

**ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE  
HOUSE JUDICIARY STANDING COMMITTEE**

April 3, 2019

1:51 p.m.

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Representative Matt Claman, Chair  
Representative Gabrielle LeDoux, Vice Chair  
Representative Chuck Kopp  
Representative Louise Stutes  
Representative Adam Wool  
Representative Laddie Shaw  
Representative David Eastman

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

All members present

**COMMITTEE CALENDAR**

PRESENTATION: STATUS OF THE SECOND CHANCE GRANT BY THE  
DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

- HEARD

PRESENTATION: REENTRY'S ROLE IN REDUCING CRIME

- HEARD

**PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION**

No previous action to record

**WITNESS REGISTER**

JANICE WEISS, Reentry Program Manager  
Department of Corrections  
Anchorage, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Presented on the status of the Second  
Chance Act Grant.

STEVE WILLIAMS, Chief Operating Officer  
Alaska Mental Health Trust  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Presented on reentry services.

SUSANNE DIPIETRO, Executive Director  
Alaska Judicial Council  
Anchorage, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Presented on reentry services.

DON HABEGER, Coordinator  
Juneau Reentry Coalition  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Presented on reentry services.

KELLY GOODE, Deputy Commissioner  
Department of Corrections  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Answered a question during the presentation on reentry services.

CATHLEEN MCLAUGHLIN, Director  
Partners Reentry Center  
Anchorage, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Presented on reentry services.

#### **ACTION NARRATIVE**

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**CHAIR MATT CLAMAN** called the House Judiciary Standing Committee meeting to order at 1:51 p.m. Representatives Eastman, Wool, Shaw, LeDoux, and Claman were present at the call to order. Representatives Stutes and Kopp arrived as the meeting was in progress.

#### **Presentation: Status of the Second Chance Grant by the Department of Corrections**

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CHAIR CLAMAN announced that the first order of business would be an update and overview from the Department of Corrections (DOC) on the status of the Second Chance [Act] (SCA) Grant. He opened invited testimony. He drew attention to a document included in the committee packet that provided information about the grant. He noted that DOC had announced earlier in the year that it was "not going to go forward with this particular grant."

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JANICE WEISS, Reentry Program Manager, Department of Corrections, explained that the State of Alaska (SOA) has received two SCA grants. The first, she said, was a planning grant worth \$100,000 that was awarded a few years ago. That grant, she explained, allowed SOA to apply for a second grant worth \$1 million. She described confusion surrounding the \$1 million grant that has since been dispelled. She addressed the document included in the committee packet and explained that it contains the grant's goals and implementation plan for the next two years. She said the plan will allow DOC to work with its various partners to provide comprehensive reentry services to those being released from DOC institutions.

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CHAIR CLAMAN asked for additional information about the administration's decision to change course and move forward with the grant. He also asked how the grant will help reentry efforts.

MS. WEISS stated that DOC was able to better understand the grant when information about it became more available. She said this additional information allowed the department to identify changes it wanted to make to the grant's scope and budget. She explained that she previously served as Coalition Coordinator of the Mat-Su Re-entry Coalition, so she understands how important it is for DOC to work with coalitions to address reentry. She said the grant has changed to the point that, rather than having to hire multiple new employees to implement it, DOC will only need to hire a grant manager. She said DOC will make use of its probation officers to implement the grant and sustain a comprehensive reentry program that includes DOC institutions, field offices, and community partners.

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CHAIR CLAMAN asked if the grant will enable reentry programs - such as the ones to be presented on later in the meeting - to be strengthened in support by DOC.

MS. WEISS said that is correct. She mentioned a conversation she had earlier in the day with new probation officers about how the grant will allow DOC to set up an infrastructure for working with reentry service providers that will continue beyond the life of the grant. She noted that DOC Commissioner-Designee Nancy Dahlstrom feels sustainability with regard to the grant is very important.

CHAIR CLAMAN asked about the level of federal funding coming to SOA as a result of keeping the grant instead of turning it down.

MS. WEISS said the level of funding from the federal government is \$1 million. She said the Bureau of Justice Assistance has been giving these grants for a number of years and realized that most recipients were unable to spend the money in one year. As a result, she explained, the bureau extended the grant to two years, meaning DOC will have until the end of fiscal year 2020 to spend the money. She said SOA will then be invited to apply for a second grant.

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CHAIR CLAMAN, seeing no additional questions, thanked Ms. Weiss for her presentation and for participating in the decision to move forward with the grant.

**Presentation: Reentry's Role in Reducing Crime**

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CHAIR CLAMAN announced that the final order of business would be a presentation on reentry services.

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STEVE WILLIAMS, Chief Operating Officer, Alaska Mental Health Trust (AMHT), said this presentation would build on information previously presented to the committee. He added that it would also illustrate what is required to help the incarcerated reenter the community. He said reentry requires partnerships between DOC and community organizations. He remarked that 40 percent of AMHT beneficiaries are incarcerated on an annual basis. He defined "beneficiaries" as adults and youths experiencing a mental health disorder, a substance use disorder, a developmental disability, a traumatic brain injury, and/or Alzheimer's Disease, dementia, or a related disorder. He noted that AMHT does not keep a list of beneficiaries. He added that beneficiaries are individuals whose disorders are so acute that they impact their quality of life and their ability to function at an independent level in the community. He said these disorders also place beneficiaries at a high risk for institutionalization, whether that be through a correctional facility, juvenile justice facility, or psychiatric institution. He stated that reentry is an important issue for AMHT because

its beneficiaries are often housed and released by DOC. He remarked that reentry services must be conducted thoughtfully and with deliberate planning, or else this particular population will cycle through the emergency and correctional systems at an above-average rate. He noted that felony offenders who are beneficiaries are incarcerated twice as long as non-beneficiaries, while misdemeanor offenders who are beneficiaries spend up to 150 times as long in DOC facilities as non-beneficiaries. He said this explains why AMHT has partnered with DOC and other organizations.

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SUSANNE DIPIETRO, Executive Director, Alaska Judicial Council, began a PowerPoint presentation titled "Reentry Services: Promoting Safer & Healthier Communities" [hard copy included in the committee packet]. She addressed slide 2, titled "Reentry Background." She remarked that the Alaska Criminal Justice Commission (ACJC) and various other criminal justice stakeholders have been grappling with the fact that 95 percent of prisoners will eventually be released. She noted that many of these prisoners entered DOC facilities with a mental health or substance abuse disorder, and that many of them will exit DOC with the same problems with which they entered. She ran through a list of additional problems that releasees could face, including loss of employment, loss of housing, and disruption of family ties. She explained that these individuals are at risk for re-offense or violation of a condition of probation, especially within the first weeks and months of release. She said research shows that the likelihood of recidivism decreases when reentry support services are frontloaded and focused on medium- to higher-risk individuals.

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MS. DIPIETRO addressed slide 3, titled "What do we mean by 'reentry'?" She said the focus of reentry is on a specific group of people who have left a correction facility after having completed their sentence and who may be under active supervision by a probation or parole officer, though some - typically misdemeanor offenders - are instead under passive court supervision. She remarked that these individuals are being returned to the community, though not necessarily to their home communities. She said some people are unable to return to their home communities due to supervision or treatment requirements. She said reentry programs attempt to help those people.

MR. WILLIAMS noted that releasees are not always released to their home communities because treatment programs are often unavailable or inaccessible in their home communities. This, he explained, means some individuals are released in communities such as Fairbanks or Anchorage for the purpose of accessing those services. She said this presents a challenge to reentry planning, as the goal is to allow people to return to their home communities.

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REPRESENTATIVE WOOL noted that it is important for releasees to not be stranded in a strange city without family support. On the topic of treatment, he asked whether the programs described by Mr. Williams are mandatory to comply with the conditions of one's release. He mused that having to stay in a place like Anchorage in order abide by those conditions, resulting in being away from one's home and family, could exacerbate a releasee's problems, and that perhaps it should be a priority to release those individuals to their home communities where they have a better support system.

MR. WILLIAMS noted that the conditions by which an individual is ordered to abide are made by the court and are often connected to the crime itself. He said some communities have access to residential substance abuse programming, but the programming is not always suitable to meet the needs of a particular individual.

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MR. WILLIAMS addressed slide 4, titled "Sequential Intercept Model (SIM)," which featured a flow chart depicting the model developed to address the needs of adults in contact with the criminal justice system. He walked through the model and discussed the path an offender takes from leaving the community, entering the criminal justice and correctional system, and then returning to the community upon reentry. He repeated the statistic that 95 percent of people in the system will be released into the community. He said the same things necessary to prevent individuals from violating in the first place are also necessary on the back end to help releasees reintegrate and prevent recidivism.

MR. WILLIAMS addressed slide 5, which displayed only a quote: "Successful reentry begins on admission and continues through incarceration, release, community supervision and ultimately the

unsupervised and successful reintegration [of the individual] onto the community." He emphasized the goal of achieving unsupervised reintegration.

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MR. WILLIAMS addressed slide 6, titled "History - Statewide Reentry Efforts." He explained that reentry has been a focused effort by DOC, AMHT, and other organizations prior to 2010, but noted that the statewide Prisoner Reentry Task Force was formed in that year. He said the new task force, which included newly-formed grassroots reentry coalitions as well as municipal and state officials, sought to address high recidivism rates. He discussed the formation and growth of local grassroots reentry coalitions across the state, including the Juneau Reentry Coalition. He said a statewide Recidivism Reduction Plan was developed in 2015. He remarked that AMHT helped fund positions for four reentry coalitions across the state in fiscal year 2016. He said additional reentry coalitions formed in 2017 around the same time that DOC, the Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS), and AMHT partnered to implement a structured release process for releasees.

MR. WILLIAMS addressed slide 7, titled "Roles of a Reentry Coalition." He summarized the four major objectives of a reentry coalition: to educate the community about recidivism, the criminal justice system, and reentry; to identify local challenges facing reentrants such as housing and employment; to identify and rectify local gaps in reentry services; and to serve as a local point of contact for DOC and its partners. He characterized the various coalitions as diverse and representative of their respective communities. He noted that the coalitions are comprised of DOC officials, HSS officials, private citizens, local businesses, and reentrants themselves.

MR. WILLIAMS drew attention to a diagram on slide 7, subtitled "From Incarceration to Communities." He explained that the diagram attempts to illustrate what it takes to successfully reenter the community post-incarceration. He walked through the diagram and listed the various people who assist reentrants, including probation officers and case managers. He explained that reentrants require a variety of things to successfully reenter the community, including transportation, safe and sober housing, vocational training, and access to healthcare.

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MR. WILLIAMS addressed slide 8, titled "Local Reentry Coalitions." He explained that AMHT funds coalition coordinator positions in Juneau, Anchorage, Fairbanks, and the Matanuska-Susitna Valley. He said DHSS funds coalitions in Nome, Dillingham, Kenai, and Ketchikan.

MR. WILLIAMS addressed slides 9 through 11, titled "Division of Behavioral Health & Community Reentry Supports." He said there are three operational focuses funded by DHSS: direct service, prevention and early intervention, and program Infrastructure. He said examples of "direct service" include reentry case management, reentry centers, healthcare access, and housing vouchers. He explained that DHSS funding under the category "prevention and early intervention" helps grassroots coalitions in rural communities. He said "program infrastructure" includes the facilitation of data sharing between DHSS and DOC, as well as data collection and monitoring. He described how data helps grow and improve reentry services. He noted that case managers currently funded by DHSS are located in Anchorage, Matanuska-Susitna, Fairbanks, and Juneau, and that their caseloads are 40 persons each. He said each caseload is small because the target population overseen by the case managers is composed of higher-risk reentrants. He mentioned that an overwhelming caseload would not generate positive results. He discussed DHSS efforts to facilitate data sharing between different departments and other entities that have contact with reentrants. He explained that DHSS wants to make information available to reentrants and those groups that support them. He added that DHSS has an independent evaluation in place to track the outcomes of reentry case managers.

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DON HABEGER, Community Coordinator, Juneau Reentry Coalition (JREC), said his role during this presentation is to discuss the local reentry coalitions and how they operate. He remarked that coalitions are unique to their localities but are all working on the same issue across the state.

MR. HABEGER addressed slide 12, titled "Juneau Reentry Coalition." He said the mission of JREC is to "promote public safety by identifying and implementing strategies that increase a former prisoner's well-being within the community and reduces the likelihood of their return to prison through recidivating." He noted that an average of 502 individuals are released annually in the Juneau community. He compared that to Juneau's 314 high school graduates in 2017. He characterized a reentry

coalition as the interface between the community and institutions. He relayed the topics discussed at a recent meeting at Lemon Creek Correctional Center. He described the assistance provided by JREC in transporting an individual from Juneau to the individual's home community in Ketchikan. He listed the various community stakeholders that are part of the coalition and that work toward a safer community. He discussed how the Subway restaurant in Juneau has donated meal cards to the local field probation office for use as incentives for supervised reentrants.

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CHAIR CLAMAN asked how many of the 502 average annual reentrants JREC is able to assist.

MR. HABEGER explained that releasees who are determined to be medium- or high-risk are eligible for JREC's case management program. He said approximately 160 annual reentrants meet that criteria. He explained that JREC has one case manager funded by DHSS who is able to serve only 40 of those individuals.

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MR. HABEGER addressed slide 13, also titled "Juneau Reentry Coalition." He said JREC's focus is on behavioral health treatment, reentry housing, and peer support. He noted the importance of helping reentrants access mental health and substance abuse services. He called reentry housing a significant issue for the Juneau community. He mentioned JREC's partnerships with the halfway house Gastineau Human Services, the women's facility Haven House Juneau, and the Central Council of the Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska, which operates its own reentry transitional housing program for men. He spoke to the help provided to recent releasees from individuals who have successfully reentered the community via peer support.

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REPRESENTATIVE WOOL spoke to issues that places like Haven House have with receiving SOA money, noting that organizations like that must rely on donations. He asked if more group homes would be available to people for reentry purposes if different facilities were able to be funded by SOA dollars.

MR. HABEGER said the Tlingit & Haida program was not able to complete an agreement with SOA, so JREC recently wrote a letter of support in pursuit of federal funding.

REPRESENTATIVE WOOL asked to what degree a criminal record can impede reentrants from obtaining housing.

MR. HABEGER answered that it is a significant challenge. He noted that sex offenders are ineligible to participate in programs through the Alaska Housing Finance Corporation (AHFC). He said JREC is trying to find a system to address that situation. He added that individuals incarcerated for manufacturing drugs are another group of people who are often prohibited from accessing programs that use state and federal housing dollars. This, he explained, results in their homelessness.

REPRESENTATIVE WOOL expressed frustration that someone who has served his/her time in jail and has entered a reentry program can be denied housing. He noted that those individuals are also unlikely to find employment, which further contributes to them becoming "a liability to the state and a public safety risk." He called that "short-sighted." He asked how organizations like JREC can alleviate that.

MR. HABEGER noted that federal rules regarding money for states are partly responsible for this scenario. He expressed that there is currently not enough interest on the national level to effect change.

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REPRESENTATIVE LEDOUX asked if there are state laws or regulations that prohibit the use of money for housing for those released after committing drug crimes.

MR. HABEGER said it is his understanding that United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) dollars received by SOA are what drives that particular issue. He said those federal monies have strings attached and SOA must honor that.

REPRESENTATIVE LEDOUX asked whether there is any way to "segregate the money" so that SOA can address the problem without using federal dollars.

MR. HABEGER said he does not have an answer to that question.

REPRESENTATIVE LEDOUX remarked that there seems to be a lot of people in Juneau who live in doorways. She asked if those people are eligible for reentry services.

MR. HABEGER said it is important to keep in mind that reentry is a voluntary program, so a person released from Lemon Creek Correctional Center is not required to access the service. He said if an individual chooses to return to the local shelter and live "a more-homeless lifestyle," he/she is free to do so. He stated that there is not much JREC can do about that.

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KELLY GOODE, Deputy Commissioner, Department of Corrections, addressed Representative LeDoux's question about segregating the money and said she would find out the answer and report back to the committee.

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MR. HABEGER addressed slide 14, also titled "Juneau Reentry Coalition." He said JREC is a community group and not formally a nonprofit organization, and that it invites any and all community members to be part of the group. He said JREC's governance team is led by a co-chair from the community and a co-chair from a DOC institution. He added that JREC's 15-member steering team consists of representatives with various areas of expertise. He said JREC work is sometimes done through workgroups. He noted that he is JREC's one paid staff member.

MR. HABEGER addressed slide 15, also titled "Juneau Reentry Coalition." He said JREC's program is voluntary and can be accessed through a reentrant's probation officer. He described the process through which one may sign up for the program. He detailed the work of a case manager to develop a written reentry plan to help guide the reentrant toward success six months after release. He said that, in the time since its case management inception, JREC has had 63 individuals that have entered into its program. He said 16 of those individuals have graduated. He referenced a statistic on the slide - "11 Noncompliant" - and said it refers to those who "did not make it" because they got in trouble for some reason. He noted that 11 noncompliant individuals out of 63 total individuals is 17 percent.

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REPRESENTATIVE LEDOUX asked if she has it correct that, out of 63 individuals referred to JREC, only 17 "made it out."

MR. HABEGER said that is incorrect. He explained a list of statistics on slide 15. He said, out of 63 individuals referred, 15 graduated with 100 percent completion, 20 opted out before completion, 11 were noncompliant, and 17 are currently enrolled are just starting the process. He mentioned that anyone released from Lemon Creek Correctional Center in the past six months can seek help and join the program.

REPRESENTATIVE LEDOUX asked, of the 63 individuals, how many have been successful. She said she realizes JREC is not dealing with an easy population.

MR. HABEGER said that the numbers he presented span from May 2017 through February 2019. He said 15 individuals have successfully completed program and 20 have opted out. Of those that opted out, he said, JREC is not aware that any of them have recidivated. He said JREC believes 35 individuals are successful to the current date.

REPRESENTATIVE LEDOUX asked for verification that none of the 15 graduates have recidivated.

MR. HABEGER said that, to JREC's knowledge, the 15 graduates and 20 opt-outs have not recidivated.

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CHAIR CLAMAN asked if JREC has a 40-case limit for its caseload.

MR. HABEGER answered that JREC's reentry case management capacity is 40 at any single time, and that the limit is a stipulation of an agreement with the Division of Behavioral Health (DBH).

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CATHLEEN MCLAUGHLIN, Director, Partners Reentry Center (PRC), addressed slide 16, titled "Partners Reentry Center." She also referenced a document [included in the committee packet] titled "Partners Reentry Center (PRC) Statistics." She said PRC was established in Anchorage about five years ago and, with over 7,000 reentrants served in that time, has learned how to deliver timely reentry services. She said timely services are key in reentry programs. "If we don't touch somebody immediately upon

release," she explained, "[and] they are [released] into homeless, we have already lost them."

MS. MCLAUGHLIN stated that PRC houses people immediately upon release regardless of charges. She said PRC is a voluntary program and the understanding is that the staff works with reentrants, not for them. She remarked that PRC attempts to help reentrants get back to being healthy members of the community. She said PRC was established in August 2013 with some legislative funding. She noted that PRC has blended funds, including a contract with DHSS for \$800,000 "for a wide range of reentry services" such as case management, bus passes, supportive services, and housing. She said PRC also receives Special Needs Housing (SNHG) and Homeless Assistance Program (HAP) funds from AHFC that it uses "to blend" for housing. She explained this means PRC is not limited in whom it can house. She mentioned "the head in the bed rule," which she explained is an agreement that PRC will pay the first 30-60 days of a reentrant's housing as long as he/she works with PRC.

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REPRESENTATIVE LEDOUX asked how PRC has managed to find a way around the issues brought up earlier by Mr. Habeger regarding JREC's inability to house certain reentrants.

MS. MCLAUGHLIN said the SNHG and HAP funds received by PRC are "to the program, not the person." She explained, for example, that if PRC is attempting to house a sex offender who must remain in Anchorage due to sex offender treatment, PRC is able to use transitional funding through HAP, SNHG, or a contract through a specific housing provider. She noted that PRC pays housing providers directly so the funds do not go through the individual to be housed. She stated that, since PRC's inception, it has housed over 3,700 people and never once denied a reentrant a bed. She said PRC has 400 beds available to it in Anchorage through 16 housing providers plus 127 private landlords. She described the system of accountability to which it holds reentrants, in particular those who are housed by private landlords. She said the private landlords are able to call PRC if issues arise with a housed reentrant. She referenced a figure on the statistics document that showed PRC funded housing for 155 reentrants during the month of February 2019.

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REPRESENTATIVE WOOL asked her to clarify how she avoids the problem regarding restrictions on spending state funds to service certain individuals.

MS. MCLAUGHLIN said the contract PRC has with DBH and the funding it receives from AHFC are focused on the program, not the individuals.

CHAIR CLAMAN clarified that HUD funds assist individuals to apply for housing so that the individual is the entity paying rent, and that these funds come with restrictions, whereas in PRC's case the rent-paying entity is the program itself.

MS. MCLAUGHLIN said that is correct. She said AHFC has tenant-based rental assistance (TBRA) vouchers which are specifically for an individual and are thus restricted, so sex offenders on the lifetime registry and convicted drug manufacturers cannot use them.

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REPRESENTATIVE SHAW asked whether PRC is under the administration of DOC or if it is a nonprofit organization.

MS. MCLAUGHLIN answered that PRC is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization under Partners for Progress.

REPRESENTATIVE SHAW said that could explain why it is able to move funds easier.

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CHAIR CLAMAN asked on behalf of Representative LeDoux why JREC cannot do the same thing as PRC.

MR. HABEGER noted that JREC is also "nonprofit" and said its current model is to continue working with its existing nonprofit partners and to accomplish certain housing projects. He said JREC looks to move in that direction but is challenged by the fact that it has not yet "caught up with the community of Anchorage."

REPRESENTATIVE LEDOUX said Partners for Progress is also a nonprofit organization. She asked what is keeping JREC from accomplishing what PRC is accomplishing.

MR. HABEGER clarified that JREC is a community coalition and not officially a nonprofit organization. He said JREC's model is to rely on and work with Juneau's existing nonprofit organizations. He said JREC has not "taken that step" to form a 501(c)(3) organization.

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MS. MCLAUGHLIN said PRC is a walk-in center. She explained that PRC sees people "in real-time" and does not have waitlists, so an individual who enters the center is served the day he/she arrives. She noted that PRC is unique in how its service-delivery model involves bringing providers into the center rather than sending individuals out to wherever the providers are located. For example, she said, various organizations come to PRC every Monday through Friday to deliver services. She explained this means people who have been displaced into Anchorage do not have to travel around town to receive services and treatment. She emphasized that this is a unique delivery model not used nationally and that it is being considered for replication. She said PRC is community-based and thus has no authority over the people it serves. She said PRC sees the people it serves as community members. She noted, "When you don't have authority over someone, you can treat them differently." She said community-based reentry services are key to PRC's success.

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REPRESENTATIVE LEDOUX asked if PRC is located "right across from the jail."

MS. MCLAUGHLIN said PRC is located across the street from the fire station on Barrow Street in Anchorage. She said the center is eight blocks from the jail. She noted the location is strategic because it is within walking distance of various services necessary for those individuals who are being released into homelessness.

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MS. MCLAUGHLIN addressed slide 17, which featured a cartoon illustration. She mentioned a study that showed that formerly incarcerated individuals are almost 10 times more likely to be homeless than the general public. She said that when PRC addresses reentry and recidivism, it is also addressing the homeless population.

MS. MCLAUGHLIN addressed slide 18, titled "3 Phases of Community-Based Reentry." She said PRC's programming is tailored to address the specific needs of each reentrant. She said the programming consists of three phases: stabilize, incentivize, and restore. She spoke to the importance of stabilizing a reentrant with mental health services, housing, and/or addiction treatment. She said PRC's first 7 to 10 days with an individual are focused on providing stability and shelter. She explained that the "incentivize" phase is about giving people purpose and keeping them busy, which reduces interest in criminal behavior. She addressed the "restore" phase by noting that 38 percent of the people served by PRC are Alaska Native, almost all of whom do not live in Anchorage by choice, but rather because they are required to participate in treatment that is only offered in select parts of the state. She said those individuals need to go home, so PRC has a restorative justice model for when treatment has been completed. She described how an individual who wishes to return to his/her village must have a restorative plan, a safety net, and must ask permission to return from elders or those in charge of the village. She discussed a commitment she made to DOC that the people she returns to villages would not re-violate. She noted that PRC has sent 22 people back to their home communities and none have recidivated.

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REPRESENTATIVE EASTMAN asked if she has seen any graduates return to the program.

MS. MCLAUGHLIN said "absolutely." She noted that PRC has done an internal audit to determine its recidivism rate, which she will share later. She said there are some people who have entered the program several times. She noted that PRC does not give monied services to people who feel they are entitled and will not house people who have already disrespected its housing within the past six months. She emphasized that PRC is voluntary for both the reentrant and for those employed at PRC.

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MS. MCLAUGHLIN addressed slide 19, titled "Partners Reentry Center." She detailed the different types of services provided by PRC broken down into three categories: housing, self-sufficiency, and behavioral modification & community support. She described the accommodations PRC will make to help an

individual get housing to provide a sustainable path forward toward him/her becoming a functioning member of the community.

MS. MCLAUGHLIN addressed slide 20, also titled "Partners Reentry Center." She said PRC serves up to 1,500 to 1,800 people per year. She said PRC surveyed 300 individuals with high [Level of Supervision/Service Inventory Revised] LSIR scores.

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CHAIR CLAMAN asked her to verify that LSIR is "the risk-assessment index for release from jail."

MS. MCLAUGHLIN said that is correct. She explained that anyone with an LSIR score over 28 has the highest likelihood of recidivating and committing new crimes.

CHAIR CLAMAN noted that the committee discussed the LSIR form with DOC during a previous meeting.

MS. MCLAUGHLIN said 65 percent of people who entered the program were signed up for Medicaid and/or the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) within the first week of release. She said 31 percent were referred to and/or utilized PRC's treatment-providing partners. She said 61 percent gained full time employment. She mentioned that PRC spent an average of about \$600 per participant on housing costs during fiscal year 2018. She added that PRC does not pay for housing when the participant is able to pay his/her own way. She posed a question: "Do we make a difference." She said the answer is yes.

MS. MCLAUGHLIN addressed slide 21, which featured a bar graph measuring recidivism resulting in a re-arrest and re-conviction. She said PRC's recidivism rate is 27 percent against a 48 percent recidivism rate for a control group of individuals who elected not to participate in PRC programming. She noted that this is a small sampling, but PRC would provide additional details should the committee want to see them.

3:08:41 PM

REPRESENTATIVE LEDOUX asked about PRC's success rate.

MS. MCLAUGHLIN said PRC has a 27 percent recidivism rate of people who were "meaningfully" in its program, so 73 percent of people did not recidivate.

REPRESENTATIVE LEDOUX asked for verification that the people in the program are those with the highest risk of recidivating.

MS. MCLAUGHLIN answered "yes." She said people with support and safety nets do not need to come to PRC. She stated that the center is for those being released into homelessness. She said 100 percent of PRC's population "are those that are the highest recidivists."

REPRESENTATIVE LEDOUX remarked that it sounds like PRC has "a pretty good track record."

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REPRESENTATIVE WOOL referenced the statistic that 65 percent of participants signed up for Medicaid or SNAP. He asked for confirmation that this is "a [recently] available function." He said it is his understanding that recently-released convicts could not obtain SNAP.

MS. MCLAUGHLIN said that is correct. She explained that, when Medicaid was expanded, PRC was able to bring in partners to sign up participants for Medicaid and food stamps. She said those who are still incarcerated can sign up for Medicaid "in a halfway house setting." She said an individual cannot apply for food stamps until release.

REPRESENTATIVE WOOL asked if this was the result of a recent changed. He asked if it had anything to do with Senate Bill 91 [passed during the Twenty-Ninth Alaska State Legislature].

MS. MCLAUGHLIN said the availability of SNAP and Medicaid is due to Medicaid expansion, which is entirely separate from Senate Bill 91.

[3:10:37 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE KOPP commended Ms. McLaughlin and PRC. He recognized PRC's achievement in reducing recidivism among high-risk reentrants. He characterized PRC's efforts as "the hard work of redeeming peoples' lives." She said those efforts protect the whole of society. He commented that the data presented is "remarkable."

MS. MCLAUGHLIN noted that, with respect to the recidivism statistics, PRC only looks at rearrests and reconvictions. She stated that PRC sees promising results.

[3:11:58 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE WOOL acknowledged that the 27 percent recidivism rate relates to new crimes as opposed to violations of conditions or probation/parole. He asked whether Ms. McLaughlin feels that some probation/parole restrictions are burdensome and at times set people up to fail. He asked if those restrictions should be reformed.

MS. MCLAUGHLIN said that is a good question. She remarked that DOC has been willing to work with PRC with regard to individuals who are "holding themselves accountable." She said that, when that is the case, probation officers should not be so quick to reincarcerate in response to a mistake. She remarked that there has been a shift in probation officer culture over the past five years, and that the shift is for the better.

[3:13:52 PM](#)

MR. WILLIAMS said the committee's discussion of reentry is valuable and remarked that it illustrates the complexity of supporting and guiding people so that they do not recidivate. He summarized the topics discussed and noted that all of them are important for a reentrant to be successful. He remarked that increased public safety and decreased recidivism rates depend on all those elements working well together.

MR. WILLIAMS returned to slide 7 and reemphasized that the role of a coalition is not to provide services, but to identify barriers and advocate for change. She said "the case management piece" operates in collaboration with the coalition, which identifies what services are available and assists in accessing them.

[3:16:17 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE STUTES asked, "Has the Alaska Mental Health Trust Fund turned a corner and realized what their true mission is other than a real estate holding company?"

MR. WILLIAMS stated that AMHT has always had a mission of looking out for its beneficiaries. He said that has never changed.

3:17:43 PM

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business before the committee, the House Judiciary Standing Committee meeting was adjourned at 3:18 p.m.