



## Arctic Alliance for People

PO Box 70416, Fairbanks, Alaska 99707 [aap@fairbanksinfo.com](mailto:aap@fairbanksinfo.com)

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Dear Legislators,

Arctic Alliance for People is a collective of health and human services organizations in the Fairbanks North Star Borough that has been advocating on behalf of our sector for over three decades. We would like to thank you for your time and energy that has been put into coming up with a sustainable fiscal plan for Alaska. We recognize that it is not an easy job, and appreciate your efforts. Every day, our organizations work to fill the gap between government services and critical community needs, creating a meaningful impact in the local economy as well as in the lives of the people we serve.

### **Solutions**

It is crucial that Alaska find new streams of revenue. Deep cuts alone to the budget will have a lasting negative impact on the Alaska economy. Cutting critical services and jobs from the budget will not benefit our community in the long run.

### **Impact of the non-profit sector on the economy**

Using standard economic indicators, the total employment in the non-profit sector is 63,000 people—or 19% of the Alaska workforce. The total impact from wages and salaries is \$2.5 billion. Our agencies offer economical solutions to our community needs. We are a good investment, with an immediate return by leveraging state dollars, resulting in stronger, healthier communities.

### **Prevention**

It may be cliché, but the old saying proves true, “An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.” Unfortunately, prevention programs are generally the first to go when cutting budgets. If we invested in programs, especially those benefitting ages from birth to 5 while the brain is still developing and hard wire connections are forming, we would alleviate problems that arise later in life.

### **Behavioral Health**

In Fairbanks, there is a behavioral health care crisis. Over the last few years, Fairbanks has seen drastic cuts made to behavior health services. As it is already, people with immediate mental health needs are being turned away from services. If cuts continue to happen, behavioral health care services will be seriously impaired.

Budgeting should be value-based so our families and communities are strengthened. There are additional information and statistics that can be provided by our member agencies to prove the impact we have on the well-being and economy of our community. We would be happy to provide those resources. Again, thank you for your work on behalf of all Alaskans, but particularly our most vulnerable populations.

Sincerely, 

Brenda Riley, 2016 Board President

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