



UAA Justice Center  
UNIVERSITY of ALASKA ANCHORAGE

[UAA Home](#) > [Justice Center](#) > [Alaska Justice Forum](#) > 27(1), Spring 2010 > Alaska

[Prisoner Re-entry Task Force](#)

 [Search](#)

# ALASKA JUSTICE FORUM

A PUBLICATION OF THE JUSTICE CENTER

Spring 2010

Vol. 27, No. 1

[Index to issue](#) | [Complete issue in Adobe Acrobat PDF format](#)

## Alaska Prisoner Re-entry Task Force

*Teresa White Carns*

**"Alaska Prisoner Re-entry Task Force" by Teresa White Carns. *Alaska Justice Forum* 27(1): 6 (Spring 2010).** The Alaska Prisoner Re-entry Task Force, a subcommittee of the Criminal Justice Working Group, met in April 2010 to establish a work plan, identify major areas of focus, and create strategic work groups to address each area. The Task Force goal is: "Individuals who are incarcerated do not return to custody." To achieve this, the Task Force will look for community partners and identify evidence-based strategies to improve the re-entry process.

The Alaska Prisoner Re-entry Task Force, a subcommittee of the Criminal Justice Working Group, met in April 2010 to establish a work plan, identify major areas of focus, and create strategic work groups to address each area. The Task Force goal is: "Individuals who are incarcerated do not return to custody." To achieve this, the Task Force will look for community partners and identify evidence-based strategies to improve the re-entry process. One way to measure progress toward this goal is a reduction in the baseline recidivism rate of 48 percent of adults returned to custody within the first year after their release. Over the next few months, members of the Task Force and subcommittees will use a basic template to develop their own goals and strategies, and will combine their efforts into a five-year strategic plan for implementing successful re-entry for prisoners. The plan should be ready for review by December 2010.

The complexity of the process is indicated by the range of community groups involved, and the variety of subcommittees that the Task Force established. Task Force members include representatives from the Alaska State Troopers, Department of Labor, Alaska Court System, Department of Corrections, Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority, Division of Behavioral Health,

**See also:**

- Criminal Justice Working Group (CJWG)
- Offender reentry

Department of Corrections Chaplaincy Program, Alaska Housing Finance Corporation, Victims for Justice, Partners for Progress, Nine Star Education and Employment Services, Cook Inlet Tribal Corporation, United Way, Akeela House, the Alaska Native Justice Center, and an ex-offender.

The Task Force subcommittees and their areas of focus are:

- **Results-based accountability assessment team**—create a structure and templates for each of the other groups to follow in developing, recording, and evaluating their work. Results-based accountability techniques are being integrated into the entire project.
- **Web site creation**—create a web site that serves as a reference point for both the members of the Task Force and the work groups, as well as providing information to the public.
- **Data gathering**—compile existing data about criminal justice populations, identify gaps in the data available, and recommend ways to provide the needed information.
- **Health and mental health**—create a baseline that shows current mental health services for offenders, whether incarcerated or not, and identify gaps in services.
- **Housing**—identify the range of existing housing services, describe the gaps, and determine ways to provide affordable housing for those released from incarceration.
- **Employment, workforce development, and education**—look at existing post-incarceration education and employment opportunities, and review ways to improve access to both.
- **Employment restrictions**—(also known as collateral consequences of incarceration)—build on existing work to identify laws that are barriers to housing, employment, and other needs of persons with felony convictions. Consider what changes might be possible, in the context of public safety, and rehabilitation of the offender.
- **State ID for released prisoners**—develop a plan to ensure prisoners have a state ID (or drivers' license) in order to qualify for benefits, work, and other daily needs.
- **Mentoring/faith-based assistance**—determine how to improve this type of support for people newly released from incarceration.
- **Misdemeanor prisoner population**—review the special difficulties for prisoners incarcerated for misdemeanors who will have little or no support network or supervision after release.

One example of a strategy that could be used to meet the Task Force goals relates to the Housing Subcommittee. Safe, sober housing has been shown to be a significant factor in reducing recidivism. A recent UAA Master's graduate in public policy, Stephanie Lawley, has developed a grid showing available housing for low income people and identifying length of stay possible, genders housed, access to public transportation, number of rooms, and requirements for residents of each facility. This grid could be the basis for a web-based application available to all agencies working to house newly-released prisoners.

*Teri Carns is with the Alaska Judicial Council in Anchorage, with responsibility for research projects, report writing, and aspects of judicial selection and retention.*