



## Alaska Reentry Partnership

*A statewide coalition of individuals and organizations promoting success for justice-involved Alaskans at all phases of their involvement---pretrial, incarceration, reentry. Members include people with lived experience, family members, reentry coalitions, community providers, state and local agencies.*

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### **Access to Digital Technology to Better Serve Justice-Involved Alaskans**

The Alaska Reentry Partnership supports the Department of Corrections (DOC)'s efforts to expand opportunities for inmates to access digital technology for access to rehabilitative programming and activities—vocational training, education, treatment and recovery services, reentry and transitional planning, housing and employment assistance, peer support, faith-based, tribal, and visitation—all of which increase the likelihood of reduced recidivism and success in the community after release. Successful reentry means safer communities.

Since COVID, Alaska's prisons and halfway houses have been challenged with staff shortages. Improved access to digital technology will offer more options for rehabilitative programming and activities when staff aren't available. Additionally, access to technology will support continuity of care across the state when inmates are transferred. Finally, in today's world, people need to be 'digitally literate' for basic functioning—filling out applications, applying for jobs, banking, communication, etc. People who have been incarcerated for decades may not have the skills needed to operate in a digital world, all critical for reentry success.

[HB 35](#) (Rep. Himschoot) and [SB 19](#) (Sen. Myers) have introduced identical bills that will remove a barrier in state law that restricts inmates inside correctional facilities from utilizing certain electronic devices, such as computers or digital tablets.

#### Recommendations:

- Support HB 35 / SB 19 to update Alaska statutes related to inmate access to technology.
- Update institutional policies related to digital technology.
- Expand infrastructure inside Alaska's prisons, halfway houses, and therapeutic court settings to better provide safe and secure video conferencing, closed circuit education channels, digital tablets, computer labs, software, and more.