional setting and obtaining housing. A basis for the workgroup was the idea that each facet of a successful reentry is interdependent on the other. The group felt the illustration below demonstrated how vital it is for each aspect of reentry to be addressed in an integrated and holistic manner. This approach encompasses the need for consistent communication, transparency and a warm hand-off of the reentrant during the transition period from incarceration back into the community.



The group set out the recommendations stated below believing that a low-cost/ or no-cost solution exists and is viable for the organizations identified.

Recommendations:

- Department of Corrections should expand Medicaid application opportunities for reentrants by formalizing a plan, process and logistics with help, coordination and collaboration by Department of Health and Social Service/Division of Public Assistance.
- Department of Corrections should make a universal reentry checklist which includes an employment plan, housing, treatment and medical referrals, a State identification card

and applications such as Medicaid and Social Security completed prior to release by revising policies and standard operating procedures.

- Department of Corrections and Department of Labor should establish a memorandum of agreement to facilitate workforce development skills and employment preparation by working with identified Institutions and Field Offices prior to release.
- Department of Corrections should establish guidelines and/or agreements to get Native Reentrants back to outlying regions by working with the Alaska Native Entities.
- Reentry Coalitions and Department of Corrections should establish Memorandums of Agreement and consistent procedures for Coalition and community in-reach; this includes establishing protocols for behavioral contracts when working with reentrants.
- Reentry Coalitions, Department of Corrections and Alaska Housing Finance Corporation should establish and expand housing options (short and long term) by working with private landlords.
- Housing stakeholders should take steps to expand housing options and voucher programs by pursuing funding options as they become available, work with private landlords so that persons with incarceration histories can access private rental housing, and work to address and present mitigating circumstances regarding criminal backgrounds prior to admission decisions in publicly funded housing.
- Department of Health and Social Services and the Mental Health Trust Authority should ensure treatment services are expanded to meet the needs of reentrants prior to release and in the community.
- Alaska Housing Finance Corporation should develop a listing of inventory in each community for each housing type including; assisted living, transitional living, permanent housing and permanent supportive housing.

For additional context into the day, summaries of the greater discussion follow:

Additional Challenges identified:

- Returning citizens released and having difficulties getting back to their communities; their support system is there and it is easier for them to find housing where they are from.
- The rental housing market is too tight; this allows for higher rents, more selective on who you rent to (background checks).

- Barriers on reentry housing programs such as Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) vouchers, 1,600 public units, up to 5,000 vouchers but federal restrictions prohibit who they can take in.
- How do we frame solutions as budget neutral but actually demonstrate the reinvestment piece is so vital? Every dollar towards prevention avoids six dollars in future costs.
- How do we seamlessly connect services? Even if institutionally each returning citizen gets a reentry plan, how does that reentry plan get operationalized within the community? That is vital piece. No time for long wait lists whether for housing, medical, treatment, etc.
- How do we convince people to focus on this population? The housing issue encompasses more of the population than just returning citizens; “prisoners are not preferred consumers”; how do we balance housing services on everyone? Pay us now or pay us later concept.

Prioritized Problems:

- Substance abuse treatment
- Job training opportunities
- Housing volume
- Short-term to long-term housing transition
- Return to home communities/region
- Cross-cutting; time order of resources and requirements

Proposed Solutions:

- Medicaid reform opportunities (discussion on timing of application, length of application, who does it, suspension of application vs termination)
- Organized pre-release plan that expands and incorporates the outside service providers in-prior to release
- Broad collaboration and communication (in-reach)
- Returning home to community/region (where funding for housing is there and different opportunities within their corporations and villages)
- Incentives for sobriety
- Incentives to work; restitution pay off
- Rethink/repurpose in lieu of closing institutions; repurpose portions of them for training, treatment, etc.- an area to fill the gaps-done regionally- therefore family support and reunification exists
- Housing First
- Landlord liaison
- Mining resources/services; connecting the providers with those in need
- Improved case management
- Different modes of treatment opportunities; video conferencing, satellite sites

- Resource Center (one stop shop)
- Prevention, reinvestment (still need prevention dollars, look at models that support people; challenge the provider to help with solutions that bring everyone together and does not exclude federal dollars)
- Involve focus populations
- Mentorship and peer to peer programs
- 211 and other websites for resources

Innovative Funding & Financing Options for Housing Investments

Facilitator: John R. Nofsinger, Ph.D., University of Alaska Anchorage

Subject Matter Experts:

Mark Romick, Alaska Housing Finance Corporation (AHFC), Director Planning

Chris Perez, Rasmuson Foundation, Senior Program Officer

Problem Statement:

Given the high cost of construction, a decline in traditional financial resources, and an aging housing stock; how can the state develop additional financial resources to increase housing production and improve the housing stock? There is an economic gap between demand side and supply side of housing for individuals and developers.

- Are we using tools as effectively as we can or are there tools from other states that we can use?
- There is not enough capital / affordable financing to address the needs in Alaska
 - Rents (or appraised value) are insufficient to recoup building costs
 - Awareness/Creativity/Innovation gap
 - Tools
 - Policies / Best Practices
 - Products
 - Builders cannot make money with their development costs

Homeownership Action Items:

1. Using the existing models for sweat equity through Habitat for Humanity and the USDA Self-Help program. Alaska Housing Finance Corporation (AHFC) will convene a meeting with United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Rural Community Assistance Corporation (RCAC), and Housing & Urban Development (HUD) with current operators of self-help programs and other interested stakeholders.
- Short Run action - Identify action steps and program elements for an expansion of a self-help program in Alaska beyond what USDA is currently doing.
- Long Run action – roll out new program to expand self-help homeownership throughout Alaska

Sidebar note: To create new incentive for regional housing authorities, investigate how AHFC's Supplemental Housing Grant Program can play a role in self-help.

Benefits of self-help model – lower cost of construction, greater homeowner and community participation and commitment

2. There are several underutilized programs for homeownership available in Alaska through HUD's 184 loan guarantees, Individual Development Account (IDA) programs, HomeStart and the Affordable Housing Programs of the Federal Home Loan Bank of Des Moines (FHLB), and the RCAC. They are underutilized due to a lack of awareness by borrowers and financial institutions.
 - Short term action - Working with the Alaska Mortgage Bankers Association and other industry trade groups, AHFC will convene a meeting with HUD, USDA, FHLB, RCAC and plan for increasing awareness and utilization of these underutilized homeownership programs.

Identify specific strategies, materials, programs, events that can be leveraged to increase awareness; i.e. homebuyer fairs, leveraging home shows or other statewide meetings.
 - Long term action – implement strategy and track utilization rates for these programs to monitor improvements.
3. Expand the use, awareness, acceptance of alternative housing types like tiny houses, manufactured housing, accessory dwelling units, and floating houses to increase availability of smaller, more affordable housing options. Some of these techniques are already being used in Alaska but not in an organized manner. Information about existing efforts is not centralized or easily accessible. Identified barriers that may exist are:
 - i. Zoning/neighborhood covenants and or code rules
 - ii. Public and market acceptance of products
 - iii. Financing and appraisal rules
 - Short Term Action – AHFC to convene meeting with municipal officials and financial/lending institutions to identify solutions to potential barriers and develop a pilot project to emphasize feasibility and provide a model activity.
 - Comment on Federal Housing Finance Agency (FHFA) proposed rule directing Fannie Mae to consider manufactured home financing as part of its “duty to serve underserved markets”
 - Long Term Action - using strategy developed, implement pilot project and identify central location for information on projects, barriers and solutions to implementing alternative housing types in communities around Alaska.

Developer / Rental Action Items:

1. Explore use of project based vouchers for 4 percent and 9 percent development.
 - a. AHFC delivery by January 2017
2. Simplify and expand the use of property tax abatement at the state code level. Provide notification/education for local entities in adopting and using at local level.
 - a. Alaska State Legislature in 2016 session

3. Create new working group to explore new state tax credit structures, such as New Market Tax Credit, State Low Income Tax Credit, Corporate Tax Credit, etc.
 - a. Alaska State Legislature in 2016 session
4. Implement a structure of Housing Trust Fund through AHFC with a dedicated funding source or sources of capital and use the funds to maximize leverage of other existing federal funds.
5. Explore best practices on use of local improvement district of method to finance infrastructure / capital improvements and confirm compliance of State law.
6. Create working group to promote Community Land Trust (CLT) and examine if State can gift or provide long term lease to CLT.
7. Create one-stop-shop of information clearing house of programs and tools for developers to go to get information on funding, Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA), etc.

Incentivizing Private Sector Housing Investments

Facilitator: Terry Fields, University of Alaska Anchorage

Subject Matter Experts::

Greg Cerbana, Weidner Investment Properties

Lauren Driscoll, Mat-Su Borough

Tyler Robinson, Cook Inlet Housing Authority

Identified Areas of Action: (areas of action are in order of prioritization ranked by group)

1. Infrastructure as a cost barrier
2. Financing options limited and/or costly
3. Shortage of land available for development
4. Cost/time of re-development and/or assemblage
5. Regulatory process and public/private engagement

Solutions:

Areas of Action	Solution	Who
1. Infrastructure as a cost barrier	State of Alaska enables tax incentives (abatement; Tax Increment Financing; Anchorage Community Development Authority; Live/Work/Play)	MOA; ACDA, Governor's Office
	AIDEA participation (risk reduction pool), EB5, RLI	Anchorage Economic Development Corporation, AIDEA
	Coordinate state capital improvement to support housing; better Department of Transportation coordination with local government that is context sensitive; require process wherein DOT is encouraged to work with local jurisdiction to upsize storm water system that currently is built only to drain road and not surrounding development.	Governor, DOT

2. Financing options limited and/or costly	AIDEA participation (risk reduction pool), EB5, RLI	Anchorage Economic Development Corporation, AIDEA
	State of Alaska diversify revenue - tax supportive of infrastructure	Governor, Legislature
	Permanent Fund Dividend down-payment savings, similar to college savings.	AHFC, Legislature
	Financing, reduce multi-family cost (6.7%) -> Permanent Fund investments to reduce multifamily loan funds -Incentives to rehab -Loan loss guarantee on infrastructure finance	Permanent Fund Division, AHFC, Governor, Legislature
3. Shortage of land available for development	State of Alaska land – consider partnerships; Concepts to trade land for infrastructure	Governor
	Make State of Alaska land available; -Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority/State of Alaska, all -Fee simple, land lease, Land Trust -Land swamps, remove regulatory barriers	Governor/ Commissioner Dean Williams/Department of Natural Resources
	Expedite conveyances	Department of Natural Resources, with oversight from Governor
4. Cost/time of re-development and/or	State of Alaska enable tax incentives (Anchorage	Attorney General, reviewing TIF (Tax Increment Financing),

assemblage	Community Development Authority, Live/Work/Play, abatement, Tax Increment Financing) Changes to state enabling legislation are needed.	MOA, AEDC, Legislature.
	Redevelopment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Brownfield revolving loan fund -Land ready to develop -Streamline/coordinate funding applications 	AEDC, AHFC, Local jurisdictions.
5. Regulatory process and public/private engagement	Statewide housing resource development, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -forum/ repository/ clearinghouse -Encourage housing plans as a part of local comprehensive planning, which is already a requirement. -State data repository 	AHFC, Statewide Chapter of American Planning Association.
	Rehab and/or small modifications best practices <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -AHFC lending on new products (e.g Accessible Dwelling Units, unit lot subdivision, tiny homes 	AHFC AHFC, AEDC, Homebuilders

Alaskans Experiencing Homelessness

Facilitator- Kathi Trawver, Ph.D, LMSW, University Of Alaska Anchorage

Subject Matter Experts:

Scott Ciambor, Alaska Coalition on Housing & Homelessness

Carrie Collins, Alaska Housing Finance Corporation

Priority issues:

1. **High level coordination of housing and homeless services to create policy alignment across state agencies and in partnership with agencies and advocates on the local level to end homelessness in Alaska:**

Background:

Advancement of housing and homeless policy in the short-term will require additional coordination with the recognition that housing/homeless data, resources, planning processes, and expertise in the sector are scattered amongst a wide-range of state departments and partner agencies that are often in silos and don't communicate effectively. The Alaska Coalition on Housing and Homelessness proposes a high-level director position or a more empowered Governor's Council on the Homeless to ensure that these conversations take place.

Who: Governor's Administration

What: Create a State Housing Director Position or empower the Alaska Council on the Homeless

When: Immediate

2. **Coordinated Funding Program for Housing & Services:**

Develop strategic and coordinated funding for housing and services for the homeless.

For example:

- Put together demonstration project that includes clear funding options;
- Encourage both housing and services funders (AHFC, DHSS, DCEED, AMHTA, Rasmuson Foundation) to list other housing or services program that can be matched on Requests for Proposals.

For Housing:

Who: AHFC, Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority, Department of Health & Social Services, Rasmuson Foundation, Alaska Continua of Care (Anchorage Coalition to End Homelessness, Alaska Coalition on Housing and Homelessness)

What: Coordinate available housing funding (HUD 811 program, Special Needs Housing Grant (SNHG), National Housing Trust Fund, and more.)

When: Immediate

For Services:

Who: Department of Health & Social Services, Department of Corrections, Office of Children's Services, Alaska Public Assistance, and more.

What: Funds to follow service needs as attached to individual person that needs it.

Prioritize right agency.

When: Immediate

* Coordination of these opportunities can be overseen by either a State Housing Director or the Governor's Council on the Homeless.

3. More involvement in the housing/homelessness services sector is needed on the local level and in the Alaska State legislature. Two pieces of legislation will help in this regard.

- **Legislation that adds a Housing & Homelessness Element to the Comprehensive Plan of Municipal Governments (AS 29.40.030).**

Background:

Currently, there is no such requirement. Subsequently, throughout the state, the housing/homeless language used and approach to addressing housing and homelessness issues vary greatly from community to community. This can lead to confusion, non-participation, or an inability to acquire resources for housing and homelessness issues. (This legislation will be more palatable to the Alaska Municipal League and local governments if packaged with efforts to provide the necessary housing and homelessness data – see recommendation #4.)

Who: Legislator with housing and homeless advocates support.

What: Add Housing and Homelessness Element to Comprehensive Plan

When: This Session

- **Creation of an Alaska State Legislature Committee on Housing/Homelessness.**

Background:

Legislatures across the country address housing and homelessness concerns in formal committees. The Coalition encourages creating a similar committee in the Alaska House or Senate or by adding this subject matter to the responsibilities of an existing committee.

Who: Alaska State Legislature

What: Start a Committee

When: This Session

4. Housing and Homeless Data

Because there are no requirements in local communities Comprehensive Planning process, access to reliable housing and homeless data is often the first barrier to making policy decisions on these issues. Communities need access to the full spectrum of housing and homeless data. (From homeless shelter beds to homeownership)

Access to reliable housing data: In general, there is not a true sense of housing availability or understanding of the housing need in the state. Pockets of housing data exist (State Census, Alaska Housing Finance Corporation, Department of Labor, Department of Commerce and Economic Development, Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority, Rasmuson Foundation, and data that a handful of communities have contracted out to create one-time needs assessment or their own data sets.) The Coalition proposes assembling a workgroup to create a statewide housing data resource that provides up-dated community level housing data that covers the full spectrum of housing (emergency shelter to fair market housing) and provides clarity for communities, planners, policymakers, media, researchers, investors, and other stakeholders.

Two models:

- a. **State of California Community Development Department – *Building Blocks for Effective Housing Elements* (<http://www.hcd.ca.gov/housing-policy-development/housing-element/>)**
- b. **Vermont Housing Data Website - <http://www.housingdata.org/profile/>**

Who: Partnership between Alaska Housing Finance Corporation, Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority, Department of Labor, Department of Community & Economic Development, Rasmuson Foundation, and Alaska & Anchorage Coalition to End Homelessness (*utilize existing workgroup's work*)

What: Create a Housing Data Website for local communities that is reliable

When: By October 2016

Homeless Data & Homeless Management Information System (HMIS).

As of June 1, 2015, the two Alaska Continua of Care – the Anchorage Coalition to End Homelessness and the Alaska Coalition on Housing and Homelessness have contracted with the Institute for Community Alliances to improve homeless data collection and housing inventory data for those experiencing homelessness throughout the state. Improvements still need to be made:

- a. Outreach and greater community participation in the Annual Point-In-Time Homeless Count.
- b. More reliable Point-In-Time homeless count and housing inventory chart information broken down to community level.

c. Coordinated Entry – Both Continua of Care need to implement a coordinated entry system that involves homeless data and homeless management information systems data sharing and coordination of local housing resources to ensure persons experiencing homelessness are housed appropriately and in a timely manner.

Who: Government Agencies (Governor's Council on the Homeless, Department of Health & Social Services, Alaska Housing Finance Corporation, Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority, etc.)

What: State agencies should require and use point-in-time and data in policymaking, funding decisions. State agencies should be involved in the development of a coordinated entry planning process.

When: Immediate

5. Access to Supplemental Security Income/Social Security Disability Insurance (SSI/SSDI): A key component of ending or avoiding a period of homelessness is to ensure individual income and access to mainstream benefits that individuals at risk for homelessness are eligible. Alaska consistently rates last in the nation for Social Security Disability appeals (Alaska – 21 percent, National Average – 43 percent in 2015). Furthermore, despite efforts of Alaska Legal Services Corporation, the Disability Law Center, and Alaska Coalition on Housing & Homelessness to train providers across the state in the SSI/SSDI Outreach, Access and Recovery (SOAR) process, a Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration best practice to approve accuracy and processing time, Coalition members consistently report high rates of application denials by Alaska Disability Determination Services. The Coalition encourages the Administration to look into this matter and to work with our federal delegation to ensure Alaskans are receiving the benefits they deserve.

Who: Governor

What: Direct disability determination services to collaborate with State Homeless Coalitions and providers to improve Alaskans access to benefits for which they are eligible. Including:

- Access to necessary medical records and evaluations; and
- Execute a memorandum of understanding between Disability Determination Services and Social Security Administration in regards to how the SOAR process will operate and be successful in Alaska.

SOAR (SSI/SSDI Outreach, Access, and Recovery) links:

- National: <http://soarworks.prainc.com/>

When: Immediate

6. Medicaid Expansion: Support Optional Medicaid Benefits That Prevent Homelessness and Higher Cost Interventions

Who: Department of Health & Social Services – Medicaid Expansion

What:

- Support additional 1915(i) and other waiver options and tenancy support services resources with Medicaid Expansion.

- Eliminate the provision that you must be a Department of Behavioral Health grantee to bill Medicaid. (This hurts recipients of Alaska Housing Finance Corporation Special Needs Housing Grant funds and permanent supportive housing programs)

When: Ongoing

7. Making the Shift to Permanent Supportive Housing: Continuum of Care Housing Inventory

Current chart data and maps indicate that housing resources for the homeless in Alaskan communities is limited – and in many communities does not exist. In many balance of state communities the only resources are domestic violence shelters or seasonal emergency shelter beds. As a whole the statewide system is severely lacking in permanent supportive housing opportunities (scattered site and congregate setting).

Essentially the state is operating a limited shelter system for the homeless when best practice noted by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), US Department of Housing and Urban Development, and US Interagency Council on the Homeless indicate that permanent supportive housing is the key to ending homelessness in communities.

Who: Alaska Housing Finance Corporation, Department of Health & Social Services, Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority, Alaska Continua of Care (Anchorage Coalition to End Homelessness, Alaska Coalition on Housing and Homelessness)

What: Utilize the Technical Assistance Collaborative Permanent Supportive Housing Report: The Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority and Department of Behavioral Health have utilized the Technical Assistance Collaborative to analyze the state system to increase and maximize the supply of affordable housing and to create more Permanent Supportive Housing units.

When: Immediate

Senior Housing

Facilitator: Kathleen McCoy, University of Alaska Anchorage

Subject Matter Experts:

Amanda Lofgren, Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority

Rachel Greenberg, Mat-Su Senior Services

Opportunity Statement:

Per capita, we have the fastest growing aging population in the nation, contributing \$3 billion to the economy.

As a State, we lack sufficient affordable, accessible and appropriate housing.

Suggested solutions:

1. Support Goals, Strategic Objectives and Performance Measures in the Alaska State Plan for Senior Services (FY2016-FY2019) and Alzheimer, Dementia & Related Disorders (ADRD) Road Map. *Please see attached goals, strategic objectives and performance measures.*
2. Advocate for Development of Housing Trust, a long term sustainable trust similar to the Mental Health Trust lands. For all housing, not just senior housing. Revenue neutral.
Who: All agencies
When: Advocate within 3-12 months.
3. Roommate finder service for seniors as a pilot project. Addresses housing design. Levels of support examples: 1) free board with 10 hours of service to senior; 2) half board with five hours of service; 3) pay full and no support to senior. Safety net to senior.
Background check for both senior and roommate. Could be college age roommate (specifically to assist senior) or perhaps another senior adult (home sharing for companionship and safety).
Who: Aging and Disability Resource Center, senior centers, community centers.
When: Within 6-12 months to develop plan. Low vacancy community to pilot.

Discussion/Question: Who enforces? Example organization in Baltimore completes vetting and background, match making (interviewing each other). No different than individuals hosting students from foreign countries.

4. Help Alaskans become more proactive and have realistic expectations about aging
Who: AmeriCorps / Alaska Commission on Aging
When: Application due in August 2016

5. Advocate for Sunrise Legislation for the Alaska Commission on Aging. (Representative Hawker and Senator Stoltze have sponsored legislation)
Who: Alaska Commission on Aging / Agenet / Seniors / Providers
When: Now
6. Support and Strengthen AHFC Senior Housing Office and Programs including support state contribution for Senior Community Housing Development Funds to enable utilization and distribution of \$1.7 million funds from Rasmussen Foundation.
Who: Alaska Commission on Aging / Agenet / Providers / Seniors / developers
When: Now
7. Portable modular ramp: used for making unit accessible. However, when senior passes or moves, the ramp remains at property. Often to be destroyed; possibly used for firewood. Portable ramp could be re-used in another area.
Who: independent living centers. UAA engineering to develop specifications, to be built (as a project) by local individuals as a training process.
Who: UAA / Job Corps / Aging and Disability Resource Center
When: immediately

Further Discussion:

Help Alaskans (via State, local community, and family) become proactive and have realistic expectations about the challenges of aging in Alaska: Marketing, Education and Planning.

Opening statistics:

- 60 and older statewide senior population as of 2014, courtesy Dept. of Labor: 115,280
Those between 50 and 59 (additional folks who will soon be "senior"), as of 2014, (Department of Labor): 107,986
- Cumulate average statewide growth of Seniors (2010 through 2014) 65+: 6.87%
- Cumulate average statewide growth of Seniors (2010 through 2014) 90+: 10.62%
- Long Term Care/Nursing Homes in Alaska: 18 in 16 communities w/a total of 693 beds.
- Total Assisted Living Facilities statewide (senior license designator): 229.
- Total Assisted Living Beds, statewide (senior license designator): 2,042.
- Percent of Assisted Living Facilities located in "urban" communities: 95% (Urban= Anchorage, Fairbanks, Juneau, Mat-Su, Kenai Peninsula)
- Total Independent Living Facilities statewide: 127
- Total units (not beds...) statewide: 3,196
- AHFC senior/disabled wait list as of 12/1/2015: 666 individuals.
- Wait list for NeighborWorks Alaska's Connolly Square (senior HUD 202 project): 18 people, equating to 4-5 years.
- NeighborWorks Alaska has approximately 350 "seniors" who reside in their properties and most are not "senior housing" per se.

- Wasilla Area Seniors has a wait list of 128 individuals.
- Renovation Loan Options program, offered thru AHFC:
 - Classes offered to Realtors, lenders & licensed contractors.
 - Approximately 250 individuals have completed the course in 2015
 - Loan volume FY14 to FY15 increased by 123 percent.
 - Dollar volume FY 14 to FY15 increased by 190 percent.
 - Our average home in Anchorage, Fairbanks and Juneau is approximately 35/36 years old.
 - Renovations allow people to make modifications and tie accessibility improvements together to “age in place.”

Communities develop plan on senior housing.

Futures planning (education): Peer-to-Peer mentoring program to help seniors plan for their future.

Development of local commissions on aging and workforce development. Also keep the programs that already exist, including maintaining and strengthening AHFC operating and capital budget supporting senior housing.

Veterans Homelessness

Facilitator: Tracey Burke, Ph.D, MSW, University of Alaska Anchorage

Subject Matter Experts: Ric Davidge, Alaska Veterans Foundation

Steve Ashman, Anchorage Department of Health & Social Services

The veteran's homeless workgroup identified three priorities:

- Finding and engaging homeless veterans.
- A lack of permanent supported housing.
- Sustaining ongoing housing and supportive service costs.

Below are the workgroups priorities and action steps for the Governor's consideration. It should also be noted that the priorities and non-veteran specific action steps apply to all homeless individuals, not just veterans.

Find Homeless Veterans – Funding for Outreach and Engagement Points of Discussion:

Treatment services should be robust and offered daily. Homeless individuals would not be required to accept them but they should be persistently offered. This can be accomplished by providing Housing First where relationships can be nurtured and developed over time to develop trust. The Municipality of Anchorage created by-name lists of homeless veterans with weekly meetings of outreach teams to discuss the status of each veteran and, when necessary, assigned an outreach worker to locate and engage the veteran in talks about housing and services. By-name team members included shelter providers, service providers and housing providers. Additional points identified by the workgroup for consideration were:

- Female veterans do not want to stay in shelters with male vets.
- The effort should be statewide, coordinated by local communities and Continuum of Care organizations.
- Housing authorities must be involved in the solution to end homelessness.
- Greater coordination of state resources for local government and service providers.
- Educating veterans to self-identify as veteran.
- Veteran status question should be included on all State applications and forms with an automatic referral to the State Department of Military and Veterans Affairs, if desired by the veteran.
- Local hospitals should be able to treat qualified veterans and pass the bill along to the VA or Medicaid for automatic payment.

Permanent Supportive Housing is Needed Immediately:

Studies have shown that homeless individuals stabilize while in housing with supportive services (Permanent Supported Housing or Housing First). This housing is typically integrated but can be provided at scattered sites. Approximately 80 percent of people in this type of housing remain in housing and have resulted in substantial reductions in costly emergency, first responder and state and community resources. These cost savings could be used to expand permanent supported housing, services and provide rental subsidies. Other points discussed by the workgroup:

- The old way of helping the homeless over the last 20 years has not succeeded and change is needed. Even the federal government is turning to the success of Permanent Supported Housing in its funding and programs.
- Funding should also be allocated for prevention or rapid re-housing for those veterans in a temporary emergency and on the verge of homelessness.
- Because of the health status of veterans (i.e. PTSD) housing should have staff on duty 24/7 or at scattered sites the property manager should have one telephone number to arrange for an immediate intervention so the veteran can maintain tenancy.
- Ongoing rental subsidies are needed because of low income; 30% of PSH resident income is used, which is about \$300 a month.
- Due to the extremely low incomes, rental subsidies are essential to keep veterans off the streets -- more VASH and AHFC vouchers are needed.
- State and local governments should make land available for affordable housing.
- Housing and support services could be partially funded by using the alcohol tax or marijuana to fund housing and services.
- Once housed, efforts must take place to train and employ homeless veterans.
- Investigate social impact bonds to help pay for housing and services.

Ongoing Services:

Finding and housing veterans by itself will not end homelessness without the needed social services and housing supports to successfully remain in the community. The SNHG funding augments social services resources (primarily Medicaid billing) by paying for non-Medicaid billing activities that ensure safety, security and success. The AHFC Special Needs Housing Grant has proven to successfully integrate housing and support services throughout the state. Another barrier is the

lack of allowable costs under Medicaid programs. The following items were discussed by the workgroup.

- SNHG should be increased (or at least funded to historical levels).
- Care coordination for personal and medical needs.
- Medicaid reform through state plan amendments; creation of 1115, 1195k and/or 1915i Waivers.
- Psychological treatment, assessment and neurological evaluation.
- Skill development, re-development and employment.
- Financial management.
- Personal health management and hygiene skills.
- Nutrition and cooking skills.
- Substance use reduction, treatment.
- Time management.
- Household management and keeping.
- Social skills and conflict resolution.

Action Steps:

The workgroup felt that there is already a significant amount of funding allocated towards housing and supportive services, but the health system continues to “conduct business” the same way it did 20 years ago. There needs to be better coordination with stakeholders and more innovative use of existing funds to finally end homelessness for veterans and their families.

1. All state applications should include the ability to make a referral to the State DMVA if selected by the veteran.
2. Encourage increased funding for the AHFC SNHG program.
3. Medicaid reform to allow for billing and payment of needed housing supports.
4. Look at dedicated funds (tobacco and marijuana) to fund homelessness capital and service needs.
5. Analyze DHSS existing funding and redesign system to ensure best use of limited resources.
6. Encourage state and local land transfers for the development of housing.

State Building Codes and Energy Efficiency Standards

Facilitator: Judith Owens-Manley, PhD., LDSW-R, University of Alaska Anchorage

Subject Matter Experts: Alan Wilson, Alaska Renovators, Inc.

John Anderson, Alaska Housing Finance Corporation

Background:

Significant gaps that threaten our health, safety, and economic development: No state wide residential building code, no energy efficiency standards that apply statewide, very uneven playing field in the level of financing, plan review, construction, inspection, and enforcement across all building types and regions of the state. This disjointed building code regulator system consumes too many resources from all interested parties without consistently providing health, safety and savings protections for all Alaskans.

We began the day with two problem statements:

- 1) Should the State have Statewide Energy Standards?
- 2) Should the State have Statewide Building Codes?

Results from the day's discussion:

The consensus from the group was yes, the state should have both statewide energy standards and statewide building codes. There was also consensus that if possible, separation of residential and commercial should be put in place. The state of Alaska should establish a statewide residential building and energy code for single, duplex, triplex and fourplex units.

The problem statements were then re-defined to the following Action Statement.

The State of Alaska should implement a Statewide Residential Building and Energy Code to be housed and authorized under the authorities of Alaska Housing Finance Corporation.

To achieve this broad and sensitive Action Statement, the discussion resulted in the following solution activities and informative deliverables.

- Solution 1: Ask AHFC to coordinate a building and energy code plan for the state, based on the existing AHFC model, and deliver the plan within the next six months to the governor. This plan will outline the process for collaborate public/private involvement for code implementation and compliance. It will also outline the family of codes to be used (International Residential Code or the IRC).
- Solution 2: Ask AHFC and the appropriate attorney generals to work in coordination with appropriate state agencies to review existing statutes and regulations and propose changes to state statutes referencing building and energy codes. The proposed changes would then be ready for the legislature. The proposed statute changes should be provided to the Governor within six months.

- Solution 3: Ask AHFC to develop a process plan for adopting a Building Advisory Council or some form of a board/commission responsible for overseeing residential codes, timeline to be determined. (There was no definitive who or when on this solution, but the group felt it was an important item to leave as a solution.)
- Solution 4: Ask AHFC to design a building and energy code educational outreach plan that addresses the benefits of statewide codes, the plan should be delivered to the governor in six months.

These problem statements and redefined action statement unfortunately are not easily defined to promote clear actionable deliverables. The group discussion resulted in the best consensus moving forward. We believe that this very complicated topic that needs overall council review to determine what can be done with administrative authority, what has to be done with legislative action and how to consolidate existing statutes and regulations.