

GOAL –

To **reduce crime and recidivism** through the use of local control and earlier intervention by tribal courts; and to **save money** in part by relieving a portion of the misdemeanor caseload from District Courts, District Attorney's Office, Public Defender Agency, Division of Juvenile Justice, and Corrections. The length of this pilot is two years, followed by an evaluation for its effectiveness in attaining these goals.

PLAN -

Seek slight re-alignment of misdemeanor case budget funding from each of the Department of Corrections (DOC), Department of Law (DOL), Department of Administration (DOA), Department of Health & Social Services, and the Courts respective budgets to fund three selected tribal courts to handle misdemeanor cases within their respective communities. Ask the Governor's Office to contribute to round out the amount and as a symbol of unifying support.

- Department of Public Safety – Alaska Wildlife Troopers can also contribute in the transportation of equipment and personnel for training to selected villages and/or hub centers.
- University of Alaska Anchorage Justice Center can be engaged for an objective review of this pilot meeting stated goals; with a proposed cost for evaluation that is \$25K.

The budget re-allocation is \$45K a year from each DOC, DOL, DOA, DHHS, and the Courts and \$5K from the Governor's Office, giving an annual budget of **\$230K @ year**; with a two year pilot total of \$460K.

IMPLEMENTATION –

Select three ready functioning tribal courts from different geographical areas of the state and annually fund each approximately \$ 67K that will be allocated in two phases; after funding equipment & training.

- Phase One – Provide updated technological **equipment**, software, and training for court recording; and refresher **training** to selected tribal courts from (choice of)
 - Kevin Illingworth, UAF; Interior Aleutians Campus, or
 - Lisa Jaeger, Tanana Chiefs Conference, or
 - Magistrate Mike A. Jackson, State of: Alaska Court System, Kake District Court;
 - and the assigned district attorney, public defender, court clerk, for that geographical area
- Phase Two – The balance of funds would provide stipends for judges and court clerk @ case.

Suggested village tribal courts list may include: Chevak; Kake; Minto; Kenaitze; Barrow; but can include others. This pilot however would be limited to three and should be geographically dispersed.

SUMMARY –

This proposal is not asking for an increase in our overall state budget; rather a re-allocation of a slight amount from several key departments who should all realize a reduction in their current workload.

This has been somewhat pioneered by our Youth Courts, where there has been realized reductions and cost savings; albeit through some screening of cases accepted. Also sought is the State's recognition of the contribution tribal courts can have at the local level. Finally, amongst all the crime fighting strategies that exist, the most effective police force any community can have are its own citizens who feel both empowered and encouraged to become involved; let's invest in and engage our communities.

All that is at risk is only a small amount of money; all that can be realized is so much more.