The Alaska Department of Corrections Recidivism Reduction Plan
The Alaska Prisoner Reentry Initiative

SUMMARY

The Department of Corrections recidivism reduction efforts have been on-going for many years. Under the leadership of Commissioner Ron Taylor, the DOC created an Office of Prisoner Reentry (OPR) to implement prisoner reentry reforms as the primary focus of recidivism reduction in the agency to:

- Ensure successful offender reentry to the State of Alaska, to reduce recidivism, to enhance public safety through collaboration among stakeholders and to assist in ensuring the appropriate and responsible use of cost savings realized by justice reforms through reinvestment in evidence-based, community-centered services.

- Collaborate with the Alaska Criminal Justice Commission, the Criminal Justice Workgroup, the Alaska Parole Board, the Department of Health & Social Services, the Department of Labor & Workforce Development, the Alaska Housing Finance Corporation, the Alaska Court System, the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority and other non-governmental stakeholders to develop and execute a robust and systematic prisoner reentry plan for Alaska to ensure the effective supervision and delivery of appropriate services to returning citizens pursuant to Senate Bill 64.

THE ALASKA PRISONER REENTRY INITIATIVE

As part of the work in the department for the past several years, the agency created the Alaska Prisoner Reentry Initiative (AK-PRI) which represents the foundation for a five-year effort expected to make Alaska a national leader in recidivism reduction of its citizens who are returning to their communities following a prison term.

Vision of The AK-PRI: Every returning citizen released from prison will have the tools and support needed to succeed in the community.

Mission: To improve public safety by reducing crime through implementation of a seamless plan of services and supervision developed with each returning citizen—delivered through state and local collaboration—from the time they enter prison through their successful transition, reintegration, and aftercare in the community. The initiative gives Alaska the tools to become a national leader among states in recidivism reduction.

Goals: (1) Promote public safety by reducing the threat of harm to persons, families and their property by citizens returning to their communities from prison; and (2) Increase success rates of returning citizens who transition from prison by fostering effective, evidence-based risk and need management and treatment, returning citizen accountability, and safe family, community and victim participation.

Performance Measures: Increased public safety through the reduction of recidivism (as measured by re-conviction or conditional release violation and return to prison) and successful completion of community supervision.
At the heart of the initiative is the Alaska Prisoner Reentry Initiative Framework. The Framework was designed for Alaska but builds on approaches for reentry improvement developed by the National Prisoner Reentry Council, as outlined in its Reentry Policy Council Report,¹ and the National Institute of Corrections through its Transition from Prison to Community (TPC) Framework.² These approaches provide guidance for specific justice policies that will be considered in Alaska as the “Targets for Change” to improve prisoner reentry.

These Targets for Change are categorized within the three TPC Framework phases (Getting Ready, the Institutional Phase; Going Home, the Pre-Release Phase; and Staying Home, the Community Supervision and Discharge Phase) and seven primary decision points that comprise the reentry process.

For each Target for Change, goals and operational expectations are included, as well as references for further reading to specific pages within the voluminous Reentry Policy Council Report and other publications that pertain specifically to the Target for Change that is being addressed. Thus, the Framework provides a practical guide to help direct Alaska’s plan to meet the policy goals and operational expectations of this Council. The Framework also frees state agencies to begin to focus immediately on implementation.

Importantly, the Framework underscores the three overarching policy and practice considerations that must be in place to truly reform a returning citizen’s behavior: Offender Management Planning, Case Management and Evidence-Based Practices.

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PRIORITIES FOR REENTRY REFORM

The priorities for implementation of the AK-PRI Framework include an improved offender management and accountability planning process (OMP) with each returning citizen, from the point of imprisonment through successful discharge from post-release community supervision, with an emphasis on safe, affordable housing and employment. This careful case planning will be driven by a validated, objective assessment of each returning prisoner’s risks, needs and strengths.

Offender Management and Planning
To establish the comprehensive and standardized use of assessment-driven OMP at four critical points in the returning citizen transition process that succinctly describe for the returning citizen, the staff, and the community exactly what is expected for returning citizen success:

1. At reception as part of the prison intake process,
2. As part of the release decision process when the returning citizen is approaching the end of their confinement,
3. When the returning citizen re-enters the community, and
4. When the returning citizen is to be discharged from probation/parole supervision.

Safe, Affordable, and Supportive Housing
To facilitate access to safe, affordable and supportive housing upon reentry into the community.

Job Development and Supportive Employment
To recognize and address the obstacles that make it difficult for a returning citizen to obtain and retain viable employment while under community supervision; and to connect returning citizens to employment, including supportive employment and employment services, before their release to the community.

Physical Health and Continuity of Care
To facilitate community-based health care providers’ access to prisons and promote delivery of services consistent with community standards and the need to maintain public health; and to prepare community-based health/treatment providers, prior to the release of an individual, to receive returning citizens in order to ensure that service delivery is uninterrupted and supports successful return to the community.

Graduated Sanctions and Incentives for Offender Behavior
To ensure a range of options available to reinforce positive behavior and to address, swiftly and certainly, failures to comply with conditions of release because it is important to match behavior with appropriate responses as not doing so can have negative results and increase aberrant behavior.

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3 Report of the ReEntry Policy Council, pgs. 256-281
5 Report of the ReEntry Policy Council, pgs.156-166 and 282-292
STATE LEVEL ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURES TO SUPPORT REFORM EFFORTS

This state level structure begins with the statewide Alaska Prisoner Reentry Council which is co-chaired by the Governor and the Lt. Governor who are deeply committed to the reforms underway. The structure also includes the AK-PRI Implementation Steering Team (IST), chaired by Commission Ron Taylor, which will guide prisoner reentry reforms at the strategic and tactical (operational) levels through community-based work groups and department-based operational teams.

The Alaska Prisoner Reentry Statewide Council (the Reentry Council)
The Reentry Council is comprised of individuals and organizations from whom the Council has sought—and will continue to seek—advice and counsel on how to improve the success of Alaska’s returning citizens. These supporters and stakeholders will assist the reentry reforms by acting as conduits for communication and a mechanism for building community awareness, support, and participation. The Reentry Council will develop work groups and sub-committees, as needed, to address pertinent issues from the varied perspectives of community leaders—many of whom have been engaged in improving prisoner reentry for many years. Committees of the Statewide Council will focus on specific issues around implementation. It is recommended that the first committee focus on Alaska Natives:

- The Alaskan Native Focus Group: The Alaskan Native Advisory Committee will be comprised of representatives from groups and organizations which are dedicated to addressing the over-representation of Alaskan Natives in the adult prison system to help determine the most effective ways to address this enormous concern.

The AK-PRI Implementation Steering Team
In November of 2014, the initial phase of work on the AK-PRI involved a core team of state agency representatives from the Department of Corrections, the Parole Board, the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority and community reentry stakeholders. This core team, the AK-PRI Implementation Steering Team (IST), is chaired by Ronald Taylor, the Commissioner of the DOC, whose office provides staff support.

The IST will function through three Workgroups, one representing each of the three Phases in the AK-PRI. Each of the workgroups has co-chairs appointed by DOC Commissioner Ronald Taylor who leads the IST. The workgroups will be facilitated and staffed by the OPR.

In order to meet these responsibilities, the IST will eventually implement a committee structure that focuses on policy and practice barriers to the full and robust implementation of the AK-PRI, and specific activities to overcome those barriers. These additions to the structure are projected for 2016 and are detailed in the full report and shown in the illustration on the next page.
The State Organizational Structure of the AK-PRI
NOTE: The Structure for 2015 is shown in black font, considerations for expansion is shown in blue font.

The Alaska Statewide Prisoner Reentry Council
Co-Chairs Governor Bill Walker and Lt. Governor Byron Mallott
Vice-Chair DOC Commissioner Ronald Taylor

The Department of Corrections
Office of Prisoner Reentry (OPR)
Administration, Management and Support

The Alaskan Native Focus Group

The Implementation Steering Team (IST)

Grant Development & Management Committee
Transition Accountability Planning Committee

Data, Evaluation, and Performance Committee
Employment Committee
Housing Committee

Departmental Implementation Resource Teams
The state will implement the Alaska Prisoner Reentry Initiative (AK-PRI) Framework locally beginning with a number of Community Pilot Sites in 2015, and then adding additional sites until the entire state is engaged. Community Pilot Sites will be organized under a structure that parallels the state-level organizational structure. Each Community Pilot Site has three key groups of stakeholders who will be instrumental to the wide range of activities needed for full implementation of the AK-PRI Initiative. The local organizational structure requires clear definition of roles and responsibilities with guidance for development by the Alaska Department of Corrections Office of Prisoner Reentry (OPR).

The Local Reentry Coalition
Advises, informs, and supports the implementation process. The purpose of the coalitions are help build support for the local implementation of improved reentry services and will work to educate the community on how the AK-PRI will create safer neighborhoods and better citizens. Many jurisdictions already have coalitions and they will be invited to participate; in other jurisdictions they will be developed by the community with support from the OPR. Coalitions are active in Juneau, Anchorage, Fairbanks, Matsu and Dillingham.

The Local AK-PRI Implementation Steering Team
The team, appointed and overseen by the local Reentry Coalition (if one exists), develops, oversees, and monitors the local implementation process and coordinates local community involvement in the overall statewide AK-PRI development process. The Steering Team is organized under three co-chairs and will be staffed by a Community Coordinator:

1. **The Superintendent** of a local Correctional Facility or designee;
2. **The Chief Probation/Parole Officer or designee**;
3. **A Community Representative** drawn from the large number of local faith, human service, and planning organizations who are critical to the local effort who will act as the "presiding co-chair to lead the meetings and to represent the local face of prisoner reentry."

Each Steering Team includes representatives or service providers associated with the AK-PRI partner government agencies representing the service modalities that must be included in successful reentry planning. These representatives are active on the Steering Team because of the critical need for multi-agency collaboration and the encouragement and support of agency leaders who empower their active participation. The three co-chairs of the Steering Team will work with the local Community Coordinator who will be resourced for each site as the AK-PRI is implemented using a combination of local, state, federal and/or foundation funds. The Community Coordinator will staff the Steering Team under the guidance of the co-chairs.

- **The Returning Citizen Transition Team**: Supports returning citizens in the transition planning process and guides the individual from the institution back into the community through a case-management approach. The Transition Teams are comprised of key local service providers, drawn from the membership of the Steering Teams, whose major responsibilities include the local and essential input needed to develop and implement the Offender Management Plan (OMP) for three phases of the AK-PRI, Reentry (OMP2), Community Supervision (OMP3) and Discharge (OMP4) as part of collaborative case management.
SUMMARY – The Alaska Recidivism Reduction Plan: The AK-PRI

Local Organizational Structure of the AK-PRI

The Alaska DOC Office of Prisoner Reentry Administration, Management and Support

Community Reentry Coalition

Key Stakeholders

AK-PRI Steering Team

Representatives of Services for:
- Employment
- Vocational Training and Education
- Housing
- Healthcare
- Mental Health
- Alcohol and Drug Addiction Services
- Family and Child Welfare Services

Representatives of:
- Legal Services
- US Attorney/Federal Probation
- Law Enforcement
- Community-based organizations
- Faith-based organizations
- Victim Advocates
- Successful Returning Citizen
- Local Jail

Co-Chairs

Phase One; Getting Ready:
- Superintendent from a local correctional facility

Phase Two; Going Home:
- Chief Probation/Parole Officer

Phase Three; Staying Home:
- A Community Representative/Presiding Co-chair

Community Coordinator

Returning Citizen Transition Team

Service Providers appointed by Reentry Coalition, AK-PRI Steering Team
COORDINATING COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT: THE HEART OF THE AK-PRI

Strong and sustained local capacity is the single most critical aspect of the implementation of the Alaska Prisoner Reentry Initiative (AK-PRI). Pilot Site communities will become dedicated champions of improved reentry that will result in less crime through determined and specific preparation for inmates who will transition back to their communities. Local efforts at education, training, planning, and implementation need significant guidance and support in order to build the capacity for system reform. Each Pilot Site will have the benefit of a local Community Coordinator to help the community effectively prepare for reentry while the Alaska Department of Corrections (DOC) is better preparing returning citizens for release. The Community Coordinator will be assisted by local post-release supervision agencies.

Community convening and organizing will serve to elicit community buy-in and investment, plan for sustainability, and ensure quality results throughout the transition process. The Community Coordinators will receive training and technical support from the Alaska DOC Office of Prisoner Reentry (ORP) so that they are clear on how to manage the process based on the AK-PRI Framework.

OFFENDER MANAGEMENT PLANS AND THE IMPORTANCE OF PRISON IN-REACH

The lynchpin of the AK-PRI Model is the development and use of Offender Management Plans (OMPs) at four critical points in the transition process. Each of the OMPs succinctly describe for the returning citizen, the corrections and/or field staff and the community exactly what is expected for a successful re-entry process. Under the Alaska Prisoner ReEntry Initiative (AK-PRI) Model, the OMPs, which consist of summaries of the returning citizen’s case management plan at critical junctures in the transition process, are prepared with each returning citizen at reception as part of the prison intake process (Phase I), as part of the release decision process when the returning citizen is approaching the end of their confinement (Phase II), when the returning citizen re-enters the community (Phase III), and when the returning citizen is to be discharged from probation/parole supervision (Phase IV).

PRINCIPLES THAT GUIDE THE OMP DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

1. The OMP process starts during returning citizen’s classification soon after their admission to prison and continues through their ultimate discharge from community supervision.

2. OMPs define programs or interventions to modify returning citizen’s dynamic risk factors that were identified in a systematic assessment process; address the returning citizen’s needs and build on the identified strength of each individual. The returning citizen is at the center of the process.

3. OMPs are sensitive to the requirements of public safety, and to the rational timing and availability of services. In an ideal system, every returning citizen would have access to programs and services to modify dynamic risk factors. In a system constrained by finite resources, the rational access to services and resources requires using risk management strategies as the basis for that allocation.

4. Appropriate partners should participate in the planning and implementation of individual returning citizen’s OMPs. These include the returning citizen, institutional staff, parole board authorities, supervision authorities, victims, returning citizen’s families and significant others, community-based
treatment agencies, housing organizations and other human service agencies, and volunteer and faith-based organizations. While corrections staff lead the Transition Team, community representatives are vital partners in the process. The design of the OMP is a collaborative process.

5. Individual OMPs delineate the specific responsibilities of returning citizens, correctional agencies and system partners in the creation, modification, and effective application of the plans. The OMPs hold them accountable for performance of those responsibilities.

While all four OMPs should include the types of services that are needed to address identified needs, reduce identified risks and build on identified strengths, beginning with the OMP2, they should encompass the enrollment of the returning citizen in the agencies responsible for the services. The OMP2 is the first OMP that is developed as a “prison in-reach” process that brings community representatives into the prisons to interact with the returning citizens.

**Prison In-Reach – the process through which community-based human service agencies work with the DOC to develop the OMP - is a major distinction between the way business has been done in the past and the way it is improved and the single most important innovation of the AK-PRI Initiative.**

6. OMPs provide a long-term road map to achieve continuity in the delivery of treatments and services, and in the sharing of requisite information, both over time and across and between agencies. This is particularly essential during the re-entry phase (Phase II) when the boundaries between agencies are literally fences and brick walls.

The OMP2 must serve as more than a plan – it must serve as a highly specific schedule of events beginning with the first hour that a returning citizen is released and has his or her Orientation Session with the probation/parole officer, and must include the expectations of how the returning citizen will spend his or her time during at least the first month of release. Perhaps the most vulnerable time for returning citizens is their first month in the community.

7. The Collaborative Case Management and Supervision (CCMS) process is used to arrange, advocate, coordinate, and monitor the delivery of a package of services needed to meet the specific returning citizen’s needs. During the prison portion of the OMP process, institutional probation officers function as case managers.

As returning citizens prepare for release and adjust to community supervision, their field probation/parole officer serves as the central and primary case manager. When they are successfully discharged from supervision, a staff member from a human service agency may assume case management responsibilities for returning citizens who continue to need services and support.
**Offender Management Planning (OMP) Flowchart**

For more detail, see Tab 7, AK-PRI Case Logic Model

### PHASE 1: GETTING READY
*The Institutional Phase*

- **OMP1:** Prison Programming Plan
- **OMP2:** Probation/Parole & Reentry Plan
- **Transition Team Meetings:** Attended by transitional planners, probation/parole reps, service providers, offender, and his/her family

### PHASE 2: GOING HOME
*The Transitional Phase*

- **Inmate Programming**
- **Release Decision Making**

### PHASE 3: STAYING HOME
*The Community Phase*

- **Supervision & Services**
- **Revocation Decision Making**
- **Discharge & Aftercare Plan**
- **OMP4:** Discharge & Aftercare Plan

**Transitional Planners:** Work with offenders while they are incarcerated preparing them for release and continue to work as partners with probation and parole after release.
For more information, visit the website of the Alaska Department of Corrections at:

http://www.correct.state.ak.us/
The Alaska Department of Corrections
Recidivism Reduction Plan

Safer Neighborhoods, Better Citizens

Providing Tools and Resources to Alaska’s Returning Citizens - Reducing Crime and Averting the Need for Additional Prison Construction

A Report to Governor William M. Walker and Lt. Governor Byron Mallott by the The Alaska Department of Corrections

May 2015
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INTRODUCTION

Alaska has supported for many years adult criminal justice reform. Following the 2014 legislative session, Senate Bill 64 was signed into law by Governor Sean Parnell in July 2014, creating the 13-member Alaska Criminal Justice Commission (ACJC) with a three-year mandate to promote public safety through better oversight and management of the adult correctional systems. Concurrently, the Legislature provided additional guidance to the executive branch through HB 266 that required the Department of Corrections (DOC), the Department of Health & Social Services, the Department of Labor & Workforce Development, the Alaska Housing Finance Corporation, the Alaska Court System, and the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority (the Trust) to create a comprehensive recidivism plan.

Subsequently, in late January of 2015, under the leadership of Acting Corrections Commissioner Ronald Taylor, the DOC created an Office of Prisoner Reentry (OPR) to implement prisoner reentry reforms as the primary focus of recidivism reduction in the agency. Responsibilities of OPR include:

- To ensure successful offender reentry to the State of Alaska, to reduce recidivism, to enhance public safety through collaboration among stakeholders and to assist in ensuring the appropriate and responsible use of cost savings realized by justice reforms through reinvestment in evidence-based, community-centered services.

- To collaborate and work with the Alaska Criminal Justice Commission, the Criminal Justice Workgroup, the Alaska Parole Board, the Department of Health & Social Services, the Department of Labor & Workforce Development, the Alaska Housing Finance Corporation, the Alaska Court System, the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority and other non-governmental stakeholders to develop and execute a robust and systematic prisoner reentry plan for Alaska to ensure the effective supervision and delivery of appropriate services to returning citizens.

In 2015, the OPR is building on the work conducted for the past several years in the DOC which has been working with the Alaska Parole Board, the Trust, other state agencies, and community stakeholders to conduct an internal review of Alaska’s reentry services under a contract with the Michigan-based Center for Justice Innovation (the Center). This review concluded that, while a good deal of laudable work was underway, increased coordination among the various efforts was needed to overcome the barriers to reducing recidivism. Given that finding, the DOC utilized its contract with the Center to help facilitate development and implementation of a comprehensive reentry improvement strategy in coordination with the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority. After preliminary data analysis and facilitated meetings with state and local stakeholders, the Alaska Prisoner Reentry Initiative (AK-PRI) has been launched. The AK-PRI represents the foundation for a five-year effort expected to make Alaska a national leader in recidivism reduction of its citizens who are returning to their communities following a prison term.
The Alaska Department of Corrections launched the Alaska Prisoner Reentry Initiative in November 2014 with the vision that every returning citizen released from prison will have the tools and support needed to succeed in the community. In order to make this vision a reality, the mission of the Alaska Prisoner Reentry Initiative (AK-PRI) is to improve public safety by reducing crime through implementation of a seamless plan of services and supervision developed with each returning citizen—delivered through state and local collaboration—from the time they enter prison through their successful transition, reintegration, and aftercare in the community. The initiative gives Alaska the tools to become a national leader among states in recidivism reduction.

The fundamental goals of the AK-PRI are to:

1. Promote public safety by reducing the threat of harm to persons, families and their property by citizens returning to their communities from prison; and
2. Increase success rates of returning citizens who transition from prison by fostering effective, evidence-based risk and need management and treatment, returning citizen accountability, and safe family, community and victim participation.

Performance measures to determine the degree that these goals are met include measurements of increased public safety through the reduction of recidivism (as measured by re-conviction or conditional release violation and return to prison) and successful completion of community supervision.

At the heart of the initiative is the Alaska Prisoner Reentry Initiative Framework (See Tabs 1 & 2). The AK-PRI Framework (the Framework) was designed for Alaska but builds on approaches for reentry improvement developed by the National Prisoner Reentry Council, as outlined in its Reentry Policy Council Report,¹ and the National Institute of Corrections through its Transition from Prison to Community (TPC) Framework.² These approaches provide guidance for specific justice policies that will be considered in Alaska as the “Targets for Change” to improve prisoner reentry.

These Targets for Change are categorized within the three TPC Framework phases (Getting Ready, the Institutional Phase; Going Home, the Pre-Release Phase; and Staying Home, the Community Supervision and Discharge Phase) and seven primary decision points that comprise the reentry process. For each Target for Change, goals and operational expectations are included, as well as references for further reading to specific pages within the voluminous Reentry Policy Council Report and other publications that pertain specifically to the Target for Change that is being addressed. Thus, the Framework provides a practical guide to help direct Alaska’s plan to meet the policy goals and operational expectations of this Council. The Framework also frees state agencies to begin to focus immediately on implementation.

Importantly, the Framework underscores the three overarching policy and practice considerations that


must be in place to truly reform a returning citizen’s behavior: Offender Management Planning, Case Management and Evidence-Based Practices.

Alaska benefits from a wealth of technical assistance that was provided for the development and implementation of the AK-PRI Framework. These technical partners include the Council of State Governments-National Reentry Resource Center and the Michigan Council on Crime and Delinquency - Center for Justice Innovation.

The Framework provides state agencies and local partners with the tools to move from planning to implementation and to accurately measure changes in recidivism. By moving reentry planning beyond high-level strategy to a focus on carefully scripted actions, the AK-PRI can make Alaska a leader in recidivism reduction.

PRIORITIES FOR REENTRY REFORM

The priorities for implementation of the AK-PRI Framework include an improved offender management and accountability planning process (OMP) with each returning citizen, from the point of imprisonment through successful discharge from post-release community supervision, with an emphasis on safe, affordable housing and employment. This careful case planning will be driven by a validated, objective assessment of each returning prisoner’s risks, needs and strengths.

**Offender Management and Planning**

Offender Management Plans (OMP) are concise guides, driven by a validated assessment of risks, needs and strengths, that describe goals for each returning citizen’s successful transition along with a corresponding schedule of actions for the returning citizen, institutional staff, the parole board, probation/parole staff, and partnering agencies.

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3 In Alaska, post-release community supervision includes probation supervision, parole supervision as well as for some cases, who have concurrent active cases, concurrent probation and parole supervision, and for cases who max-out from prison, no supervision.
agencies. The OMP spans the phases of the transition process and agency boundaries to ensure continuity of services and supervision between institutions and community. Increased certainty will motivate returning citizens to participate in the OMP process and to become engaged in fulfilling their responsibilities and will ensure that all parties are held accountable for timely performance of their respective responsibilities.

**Goal**: To establish the comprehensive and standardized use of assessment-driven OMP at four critical points in the returning citizen transition process that succinctly describe for the returning citizen, the staff, and the community exactly what is expected for returning citizen success: (1) At reception as part of the prison intake process, (2) As part of the release decision process when the returning citizen is approaching the end of their confinement, (3) When the returning citizen re-enters the community, and (4) When the returning citizen is to be discharged from probation/parole supervision.

**Policy Expectations**: Prisoner reentry policies are defined as formal, written rules and agreements that define standard practices for agencies engaged in the transition process. Alaska’s policies regarding the OMP process currently include or are expected to include, the following provisions:

- OMPs are driven by a validated risk, needs and strengths assessment instrument that is used at prison intake and at subsequent major decision points in the corrections/parole/post-release supervision process.
- As a result of these assessments, the OMPs consist of the returning citizen’s Treatment Plan updated at critical junctures in the transition process and are prepared at prison intake, at the point of the release decision, at the point of return to the community, and at the point of discharge from probation/parole supervision.
- OMPs are a collaborative product involving institutional staff, the returning citizen, the parole board, community supervision officers, human services providers (public and/or private), victims, and neighborhood and other community organizations.
- The OMP policy clearly states that the objective of the OMP is to increase both overall community protection by lowering risk to persons and property and by increasing each returning citizen’s prospects for successful return to and self-sufficiency in the community.

**Safe, Affordable, and Supportive Housing**

Following incarceration, many returning citizens join the growing number of individuals in the general population struggling to obtain safe, affordable, and supportive housing. But former offenders face additional barriers in seeking access to the scarce housing options available. Court orders, state laws, local ordinances, and conditions of release often restrict the locations in which a returning citizen can seek housing. In the private rental market, many landlords are unwilling to rent to individuals with a criminal record. Due to exclusions in federal housing assistance policy and the broad discretion of local public housing authorities to add exclusions, individuals with a criminal history are not eligible for many forms of public housing assistance.

Finally, although family is a key resource for many returning citizens, staying with relatives is not always an option. Some families are unwilling, perhaps as a result of prior criminal behavior, to welcome an individual back into the home. In other cases, families may not have the resources to support another unemployed family member or may be putting their own public housing assistance in jeopardy by opening their home to a relative with a criminal record.
Given such barriers, it is not surprising that incarceration puts returning prisoners at greater risk of homelessness. A certain proportion of incoming prisoners were homeless before their incarceration, and at least as many end up homeless for some period of time after leaving prison. For those with histories of mental illness, the likelihood is still greater. Nationally, surveys of homeless assistance providers and individuals who use their services have found that about 54 percent of currently homeless clients had been in jail or prison at some point in their lives.4 The consequences of insufficient housing extend beyond the prisoner. Research indicates that parolees without stable housing may face a higher risk of parole failure, whether through re-arrest for a new crime or failure to meet basic parole requirements. Studies indicate that the likelihood of arrest increases 25 percent each time a parolee changes address.5

**Goal:** To facilitate access to safe, affordable and supportive housing upon reentry into the community.6

**Policy Expectations:** Formal written rules and agreements defining the standard practice for agencies engaged in improving access to stable housing should include the following provisions:

- Facility staff, probation/parole staff and community-based transition planners work with returning citizens to assess individual housing needs and identify the appropriate housing option for each incarcerated individual well before release. The housing planning process includes an assessment of the feasibility, safety and appropriateness of an individual living with family members after his or her release from prison.
- A full range of housing options (i.e. supportive housing, transitional housing, affordable private rental housing) will be accessed to accommodate individuals returning to the community.
- In order to make certain that returning citizens are not discharged from prison into homelessness, individuals leaving prison without a documented housing plan and those with histories of homelessness are included among the homeless priority population in order to facilitate their access to supportive housing and other housing services.
- Returning citizens receive information and training on strategies for finding/maintaining housing and their legal rights as tenants.

**Job Development and Supportive Employment**

Research has consistently shown that offenders who find stable employment soon after release from incarceration are less likely to recidivate.7 Employment not only provides the income needed to meet basic needs but also provides the means to become a productive member of the community. However, among job seekers, individuals with criminal records, particularly those recently released from incarceration, face unique hurdles. Compared to the general population, returning offenders tend to have

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6 Report of the ReEntry Policy Council, pgs. 256-281
less work experience, less education, and fewer marketable skills. They frequently return to communities already hit hard by unemployment, where job prospects and access to employment services are limited and contact with a social network that can provide job leads is rare. Furthermore, the stigma of a criminal record, spotty work histories, low education and skill levels, and physical and mental health problems take many jobs out of reach for returning offenders.

Many returning citizens also lack necessary identification documents, access to transportation, and childcare for dependent children. To a lesser extent, many recently released prisoners have unstable housing situations that may prevent access to employment. Restrictions on the type of employment a former prisoner may obtain, and practices of probation/parole agencies may pose additional obstacles to obtaining and holding a job for those under supervision. Predetermined reporting requirements and supervision fees may be particularly burdensome. Estimates show that the proportion of prisoners who have a job secured before release ranges from 14 percent to just under 50 percent. For those lacking employment upon release, job placement organizations can play a key role. Transitional employment can provide released prisoners with access to income, structure, and additional supervision to assist in the transition from custody to freedom.

**Goals**: To recognize and address the obstacles that make it difficult for a returning citizen to obtain and retain viable employment while under community supervision; and to connect returning citizens to employment, including supportive employment and employment services, before their release to the community.

**Policy Expectations**: Formal written rules and agreements that define the standard practice for agencies engaged in improving employment outcomes among returning citizens are expected to include the following provisions:

- Supportive transitional employment programs are supported and promoted across agencies.
- Staff charged with community supervision work towards sustainable employment.
- Work-release programs are available as a transition between work inside a correctional facility and work after release into the community.
- Community members and community-based services act as intermediaries between employers and job-seeking individuals who are incarcerated.
- Returning citizens receive written information about prospective employers in their community and/or community employment service providers well in advance of the anticipated release date.
- Prior to discharge, returning citizens receive official documentation of their skills and experience, including widely accepted credentials.

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Physical Health and Continuity of Care

During and after imprisonment, health care is a vital component of the services that must be provided for the rehabilitation process to be optimized. Given the high rate of illness and infection in corrections populations and the damage those issues cause to individual and public health, comprehensive treatment for all prisoners with health care needs is a priority in Alaska. To make such treatment available—and to build a foundation for continued treatment—in the community, the Department of Correction has and will continue to seek ways to collaborate with community-based providers, including in-reach, telemedicine, and appropriate information sharing.

The prevalence of chronic illnesses, communicable diseases, and severe mental disorders among people in prison is far greater than among other people of comparable ages. Significant illnesses afflicting corrections populations include coronary artery disease, hypertension, diabetes, asthma, chronic lung disease, HIV infection, hepatitis B and C, other sexually transmitted diseases, tuberculosis, chronic renal failure, physical disabilities, and many types of cancer.12

There are also increasing numbers of frail elderly prisoners who suffer from dementia, strokes, or other debilitating conditions: as of 2002, 121,000 people age 50 and older were in state or federal prisons, more than twice as many as a decade earlier, according to the US Justice Department. The average cost of housing an inmate over 60 has been estimated at $70,000 a year, or about three times the average cost for prisoners overall, largely because of health care expenses. Based upon the known prevalence of chronic illnesses among people who are incarcerated, it can be conservatively estimated that at least one-third of the over 600,000 people released each year from state and federal prisons have an identified chronic illness that should be evaluated further or treated on a long-term basis.13

Virtually all people in prison or jail are at high risk for many chronic and communicable diseases. Individuals in this population, when not incarcerated, are often among the hardest for the health system to identify, in part because the criminal justice system and health system rarely collaborate to discuss their shared population. Accordingly, periods of incarceration provide what the National Commission on Correctional Health Care describes as a “window of opportunity” for a variety of preventive, diagnostic, and treatment interventions that stand to benefit not only inmates, but also their families, partners, friends, and communities.14, 15

The state currently pays virtually 100% of the health care costs for Alaskans in prison. Through Medicaid expansion, which is being considered in the state, it is estimated that $4 million to $7 million annually could be saved.16

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**Goal:** To facilitate community-based health care providers’ access to prisons and promote delivery of services consistent with community standards and the need to maintain public health\(^{17}\); and to prepare community-based health/treatment providers, prior to the release of an individual, to receive returning citizens in order to ensure that service delivery is uninterrupted and supports successful return to the community.

**Policy Expectations:** Formal written rules and agreements defining the standard practice for agencies engaged in improving access to stable housing should include the following provisions:

- Comprehensive medical records are maintained for each prisoner, and a summary of the records follows the person as he or she transfers between providers.
- Short-term inmates receive basic medical care and transition planning to maintain health care services in the community.
- Correctional health care services integrate prevention, education, and good health promotion.
- Telemedicine is used to deliver health services.
- A summary health record containing information about important medical problems, prior diagnostic studies, allergies, and medications is prepared for each person released from prison prior to his or her release.
- Prior to discharge, people in prison receive their summary health record, other important medical records, and education about continuity of care.
- Prisoners receiving medications at the time of discharge are provided with an interim supply of essential medications upon exit from the facility.

**Graduated Sanctions and Incentives for Offender Behavior**

It is essential in the application of supervision and responses to violations that corrections and community supervision agencies have a well-developed and documented policy that directs staff to include incentives and sanctions in their arsenal of responses. These “graduated sanctions and incentives” must also be understood and supported by the full range of stakeholders in the justice system (judges, prosecutors, defense attorneys, and parole board members) and with the larger community.

In a risk reduction driven system such as Alaska is pursuing, community supervision staff will obviously take offenders’ risk level into account when determining responses to behavior that may be positive (using incentives) or negative (using sanctions). Research shows that it is important to match responses as not doing so can have negative results and increase aberrant behavior\(^{18}\).

Corrections and supervision agencies should thoughtfully document into policy and procedures expectations to use sanctions and incentives to improve offenders’ behavior when possible. Research shows that the use of incentives and encouragements, in addition to sanctions, reduces criminal activity when used as part of a transformation from a “tail ‘em, nail ‘em, jail ‘em” philosophy to one that is driven

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\(^{17}\) Report of the ReEntry Policy Council, pgs.156-166 and 282-292

by offender success and assumes more a coaching role for supervising officers. According to one of the most useful manuscripts on the subject, the Ten Step Guide for Transforming Probation Departments:

Incentives and graduated sanctions give probation officers a range of responses to probationers’ behavior that helps build accountability and discourage recidivism. They also help ensure that each officer responds to violations with a level of swiftness and severity that is directly related to the probationer’s risk level and the condition of supervision that has been violated...Standardizing responses provides a measure of fairness while giving officers necessary flexibility.

This Guide includes Travis County’s “Violation Response Table,” which identifies the different levels of graduated sanctions depending on the type of infraction. The Guide recommends a four point process that Alaska should consider as another step in the process of redesigning their system based on the ADOC’s case logic.

Redesigning Incentive and Sanctioning Strategies Checklist

- Work with judges, prosecutors, parole board members and other stakeholders to develop a range of supported options and new procedures for employing incentives and graduated sanctions that are tailored to probationers'/parolees’ level of criminogenic risk and identified need.
- Issue a comprehensive report that details the transparent procedures to be followed.
- Train officers to ensure the procedures are carried out fairly and in swift response to a violation. Emphasize the use of incentives rather than relying exclusively on punitive sanctions.

**Goal:** To ensure a range of options available to reinforce positive behavior and to address, swiftly and certainly, failures to comply with conditions of release

**Policy Expectations**
- An organized structure guides the imposition of sanctions.
- Revocation and re-incarceration are the most serious of many different options available for addressing violations.
- Individuals who violate conditions of release are assessed to gauge the level of response needed.
- Policies governing the sharing of information consider privacy and confidentiality issues.
- Meaningful positive reinforcements exist to encourage compliance with the conditions of release.
- Victims are given an opportunity to inform the imposition of graduated responses.

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21 Ibid
States which have been more successful at implementation of prisoner reentry improvements that result in long term, sustainable reductions in recidivism of former prisoners create organizational structures at the state and local level that are strong enough to support the weight of the reforms. In order to address the legislative directive for statewide collaboration, the OPR is developing a state level organizational structure that will fully engage reentry stakeholders across the state to participate in the on-going development and implementation of the AK-PRI.

This state level structure begins with the statewide *Alaska Prisoner Reentry Council* and the AK-PRI *Implementation Steering Team* (IST) which will guide prisoner reentry reforms at the strategic and tactical (operational) levels through community –based work groups and department-based operational teams. (See page 13 for an illustration of the State Structure).

**The Alaska Prisoner Reentry Statewide Council (the Reentry Council)**
The Reentry Council is comprised of individuals and organizations from whom the Council has sought – and will continue to seek - advice and counsel on how to improve the success of Alaska’s returning citizens. These supporters and stakeholders will assist the reentry reforms by acting as conduits for communication and a mechanism for building community awareness, support, and participation. The Reentry Council will develop work groups and sub-committees, as needed, to address pertinent issues from the varied perspectives of community leaders – many of whom have been engaged in improving prisoner reentry for many years. Committees of the Statewide Council will focus on specific issues around implementation. It is recommended that the first committee focus on Alaska Natives:

- **The Alaskan Native Focus Group:** The Alaskan Native Advisory Committee will be comprised of representatives from groups and organizations which are dedicated to addressing the over-representation of Alaskan Natives in the adult prison system to help determine the most effective ways to address this enormous concern.

**The AK-PRI Implementation Steering Team**
In November of 2014, the initial phase of work on the AK-PRI involved a core team of state agency representatives from the Department of Corrections, the Parole Board, the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority and community reentry stakeholders. This core team, the *AK-PRI Implementation Steering Team* (IST), is chaired by Ronald Taylor, the Commissioner of the DOC, whose office provides staff support. Once the Statewide Reentry Council convenes in 2015, it will be recommended that the IST become formalized and report to the *Statewide Reentry Council*.

Now that the Council has adopted the Framework as the roadmap for the AK-PRI, the IST will expand to include human services organizations, non-profit institutions and faith-based partners. These additions will enhance the team’s perspective and help it expand and become firmly established statewide. Thus, for practical purposes, the Framework should be viewed as a *preliminary* plan that will be strengthened dramatically through full community engagement.
The IST will function through three Workgroups, one representing each of the three Phases in the AK-PRI. Each of the workgroups has co-chairs appointed by DOC Commissioner Ronald Taylor who leads the IST. The workgroups will be facilitated and staffed by the OPR.

The responsibilities of the Implementation Steering Team (IST) include:

- Identify barriers in each department or agency that may hinder the successful transition of returning citizens and develop policies, procedures, and programs to overcome such barriers.
- Identify methods to improve collaboration and coordination of offender transition services, including cross-training, information-sharing systems, and policies, procedures, and programs that measure offender reentry management with well-defined, performance-based outcomes.
- Consult with state and local agencies, organizations, and community leaders with expertise in the areas of prison facilities, parole decision-making, reentry, and community supervision to collaborate on offender transition issues and ways of improving operations.
- Consult with representatives from professional associations, volunteer and faith-based organizations, and local treatment and rehabilitation agencies to collaborate on offender transition issues and ways of improving operations.
- Provide recommendations as to how the Governor and other state departments and agencies may assist the Council in overcoming the barriers it has identified to the successful transition and reintegration of offenders returning to communities.
- Provide recommendations on how state laws and may be improved in order to contribute to the successful transition and reintegration of offenders into society and reduce recidivism.

In order to meet these responsibilities, the IST will eventually implement a committee structure that focuses on policy and practice barriers to the full and robust implementation of the AK-PRI, and specific activities to overcome those barriers. These additions to the structure are projected for 2016.

Departmental AK-PRI Implementation Resource Teams: In order to effectively implement the AK-PRI Framework, each department that is responsible for any type of service that affects returning citizens will be represented on the IST and be asked to form in their state agency an Implementation Resource Team (IRT). This team would be comprised of top level managers who are responsible for moving the AK-PRI Framework into the policies and procedures of their department and assuring that the Framework is fully implemented at both the state and local level. The Implementation Resource Teams will be responsible for interpreting how their departments’ functions will need to be adapted to correspond with every aspect of the AK-PRI Framework and assuring efficient implementation.

Active participation of the IRT Team Leader on the IST will be critical for their clear understanding of the forces driving the development and implementation of the Framework. AK-PRI Implementation Resource Teams will propose solutions to their department directors on how to respond to the challenges that inevitably will arise as their departments’ reform their approaches to addressing the needs of citizens returning to Alaska’s communities so that crime in Alaska is reduced.
This process represents the way that the AK-PRI Recidivism Reduction Plan will become, as the law requires, “…comprehensive, complementary, and non-duplicative…”

- **The Transition Accountability Planning Committee:** Given the critical importance of transition planning across the spectrum of the reentry process from intake to prison through discharge from correctional authority, the Offender Management Planning (OMP) process requires a work group that is comprised of prison, community supervision and community justice leaders and service providers is needed to implement the process with fidelity. This committee will work to ensure that all stakeholders’ perspectives and inputs are taken into account when developing the new processes and policies around transition planning.

- **The Housing and Employment Committees:** Housing and employment for returning citizens are paramount for improved offender and system outcomes. These two service areas are the top priority of the Reentry Council and as such will benefit from specific forums for agency and community stakeholders to meet and determine the state’s and each community’s assets, barriers and gaps around housing and employment and work to maximize the assets, overcome the barriers, and eventually reduce the gaps in the service milieus of these two service areas.

- **The Grants Development and Management Committee:** One of the benefits of having explicit expectations for improving prisoner reentry through the AK-PRI and its state and local structures and guidelines is an enhanced ability to be very competitive for local, state, federal and foundation grant dollars. This committee will serve the purpose of determining the availability of funding from all sources, determine those that are important to pursue and provide the structure, discipline and capacity to pursue and achieve enhanced funding.

  Federal grant making for prisoner reentry under the Second Chance Act, for example, has grown dramatically over the past decade and states with clear designs, strategies and tactics to reduce recidivism have an excellent track record for grant awards.

- **The Data, Evaluation, and Performance Committee:** The ability to track, record, monitor, report and share data between stakeholders that provides needed accountability for improved reentry services is paramount to success. This committee will serve as the forum for policies, processes and protocols for data system development and implementation.
The Alaska DOC Recidivism Reduction Plan

The State Organizational Structure of the AK-PRI
NOTE: The Structure for 2015 is shown in black font, considerations for expansion is shown in blue font.

The Alaska Statewide Prisoner Reentry Council
Co-Chairs Governor Bill Walker and Lt. Governor Byron Mallott
Vice-Chair DOC Commissioner Ronald Taylor

The Department of Corrections
Office of Prisoner Reentry (OPR)
Administration, Management and Support

The Alaskan Native Focus Group

The Implementation Steering Team (IST)

Grant Development & Management Committee
Transition Accountability Planning Committee
Data, Evaluation, and Performance Committee
Employment Committee
Housing Committee

Departmental Implementation Resource Teams
The state will implement the Alaska Prisoner Reentry Initiative (AK-PRI) Framework locally beginning with a number of Community Pilot Sites in 2015, and then adding additional sites until the entire state is engaged. Community Pilot Sites will be organized under a structure that parallels the state-level organizational structure. Each Community Pilot Site has three key groups of stakeholders who will be instrumental to the wide range of activities needed for full implementation of the AK-PRI Initiative. The local organizational structure requires clear definition of roles and responsibilities with guidance for development by the Alaska Department of Corrections Office of Prisoner Reentry (OPR).

The Local Reentry Coalition
Advises, informs, and supports the implementation process. The purpose of the coalitions are help build support for the local implementation of improved reentry services and will work to educate the community on how the AK-PRI will create safer neighborhoods and better citizens. Many jurisdictions already have coalitions and they will be invited to participate; in other jurisdictions they will be developed by the community with support from the OPR.

The Local AK-PRI Implementation Steering Team
The team, appointed and overseen by the local Reentry Coalition (if one exists), develops, oversees, and monitors the local implementation process and coordinates local community involvement in the overall statewide AK-PRI development process. The Steering Team is organized under three co-chairs and will be staffed by a Community Coordinator:

1. The Superintendent of a local Correctional Facility or designee;
2. The Chief Probation/Parole Officer or designee;
3. A Community Representative drawn from the large number of local faith, human service, and planning organizations who are critical to the local effort who will act as the “presiding co-chair to lead the meetings and to represent the local face of prisoner reentry.

Each Steering Team includes representatives or service providers associated with the AK-PRI partner government agencies representing the service modalities that must be included in successful reentry planning. These representatives are active on the Steering Team because of the critical need for multi-agency collaboration and the encouragement and support of agency leaders who empower their active participation. The three co-chairs of the Steering Team will work with the local Community Coordinator who will be resourced for each site as the AK-PRI is implemented using a combination of local, state, federal and/or foundation funds. The Community Coordinator will staff the Steering Team under the guidance of the co-chairs. (See next section)

- The Returning Citizen Transition Team: Supports returning citizens in the transition planning process and guides the individual from the institution back into the community through a case-management approach. The Transition Teams are comprised of key local service providers, drawn from the membership of the Steering Teams, whose major responsibilities include the local and essential input needed to develop and implement the Offender Management Plan (OMP) for three phases of the AK-PRI, Reentry (OMP2), Community Supervision (OMP3) and Discharge (OMP4) as part of collaborative case management (See Tab 3, The AK-PRI Collaborative Case Supervision and Management Model for more detail)
The Alaska DOC Office of Prisoner Reentry Administration, Management and Support

Community Reentry Coalition

Key Stakeholders

AK-PRI Steering Team
Representatives of Services for:
- Employment
- Vocational Training and Education
- Housing
- Healthcare
- Mental Health
- Alcohol and Drug Addiction Services
- Family and Child Welfare Services

Representatives of:
- Legal Services
- US Attorney/Federal Probation
- Law Enforcement
- Community-based organizations
- Faith-based organizations
- Victim Advocates
- Successful Returning Citizen
- Local Jail

Co-Chairs

Phase One; Getting Ready:
- Superintendent from a local correctional facility

Phase Two; Going Home:
- Chief Probation/Parole Officer

Phase Three; Staying Home:
- A Community Representative/Presiding Co-chair

Community Coordinator

Returning Citizen Transition Team
Service Providers appointed by Reentry Coalition, AK-PRI Steering Team
COORDINATING COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT: THE HEART OF THE AK-PRI

Strong and sustained local capacity is the single most critical aspect of the implementation of the Alaska Prisoner Reentry Initiative (AK-PRI). Pilot Site communities will become dedicated champions of improved reentry that will result in less crime through determined and specific preparation for inmates who will transition back to their communities. Local efforts at education, training, planning, and implementation need significant guidance and support in order to build the capacity for system reform. Each Pilot Site will have the benefit of a local Community Coordinator to help the community effectively prepare for reentry while the Alaska Department of Corrections (DOC) is better preparing returning citizens for release. The Community Coordinator will be assisted by local post-release supervision agencies.

Community convening and organizing will serve to elicit community buy-in and investment, plan for sustainability, and ensure quality results throughout the transition process. The Community Coordinators will receive training and technical support from the Alaska DOC Office of Prisoner Reentry (ORP) so that they are clear on how to manage the process based on the AK-PRI Framework. The four key ingredients for successful community organizing that the Community Coordinator will assist with are:

- **Capacity.** Each Community Coordinator must have the capacity to work on reentry. Indicators of adequate capacity include experience, staff capacity, resources to apply to the work, and relationships with key stakeholders.
- **Commitment.** Each Community Coordinator must demonstrate a dedicated commitment to reentry. Additionally, the community must develop a commitment to reentry. The development of community commitment may be fostered by the Community Coordinator. How is this level of interest perceived by other key community stakeholders?
- **Credibility.** The Community Coordinator must demonstrate credibility within the community. What is the demonstrated historic experience and credibility of the Community Coordinator in playing a catalytic role?
- **Knowledge.** What is the Community Coordinator’s understanding of reentry and its implications?

The Skills of Community Coordinators: Local community-development efforts to implement the AK-PRI Framework will require a precise and extensive set of skills that will be the hallmarks of the Community Coordinators, who will staff the local development process. (See Tab 4, Coordinating Community Development- the Heart of the AK-PRI for more detail).

- **Communication.** The Community Coordinators must have excellent communications (both written and verbal) skills to facilitate connectedness among all implementation stakeholders. Communications must be facilitated both from the local communities to the statewide AK-PRI managers and from AK-PRI to the local communities.
- **Community convening.** The Community Coordinators must possess the skills to bring diverse stakeholders together, build consensus around reentry issues, and catalyze action and leadership within communities toward transition planning.
- **Community organizing.** Organizing within pilot communities involves training Steering Team members and Transition Team members, facilitating Reentry Advisory Council meetings, and building partnerships among key stakeholder groups.
- **Brokering.** When acting as a broker within communities, the Community Coordinator can benefit from maintaining a degree of neutrality to negotiate effectively through community conflict.
Extensive skills in brokering and fostering neutrality will be a central requirement of a Community Coordinator.

- **Coordinating.** The implementation planning associated with AK-PRI is challenging to coordinate. Maintaining connectedness to community activities will require extensive coordinating by the Community Coordinator.

- **Systems building.** Building systems and shepherding cross-systems change requires a complex set of skills. The Community Coordinator must have experience in building and managing system-wide change.

**The Responsibilities of Community Coordinators:** The involvement of communities in the AK-PRI includes three “focus areas” for Community Coordinators.

**Focus Area One:** Coordination and communication regarding the evolving design of the AK-PRI Framework so that each of the seven primary decision points is deeply influenced by the community perspective. The iterative process of refining the Framework will require open communication and effective coordination to ensure that community input is captured, the community has an accurate understanding of the Framework, and expectations for implementation are clearly defined. The affected policies and practices provide a rich context for an examination of the community’s role in the AK-PRI and thus a guide to the work.

- **Task 1.** The Community Coordinator will be responsible for facilitating communication with local stakeholders and with ORP to ensure that the evolving design of AK-PRI Framework is informed by the community perspective.

**Focus Area Two:** Facilitation and coordination regarding the identification of: (1) community assets that can be applied to improve returning citizen success, (2) policy and operational barriers among state and local agencies, and (3) service gaps that must be filled.

- **Task 2.** The community-assessment task of evaluating the assets, barriers, and gaps will be organized by the Community Coordinator. (See Tab 5 for the *AK-PRI Community Assessment Instrument*).

- **Task 3.** Committees will be formed to address these issues. Community representation on the AK-PRI committees will be coordinated by the Community Coordinator.

**Focus Area Three:** The design and implementation by local Pilot Sites of Comprehensive Reentry Plans that will provide the framework, rationale, and funding – when it is available from local, state, federal and private sources - for improved policies, practices, and programs whose success will be measured by reduced crime and fewer returns to prison. The Community Coordinator will facilitate the local process and provide the staff support needed to write the Comprehensive Plan.

The local Comprehensive Plan is developed from two primary sources of information. First, state DOC “pipeline data” that provides the community with the number and characteristics of citizens expected to return in the planning year. Second, the results of the community assessment process described above.
Task 4. Coordinating the completion of the Comprehensive Community Reentry Plans utilizing DOC “pipeline data” and the result of the local community assessment process.

Focus Area Four: The Offender Management Plan (OMP) process must be coordinated with prison officials, release authorities, supervising agencies and the local steering team.

Task 5. The Community Coordinator will be responsible for making certain the information from the first Offender Management Plan (OMP1) is in the hands of the local AK-PRI Steering Team.

Task 6. The Community Coordinator will be responsible for making certain that the expected release date and location of the offender is communicated to the local Steering Team.

Task 7. The Community Coordinator will be responsible for ensuring that the local reentry Chief Parole and the Chief Probation Officer coordinates the logistics for the interaction of the Transition Team and the local prison and for the convening and facilitation of local Team meetings to develop the OMPs.

Task 8. Since the Community Coordinators will be acting as staff for the local Steering Teams and their Reentry Councils, one of their many responsibilities will be to coordinate the planning and implementation of the fourth and final OMP (OMP4: The Discharge OMP) that will be the explicit “hand off” of the parolee’s case to responsible parties in the community who will continue providing services and guidance to the returning citizen.

OFFENDER MANAGEMENT PLANS AND THE IMPORTANCE OF PRISON IN-REACH

The lynchpin of the AK-PRI Model is the development and use of Offender Management Plans (OMPs) at four critical points in the transition process. Each of the OMPs succinctly describe for the returning citizen, the corrections and/or field staff and the community exactly what is expected for a successful re-entry process. Under the Alaska Prisoner ReEntry Initiative (AK-PRI) Model, the OMPs, which consist of summaries of the returning citizen’s case management plan at critical junctures in the transition process, are prepared with each returning citizen at reception as part of the prison intake process (Phase I), as part of the release decision process when the returning citizen is approaching the end of their confinement (Phase II), when the returning citizen re-enters the community (Phase III), and when the returning citizen is to be discharged from probation/parole supervision (Phase IV). So, OMPs serve as concise guides for returning citizens, corrections and field staff and community service providers:

- **OMP1:** The expectations while imprisoned that will help returning citizens prepare for release.
- **OMP2:** The terms and conditions of the returning citizen’s release to communities.
- **OMP3:** The supervision and services returning citizens will experience in the community.
- **OMP4:** The Case Management Plan for eventual discharge from parole and/or probation.

The OMP integrates transition from prisons to communities by spanning phases in the transition process and agency boundaries. The OMP is a collaborative product that at any given time may involve institutional staff, the returning citizen, the parole board, parole/probation officers, human services
providers (public and/or private), victims, and neighborhood and community organizations. The OMP describes actions that must occur to prepare individual returning citizens for release to the community, defines terms and conditions of their probation/parole supervision, specifies both the type and degree of supervision and the array of services they will experience in the community, and describes their eventual discharge to aftercare upon successful completion of supervision from probation and/or parole.

The objective of the OMP process is to increase both overall community protection by lowering risk to persons and property and by increasing individual returning citizen’s prospects for successful return to and self-sufficiency in the community. The OMP process begins soon after returning citizens enter prison and continues during their terms of confinement, through their release from prison, and continues after their discharge from supervision as an evolving framework for aftercare provided by human service agencies or other means of self-help and support. The OMP1 is developed by institutional probation officers and education staff in the prisons that form the OMP1 Transition Team. Beginning with the OMP2, the OMPs are developed by a Transition Team that includes institutional staff, probation/parole supervision staff, and community agencies and service providers.

Thus, the membership of the Transition Team and their respective roles and responsibilities change over time as the returning citizen moves through the reentry process. During the institutional phase (OMP1) institutional probation officers leads the team. During the reentry and community supervision phases (OMP2 and OMP3) Prison In-Reach specialists – if they are available – or probation/parole offices lead the team with both institutional staff and community services providers as partners in the collaborative process. After returning citizens have successfully completed community supervision, their OMP will continue as needed and be managed by staff of human services agencies as the returning citizen continues to receive services and support (OMP4). At each stage in the process Transition Team members will use a collaborative case management model to monitor progress in implementing the OMP.

The OMP reduces uncertainty in terms of release dates and actions (and timing of actions) that need to be taken by returning citizens, prison staff, the parole board, parole and probation agents, and partnering community agencies. Increased certainty will motivate returning citizens to fully participate in the OMP process and to become engaged in fulfilling their responsibilities and will ensure that all parties are held accountable for timely performance of their respective responsibilities. (See the illustration on page 19)

The most pivotal activity that distinguishes the old way of doing business from the new way is the Prison In-Reach process that is the centerpiece of AK-PRI Phase II, the Reentry Phase. Prison In-Reach is the process by which community-based human service organizations work with the department on the development of the OMPs. When reviewing the Policy Statements and Recommendations that comprise the AK-PRI Model, the importance of the Prison In-Reach process becomes more focused. There are a series of Policy Statements in the AK-PRI Model that require an aggressive and productive Prison In-Reach process followed by an equally aggressive supervision strategy – especially during the pivotal first month of release.

PRINCIPLES THAT GUIDE THE OMP DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

1. The OMP process starts during returning citizen’s classification soon after their admission to prison and continues through their ultimate discharge from community supervision.
2. OMPs define programs or interventions to modify returning citizen’s dynamic risk factors that were identified in a systematic assessment process; address the returning citizen’s needs and build on the identified strength of each individual. The returning citizen is at the center of the process.

3. OMPs are sensitive to the requirements of public safety, and to the rational timing and availability of services. In an ideal system, every returning citizen would have access to programs and services to modify dynamic risk factors. In a system constrained by finite resources, the rational access to services and resources requires using risk management strategies as the basis for that allocation.

4. Appropriate partners should participate in the planning and implementation of individual returning citizen’s OMPs. These include the returning citizen, institutional staff, parole board authorities, supervision authorities, victims, returning citizen’s families and significant others, community-based treatment agencies, housing organizations and other human service agencies, and volunteer and faith-based organizations. While corrections staff lead the Transition Team, community representatives are vital partners in the process. The design of the OMP is a collaborative process.

5. Individual OMPs delineate the specific responsibilities of returning citizens, correctional agencies and system partners in the creation, modification, and effective application of the plans. The OMPs hold them accountable for performance of those responsibilities. While all four OMPs should include the types of services that are needed to address identified needs, reduce identified risks and build on identified strengths, beginning with the OMP2, they should encompass the enrollment of the returning citizen in the agencies responsible for the services. The OMP2 is the first OMP that is developed as a “prison in-reach” process that brings community representatives into the prisons to interact with the returning citizens. Prison In-Reach – the process through which community-based human service agencies work with the DOC to develop the OMP - is a major distinction between the way business has been done in the past and the way it is improved and the single most important innovation of the AK-PRI Initiative.

6. OMPs provide a long-term road map to achieve continuity in the delivery of treatments and services, and in the sharing of requisite information, both over time and across and between agencies. This is particularly essential during the re-entry phase (Phase II) when the boundaries between agencies are literally fences and brick walls. The OMP2 must serve as more than a plan – it must serve as a highly specific schedule of events beginning with the first hour that a returning citizen is released and has his or her Orientation Session with the probation/parole officer, and must include the expectations of how the returning citizen will spend his or her time during at least the first month of release. Perhaps the most vulnerable time for returning citizens is their first month in the community.

7. The Collaborative Case Management and Supervision (CCMS) process is used to arrange, advocate, coordinate, and monitor the delivery of a package of services needed to meet the specific returning citizen’s needs. During the prison portion of the OMP process, institutional probation officers function as case managers. As returning citizens prepare for release and adjust to community supervision, their field probation/parole officer serves as the central and primary case manager. When they are successfully discharged from supervision, a staff member from a human service agency may assume case management responsibilities for returning citizens who continue to need services and support.

(See Tab 6, Offender Management Plans and the Critical Importance of Prison In-Reach; and Tab 3, Collaborative Case Management and Supervision).
Offender Management Planning (OMP) Flowchart

For more detail, see Tab 7, AK-PRI Case Logic Model

PHASE 1: GETTING READY
The Institutional Phase

OMP1: Prison Programming Plan

- Assessment & Classification
- Inmate Programming

PHASE 2: GOING HOME
The Transitional Phase

OMP2: Probation/Parole & Reentry Plan

- Inmate Release Preparation
- Release Decision Making

- Transition Team Meetings: Attended by transitional planners, probation/parole reps, service providers, offender, and his/her family

PHASE 3: STAYING HOME
The Community Phase

OMP3: Treatment & Supervision Plan

- Supervision & Services
- Revocation Decision Making

OMP4: Discharge & Aftercare Plan

- Discharge & Aftercare

Transitional Planners: Work with offenders while they are incarcerated preparing them for release and continue to work as partners with probation and parole after release.
**The Alaska DOC Recidivism Reduction Plan**

**ADDENDA**

Tab 1: *AK-PRI Framework, Summary*

Tab 2: *AK-PRI Framework, Targets for Change*

Tab 3: *AK-PRI Collaborative Case Supervision and Management Model*

Tab 4: *Coordinating Community Development- the Heart of the AK-PRI*

Tab 5: *AK-PRI Community Assessment Instrument*

Tab 6: *Offender Management Plans and the Critical Importance of Prison In-Reach*

Tab 7: *AK-PRI Case Logic Model*
About The Center for Justice Innovation

The Michigan Crime and Delinquency’s Center for Justice Innovation specializes in adult corrections and justice policy issues and seeks to build capacity within state and local jurisdictions to improve both system and individual offender outcomes through the use of evidence-based practices. These improved outcomes include:

(1) Fewer crimes committed by formerly incarcerated individuals and individuals who have been or are currently under correctional supervision in the community;

(2) Community and institution-based programs that demonstrate increased fidelity to the standards of evidence-based practices;

(3) Prevention of unnecessary confinement of offenders in jail and prisons; and,

(4) Reduced costs and improved efficiencies.

The Center is led by Dennis Schrantz, who has worked in ten states over the past 10 years to assist state and local jurisdictions in improving their policies and practices for prisoner reentry. One of Mr. Schrantz’s major accomplishments in prisoner reentry was his work over seven years in the Michigan Department of Corrections (MDOC) where, as chief deputy director and an appointee of Governor Jennifer M. Granholm, he led efforts to design, implement, monitor, and evaluate the Michigan Prisoner ReEntry Initiative (MPRI).

MPRI contributed to a decline in the prison population of nearly 17% in six years, allowing the closure of 21 prisons and a projected cost savings to the state of $339 million annually in averted prison costs; all while the reinvesting over $50 million annually in supervision and reentry services. Based on data from nearly 33,000 former prisoners who participated in MPRI from 2005 through 2011, Michigan has witnessed unparalleled successes: a 38% reduction in parolee revocations to prison; an increase in the parole approval rate from an average of 48% to nearly 75% because of the Parole Board’s increase confidence in Michigan’s reentry strategy; and, a 42% decrease in technical violations despite a 40% increase in the parolee population.

Michigan’s ability to integrate research into the policies and practices that reduce recidivism has been highlighted in numerous publications and has established MCCD as a leading national expert on how to reduce the return-to-prison recidivism rate of former prisoners, reduce prison populations, and reinvest prison dollars into communities.

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2 Michigan Department of Corrections, Trends in Key Indicators, 2013.
Reducing Recidivism through Improved Prisoner Reentry Policy & Practices  
Collaborative Case Management and Supervision  
The Michigan Council on Crime and Delinquency; Center for Justice Innovation  
Dennis Schrantz, Robb Burroughs and Kirt Baab  
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Definition

Collaborative Case Management and Supervision (CCMS) is the coordinated and strategic use of resources at the case level to accomplish agreed upon objectives. It is a dynamic process that starts at the time of sentencing/intake and continues seamlessly through successful reintegration and stabilization in the community. CCMS aims to reduce crime by engaging all partners in a collaborative process that holds offenders accountable for their behavior and increases offender success.

The Critical Elements of Collaborative Case Management and Supervision

Starting from the perspective that communities are safer when individuals returning from incarceration are successfully reintegrated (i.e. do not commit additional crimes, support their families, pay taxes, etc.), CCMS combines the following elements:

- **The goal is behavior change**: CCMS pushes corrections practice beyond concepts of incapacitation, supervision, and monitoring by seeking to engage returning prisoners in the process of change. Rather than abandon the use of surveillance, compliance monitoring, and sanctions for non-compliance, CCMS balances these and other important external controls with effective treatment and strategies to enhance the individual’s internal motivation to change.

- **Interventions are individualized and comprehensive**: In order to influence behavior change, CCMS first seeks to identify each individual’s level of risk to reoffend, the criminogenic needs driving the offense behavior, and the internal strengths and external resources available to support positive change. The results of the assessment process are then used to plan the mix of treatment, services, and supervision most likely to lead to success by addressing the complex and multiple needs of offender.

- **Returning offenders are partners in the process**: Long-term outcomes are enhanced when the goals and planned activities are meaningful to the offenders themselves. Instead of setting conditions and monitoring compliance, staff approaches offenders as active participants in setting and achieving goals. Consequently, offenders are more likely to acknowledge their own responsibility to seek change.

- **Teams are responsible for case planning and management and engage additional stakeholders as needed**: In addition to the offender, multidisciplinary teams are made up of either institutional or community corrections staff and a mix of treatment providers, workforce development specialists, community resources, law enforcement, and others based on the specific needs of each offender. The team frequently reaches out and coordinates services with other stakeholders, including family, faith-based groups, and other natural supports.
Transitions are seamless: In order to ensure continuity of key treatment and services, especially those that start inside the facility and continue in the community, teams managing cases inside the facility and teams managing cases in the community communicate and coordinate activities. The primary tool for case-level communication and coordination is the Offender management plan (OMP).

Collaborative Case Management and Supervision - Policy and Practice
The elements of CCMS can be translated into more specific policy and practice guidelines for improving reentry outcomes. The numbered headings are the six core activities for implementation of the collaborative case management model described in Chapter 5 of the TPC Reentry Handbook. Each is followed with a brief discussion of policy and procedure recommendations that support implementation of the core activity.

RESOURCES

1. Conduct assessments of offenders’ risks, needs, strengths, and environment.

   CCMS activity should start at the point of intake to the facility with a comprehensive assessment process. The goal is to build awareness of the personal, situational, and historical/contextual factors behind each offender’s criminal justice involvement, as well as his or her strengths that can be accessed to mediate risk. The focus of the assessment process should be validated measure of risk and criminogenic need but should also include multiple screenings and further assessment, as indicated, for a full range of personal history and needs, including but not limited to health, mental health, family relationships, employment, and housing stability.

   Because gathering all of the necessary information will require the use of generalized risk and need assessments, screenings, and follow-up assessments, facility policy should define a streamlined process for selecting, administering, and tracking assessments. In addition, the staff administering assessments should be properly trained and supervised and use instruments that have been validated.

   Although the most extensive and intensive assessment work may take place at the point of intake, policies and procedures should be in place for reassessment throughout the entire reentry process. Reassessment allows the team to uncover new or evolving needs and to track changes in dynamic criminogenic needs following delivery of treatment, programming, and other interventions.

2. Form, participate in, and lead case management teams that work collaboratively.

   Throughout all three phases of reentry, case planning and management activities are conducted by an interdisciplinary team called a transition team. The composition of the transition team and the respective roles of its members will change over time, as the offender completes goals, identifies new needs, and transitions through the three phases. Generally, the team should include the offender, prison staff, community supervision staff, facility and community-based service providers, and family members and/or pro-social supports. During the institutional phase prison staff may lead the team. During the reentry and community supervision phase parole officers may lead the team. During the reintegration phase human services agencies or community services providers may lead the team.
In order to facilitate effective and efficient transition team operation, policies should be in place to define team composition, member roles and responsibilities, and the content and process of information sharing between team members. It is also important to ensure that staff members responsible for case management have the knowledge, skills, and time to carry out new and likely more intensive activities. Creating adequate staff capacity may mean removing or reducing prior staff responsibilities that are no longer needed.

Whenever personal information is shared, it is critical to maintain the offenders’ rights to confidentiality. However, with appropriate consent, information sharing across agency boundaries is necessary for good assessment and case management. One way to facilitate the exchange of information between agencies and systems is to share access and even link information technology systems in use by the respective service systems (i.e. corrections, mental health, human services, etc.). Again, the technology should include safeguards to ensure that information identified with a specific individual can only be accessed by members of the team who have been authorized to view that information.

3. Develop and implement – along with offenders and other partners within both correctional and other agencies – a offender management plan geared directly to the level of offender risk and criminogenic needs.

The offender management plan (OMP) is a concise guide for the offender and case management team that describes the goals identified for each offender’s successful transition and the schedule of actions that need to be taken by the offender, prison staff, releasing authority, community supervision staff, partnering agencies, and others to achieve those goals. The increased certainty and clarity of goals and activities will motivate offenders to participate in the case management process and fulfill their responsibilities. Likewise, the OMP will ensure that all parties are held accountable for timely performance of their respective responsibilities. The OMP spans the three phases of the transition process, as well as agency barriers, to ensure continuity of care between the institution and the community. At a minimum, the OMP should be formally updated at four critical junctures in the reentry process:

- **OMP1: The Prison Programming Plan** – Completed at intake, the OMP1 includes the expectations for the prison term that will help inmates prepare for release.
- **OMP2: The Parole Plan and Reentry Plan** – Completed prior to release, the OMP 2 describes the terms, conditions, and expectations about the prisoners release to communities.
- **OMP3: The Treatment and Supervision Plan** – Completed upon return to the community, the OMP 4 includes a detailed schedule of the supervision and services offenders will experience in the community.
- **OMP4: The Discharge and Aftercare Plan** – Completed prior to successful discharge from parole/probation, the OMP4 describes how the offender will maintain long-term success in the community with the support of community service agencies and informal prosocial supports.

Figure 3.1 on the next page illustrates the use of the OMP through the points of the reentry process.
Transitional Planners: Work with offenders while they are incarcerated preparing them for release and continue to work as partners with probation and parole for as long as one year after release.
4. Provide or facilitate access to programs and interventions to address risk and needs.

In addition to the role members of the transition team will play in delivering direct services, including assessment, treatment, and motivational enhancement, at various points, the transition team will also fill a referral and brokerage role. The two complimentary roles ensure that offenders have access to treatment, programming, and interventions that will effectively address risk and needs. Interventions should be consistent with the principles of evidence-based practice.

5. Involve offenders in the case management process and engage them in the process of change, making efforts to enhance their motivation.

By engaging offenders in the assessment, planning, and case management process, CCMS is more than a means of referring to and tracking participation in various treatment programs. It is an intervention on its own, complimenting and enhancing the outcomes of other interventions. The evidence is strong that offenders are more likely to achieve and sustain desired behavior changes if the goals and process for achieving the goals are meaningful for them.

One way to build this intrinsic motivation is to involve offenders as the central member of the transition team when conducting assessment, planning, and progress monitoring. It is not enough just to ask for his or her feedback from time to time. The team should seek to build a trusting relationship with the offender through regular and consistent contact, including both formal meetings and less formal check-ins, such as a conversation during meal time at the facility or a home visit in the community.

Another, more direct means to enhance motivation, is for members of the transition team to use communication styles and techniques designed to enhance motivation, such as Motivational Interviewing (MI), in all of their interactions with the offender. Rather than impose goals and demand solutions, these approaches employ empathy and specific communication skills to direct the offender through his or her own exploration of the need for change and identification of goals and solutions. Integrating MI and other approaches to enhance motivation into staff-offender interactions requires training and ongoing coaching for the staff, as well as policies and procedures that establish the value of these approaches.

6. Review progress and adapt plans accordingly over time, including monitoring conditions of supervision and responding appropriately to both technical and criminal violations.

Through the use of formalized assessments, as well as frequent and consistent communication with the offender, members of the transition team, treatment providers, family members, and others engaged in the transition process, it is important to assess progress toward desired changes over time. When progress is slower than expected or there are indications that the offender is sliding back toward old problematic behavior patterns, a swift response to identify the problem and adjust the plan accordingly is needed. Conversely, faster than expected progress, compliance with facility expectations
and community supervision conditions, and other achievements should be acknowledged and rewarded, as appropriate, as a means to enhance motivation further.

The transition team’s focus on monitoring and adjusting the transition plan is especially important in the period immediately following return to the community. Most people transitioning from the facility environment to the community experience some degree of anxiety and stress and need an adjustment period. The appearance of problem behaviors, especially during this adjustment, does not necessarily indicate a return to criminal behavior. It is important that community supervision officers have the skills to distinguish between the behaviors that are affiliated with a risk of future transgression and behaviors that are more likely associated with the adjustment. Regardless of the cause of the problem behavior and the potential risk it signals, the supervision officer and transition team should be equipped with a full range of responses, including graduated levels of sanctions, that can be used to facilitate compliance and encourage success. Ensuring the community’s safety is the top priority, and returning an individual to incarceration may be necessary in some cases to protect safety. However, as a default response to all violations, re-incarceration does little to change behavior patterns and protect safety over the long term.
Strong and sustained local capacity is the single most critical aspect of the implementation of the Alaska Prisoner Reentry Initiative (AK-PRI). Pilot Site communities will become dedicated champions of improved reentry that will result in less crime through determined and specific preparation for inmates who will transition back to their communities. Local efforts at education, training, planning, and implementation need significant guidance and support in order to build the capacity for system reform. It is the goal of the AK-PRI that each local reentry Pilot Site will have the benefit of a local Community Coordinator to help the community effectively prepare for reentry while the Alaska Department of Corrections (DOC) is better preparing returning citizens for release. The Community Coordinator will be assisted by local post-release supervision agencies.

Community convening and organizing will serve to elicit community buy-in and investment, plan for sustainability, and ensure quality results throughout the transition process. The Community Coordinators will receive training and technical support from the Alaska DOC Office of Prisoner Reentry (ORP) so that they are clear on how to manage the process based on the AK-PRI Framework. The three key ingredients for successful community organizing that the Community Coordinator will assist with are:

- **Capacity.** Work experience and familiarity with the needs of returning citizens in order to build staff capacity, establish resources to apply to the work, and develop credible and informed relationships with key stakeholders.
- **Commitment.** The ability to demonstrate a passionate dedication to reentry in order to develop and foster this passion within the community where they work.
- **Credibility.** Credibility requires expertise about evidenced based policies, practices and programs and a dedication to learning what works and applying that in the community setting.

### The Skills of Community Coordinators

Local community-development efforts to implement the AK-PRI Framework will require a precise and extensive set of skills that will be the hallmarks of the Community Coordinators, who will staff the local development process.

- **Communication.** The Community Coordinators must have excellent communications (both written and verbal) skills to facilitate connectedness among all implementation stakeholders. Communications must be facilitated both from the local community to state agencies and from these state agencies to the local community.
- **Community convening.** The Community Coordinators must possess the skills to bring diverse stakeholders together, build consensus around reentry issues, and catalyze action and leadership within communities toward transition planning.
- **Community organizing.** Organizing within pilot communities involves training Steering Team members and Transition Team members, facilitating Steering Team meetings, and building partnerships among key stakeholder groups.
- **Brokering.** When acting as a broker within communities, the Community Coordinator can benefit from maintaining a degree of neutrality to negotiate effectively through community conflict. Extensive skills in brokering and fostering neutrality will be a central requirement of a Community Coordinator.
- **Coordinating.** The implementation planning associated with AK-PRI is challenging to coordinate. Maintaining connectedness to community activities will require extensive coordinating by the Community Coordinator between the community state departments and agencies and the Alaska Prisoner Reentry Statewide Council.
- **Systems building.** Building systems and shepherding cross-systems change requires a complex set of skills. The Community Coordinator must have experience in building and managing system-wide change.
The Responsibilities of Community Coordinators

The involvement of communities in the AK-PRI includes four “focus areas” for Community Coordinators.

**Focus Area One:** Coordination and communication regarding the evolving design of the AK-PRI Framework so that each of the seven primary decision points is deeply influenced by the community perspective. The iterative process of refining the Framework will require open communication and effective coordination to ensure that community input is captured, the community has an accurate understanding of the Framework, and expectations for implementation are clearly defined. The affected policies and practices provide a rich context for an examination of the community’s role in the AK-PRI and thus a guide to the work.

- **Task 1.** The Community Coordinator will be responsible for facilitating communication with local stakeholders and with ORP to ensure that the evolving design of AK-PRI Framework is informed by the community perspective.

**Focus Area Two:** Facilitation and coordination regarding the identification of: (1) community assets that can be applied to improve returning citizen success, (2) policy and operational barriers among state and local agencies, and (3) service gaps that must be filled.

- **Task 2.** The community-assessment task of evaluating the assets, barriers, and gaps will be organized by the Community Coordinator.
- **Task 3.** Committees will be formed to address these issues. Community representation on the AK-PRI committees will be coordinated by the Community Coordinator.

**Focus Area Three:** The design and implementation by local Pilot Sites of Comprehensive Reentry Plans that will provide the framework, rationale, and funding – when it is available from local, state, federal and private sources – for improved policies, practices, and programs whose success will be measured by reduced crime and fewer returns to prison. The Community Coordinator will facilitate the local process and provide the staff support needed to write the Comprehensive Plan.

- **Task 4.** Coordinating the completion of the Comprehensive Community Reentry Plans will be the responsibility of the Community Coordinator.

**Focus Area Four:** The Offender Management Plan (OMP) process must be coordinated with prison officials, release authorities, supervising agencies and the local steering team.

- **Task 5.** The Community Coordinator will be responsible for making certain the information from the first Offender Management Plan (OMP1) is in the hands of the local AK-PRI Implementation Steering Team.
- **Task 6.** The Community Coordinator will be responsible for making certain that the expected release date and location of the offender is communicated to the local Steering Team.
- **Task 7.** The Community Coordinator will be responsible for ensuring that the field office of Adult Probation coordinates the logistics for the interaction of the Transition Team and the releasing prison and for the convening and facilitation of local Team meetings to develop the OMPs.
- **Task 8.** Since the Community Coordinators will be acting as staff for the local Steering Teams, one of their many responsibilities will be to coordinate the planning and implementation of the fourth and final OMP (OMP4: The Discharge OMP) that will be the “hand off” of the parolee’s case to responsible parties in the community who will continue providing services and guidance to the returning citizen.
Community Assessment for ReEntry Coalition Development

The purpose of this Community Assessment is to begin the work of developing a Comprehensive Community Reentry Plan for your community focusing on your community’s assets, gaps, barriers, proposed solutions, case management strategy, and plans to follow evidence-based practices for reentry services. In order for have a consistent frame of reference across sites, please use the following definitions:

- **Assets** are those strengths present in communities and may consist of programs, services, delivery systems, organizational capacities and networks.

- **Barriers** consist of those challenges that impede the effective coordination and delivery of services to meet a recognized need.

- **Gaps** refer to the absence of a specific element or component within a community that renders the service delivery network less effective than it might otherwise be. It may be something that could be addressed through policy change, organizational structural change or funding assistance, or some combination of these.

- **Proposed solutions** should describe your plan to effectively use your assets, fill your gaps, and overcome your barriers for each service area.

- **Case management** describes how the services provided to a returning prisoner are coordinated and effectively delivered.

- **Evidence-based practices** refer to those practiced that are founded on research which demonstrates a correlation between those practices and recidivism reduction.

If you have any questions regarding this survey, please contact ____________________ @ (phone number) or @ (email address)
Community Contact Information

Please complete the following information table.

Community:

☐ (Fill in blanks with names of communities)

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Describe the process for completing this assessment:

Contact Person for Assessment; Name & Title:

Organization:

Address: City: State: Zip:

E-Mail:

Telephone: Fax:

Please enter information on your Reentry Coalition membership below and indicate with an asterisk who assisted in completing the assessment.

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Please respond to the survey questions by filling in the appropriate circle(s) or by writing in the spaces provided.

I. After completing this survey, summarize below a description of your local AK-PRI Pilot Site in terms of:

1. The AK-PRI Model process: How prepared are you to more effectively handle prisoners returning to your community in terms of the assets, barriers and gaps in your community?

2. Financial resources: What is your best estimate of your community’s total financial resources available for reentry services? (Please place an X in the box next to your selection.)

- $0 - $50,000
- $50,000 - $250,000
- $250,000 - $500,000
- $500,000 - $1,000,000
- Over $1,000,000

Describe how you determined this estimate:
II. The purpose of the Community Assessment is to evaluate what resources you have and what resources you need to meet the needs of returning prisoners. To begin with, you’ll need to review the data on returning prisoners provided to you by the Alaska Department of Corrections. The Community Assessment is organized by service area and should facilitate your community’s Comprehensive Community Reentry Plan and the completion of funding applications for local, state and/or federal funding. Please complete the questions for each service area utilizing input from your Coalition membership and others in your community to complete the questions. You may use as much space as you need to complete these questions.

**Safe, Affordable and Supportive Housing**

**Assets.**

*Please describe the assets available in your community for this service area. List programs from all sources of funding (public and private) available in your community.*

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**Barriers.**

*Please describe the barriers to providing effective services in this area. Barriers could include existing policies or procedures that regulate the service for returning prisoners.*

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**Gaps.**

*Please describe the gaps in funding for this service area in your community.*

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**Proposed Solutions.**

*Please describe your community’s plan for addressing the gaps and barriers described above. Your solution could include obtaining addition funding to address the gaps, changing policies to overcome barriers, or adapting existing assets to meet additional needs.*

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Transportation

**Assets.**
Please describe the assets available in your community for this service area. List programs from all sources of funding (public and private) available in your community.

**Barriers.**
Please describe the barriers to providing effective services in this area. Barriers could include existing policies or procedures that regulate the service for returning prisoners.

**Gaps.**
Please describe the gaps in funding for this service area in your community.

**Proposed Solutions.**
Please describe your community’s plan for addressing the gaps and barriers described above. Your solution could include obtaining additional funding to address the gaps, changing policies to overcome barriers, or adapting existing assets to meet additional needs.
Employment Services

**Assets.**
Please describe the assets available in your community for this service area. List programs from all sources of funding (public and private) available in your community.

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**Barriers.**
Please describe the barriers to providing effective services in this area. Barriers could include existing policies or procedures that regulate the service for returning prisoners.

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**Gaps.**
Please describe the gaps in funding for this service area in your community.

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**Proposed Solutions.**
Please describe your community’s plan for addressing the gaps and barriers described above. Your solution could include obtaining additional funding to address the gaps, changing policies to overcome barriers, or adapting existing assets to meet additional needs.

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Substance Abuse Treatment

**Assets.**
Please describe the assets available in your community for this service area. List programs from all sources of funding (public and private) available in your community.

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**Barriers.**
Please describe the barriers to providing effective services in this area. Barriers could include existing policies or procedures that regulate the service for returning prisoners.

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**Gaps.**
Please describe the gaps in funding for this service area in your community.

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**Proposed Solutions.**
Please describe your community’s plan for addressing the gaps and barriers described above. Your solution could include obtaining additional funding to address the gaps, changing policies to overcome barriers, or adapting existing assets to meet additional needs.
Mental Health Treatment

**Assets.**
Please describe the assets available in your community for this service area. List programs from all sources of funding (public and private) available in your community.

**Barriers.**
Please describe the barriers to providing effective services in this area. Barriers could include existing policies or procedures that regulate the service for returning prisoners.

**Gaps.**
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**Proposed Solutions.**
Please describe your community’s plan for addressing the gaps and barriers described above. Your solution could include obtaining additional funding to address the gaps, changing policies to overcome barriers, or adapting existing assets to meet additional needs.
Domestic Violence Services

**Assets.**
Please describe the assets available in your community for this service area. List programs from all sources of funding (public and private) available in your community.

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**Barriers.**
Please describe the barriers to providing effective services in this area. Barriers could include existing policies or procedures that regulate the service for returning prisoners.

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**Proposed Solutions.**
Please describe your community’s plan for addressing the gaps and barriers described above. Your solution could include obtaining additional funding to address the gaps, changing policies to overcome barriers, or adapting existing assets to meet additional needs.
Life Skills Programs (financial management, cognitive skills, anger management)

**Assets.**

Please describe the assets available in your community for this service area. List programs from all sources of funding (public and private) available in your community.

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**Barriers.**

Please describe the barriers to providing effective services in this area. Barriers could include existing policies or procedures that regulate the service for returning prisoners.

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**Proposed Solutions.**

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Adult Education

**Assets.**
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**Proposed Solutions.**
*Please describe your community’s plan for addressing the gaps and barriers described above. Your solution could include obtaining additional funding to address the gaps, changing policies to overcome barriers, or adapting existing assets to meet additional needs.*
**Health Care Services** (medical centers, health care clinics, free or low cost prescription coverage)

**Assets.**
Please describe the assets available in your community for this service area. List programs from all sources of funding (public and private) available in your community.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Name</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Details</th>
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<tr>
<td>[Program 1]</td>
<td>[Source 1]</td>
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<td>[Program 2]</td>
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<tr>
<td>[Program 3]</td>
<td>[Source 3]</td>
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**Barriers.**
Please describe the barriers to providing effective services in this area. Barriers could include existing policies or procedures that regulate the service for returning prisoners.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Barrier</th>
<th>Details</th>
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<td>[Barrier 3]</td>
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**Gaps.**
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<th>Gap</th>
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Please describe your community’s plan for addressing the gaps and barriers described above. Your solution could include obtaining addition funding to address the gaps, changing policies to overcome barriers, or adapting existing assets to meet additional needs.

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<tr>
<th>Solution</th>
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<td>[Solution 2]</td>
<td>[Details 2]</td>
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<tr>
<td>[Solution 3]</td>
<td>[Details 3]</td>
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Workforce Development Services

**Assets.**
*Please describe the assets available in your community for this service area. List programs from all sources of funding (public and private) available in your community.*

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<th>Asset 1</th>
<th>Asset 2</th>
<th>Asset 3</th>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Solution 1</th>
<th>Solution 2</th>
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Support From Faith-Based Organizations

Assets.
*Please describe the assets available in your community for this service area. List programs from all sources of funding (public and private) available in your community.*

Barriers.
*Please describe the barriers to providing effective services in this area. Barriers could include existing policies or procedures that regulate the service for returning prisoners.*

Gaps.
*Please describe the gaps in funding for this service area in your community.*

Proposed Solutions.
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Sex Offender Services

**Assets.**

Please describe the assets available in your community for this service area. List programs from all sources of funding (public and private) available in your community.

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**Barriers.**

Please describe the barriers to providing effective services in this area. Barriers could include existing policies or procedures that regulate the service for returning prisoners.

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**Gaps.**

Please describe the gaps in funding for this service area in your community.

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**Proposed Solutions.**

Please describe your community’s plan for addressing the gaps and barriers described above. Your solution could include obtaining additional funding to address the gaps, changing policies to overcome barriers, or adapting existing assets to meet additional needs.
Family Support Services (family reunification programs, mentoring, emergency services)

**Assets.**
Please describe the assets available in your community for this service area. List programs from all sources of funding (public and private) available in your community.

**Barriers.**
Please describe the barriers to providing effective services in this area. Barriers could include existing policies or procedures that regulate the service for returning prisoners.

**Gaps.**
Please describe the gaps in funding for this service area in your community.

**Proposed Solutions.**
Please describe your community’s plan for addressing the gaps and barriers described above. Your solution could include obtaining additional funding to address the gaps, changing policies to overcome barriers, or adapting existing assets to meet additional needs.
## Victim Services

### Assets.

Please describe the assets available in your community for this service area. List programs from all sources of funding (public and private) available in your community.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Asset Description</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Budget Allocation</th>
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### Barriers.

Please describe the barriers to providing effective services in this area. Barriers could include existing policies or procedures that regulate the service for returning prisoners.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Barrier Description</th>
<th>Impact</th>
<th>Mitigation</th>
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### Gaps.

Please describe the gaps in funding for this service area in your community.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gap Description</th>
<th>Impact</th>
<th>Proposed Solution</th>
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### Proposed Solutions.

Please describe your community’s plan for addressing the gaps and barriers described above. Your solution could include obtaining addition funding to address the gaps, changing policies to overcome barriers, or adapting existing assets to meet additional needs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Solution Description</th>
<th>Expected Outcome</th>
<th>Status</th>
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</table>
Entitlement Programs (Veteran benefits, Medicaid services, Social Security, etc.)

**Assets.**

Please describe the assets available in your community for this service area. List programs from all sources of funding (public and private) available in your community.

---

**Barriers.**

Please describe the barriers to providing effective services in this area. Barriers could include existing policies or procedures that regulate the service for returning prisoners.

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**Gaps.**

Please describe the gaps in funding for this service area in your community.

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**Proposed Solutions.**

Please describe your community’s plan for addressing the gaps and barriers described above. Your solution could include obtaining additional funding to address the gaps, changing policies to overcome barriers, or adapting existing assets to meet additional needs.
Law Enforcement Services

**Assets.**

*Please describe the assets available in your community for this service area. List programs from all sources of funding (public and private) available in your community.*

---

**Barriers.**

*Please describe the barriers to providing effective services in this area. Barriers could include existing policies or procedures that regulate the service for returning prisoners.*

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**Gaps.**

*Please describe the gaps in funding for this service area in your community.*

---

**Proposed Solutions.**

*Please describe your community’s plan for addressing the gaps and barriers described above. Your solution could include obtaining additional funding to address the gaps, changing policies to overcome barriers, or adapting existing assets to meet additional needs.*

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Section III. Case Management Strategy. Please describe how you plan to manage services provided to returning prisoners among your Reentry Coalition membership, Probation/Parole Office Representatives, Transition Teams and Community Coordinators.

Case Management Strategy
Section IV. Evidence-based Practices. Please describe how you plan to incorporate Evidence-Based Practices into your Comprehensive Community Reentry Plan.

Evidence-Based Practices

Please describe your community’s definition of Evidence-Based Practices.

Please describe how you will incorporate Evidence-Based Practices into the implementation of the AK-PRI Model.

Please describe your community’s need for training of Evidence-Based Practices to effectively incorporate its principles into your Comprehensive Community ReEntry Plan.

Thank you for completing this community assessment.

Please return to __________at:

E-mail: __________________

Developed By Dennis Schrantz
The Michigan Council on Crime and Delinquency
Center for Justice Innovation
DennisSchrantz@gmail.com
269.254.7181
INTRODUCTION

The lynchpin of the AK-PRI Model is the development and use of Offender Management Plans (OMPs) at four critical points in the transition process. Each of the OMPs succinctly describe for the returning citizen, the corrections and/or field staff and the community exactly what is expected for a successful re-entry process. Under the Alaska Prisoner ReEntry Initiative (AK-PRI) Model, the OMPs, which consist of summaries of the returning citizen’s case management plan at critical junctures in the transition process, are prepared with each returning citizen at reception as part of the prison intake process (Phase I), as part of the release decision process when the returning citizen is approaching the end of their confinement (Phase II), when the returning citizen re-enters the community (Phase III), and when the returning citizen is to be discharged from probation/parole supervision (Phase IV). So, OMPs serve as concise guides for returning citizens, corrections and field staff and community service providers:

- **OMP1**: The expectations for the prison term that will help returning citizens prepare for release.
- **OMP2**: The terms and conditions of the returning citizen’s release to communities.
- **OMP3**: The supervision and services returning citizens will experience in the community.
- **OMP4**: The Case Management Plan for eventual discharge from parole and/or probation.

The OMP integrates transition from prisons to communities by spanning phases in the transition process and agency boundaries. The OMP is a collaborative product that at any given time may involve institutional staff, the returning citizen, the parole board, parole/probation officers, human services providers (public and/or private), victims, and neighborhood and community organizations. The OMP describes actions that must occur to prepare individual returning citizens for release to the community, defines terms and conditions of their probation/parole supervision, specifies both the type and degree of supervision and the array of services they will experience in the community, and describes their eventual discharge to aftercare upon successful completion of supervision from probation and/or parole. The objective of the OMP process is to increase both overall community protection by lowering risk to persons and property and by increasing individual returning citizen’s prospects for successful return to and self-sufficiency in the community.

The OMP process begins soon after returning citizens enter prison and continues during their terms of confinement, through their release from prison, and continues after their discharge from supervision as an evolving framework for aftercare provided by human service agencies or other means of self-help and support. The OMP1 is developed by institutional probation officers and education staff in the prisons that form the OMP1 Transition Team. Beginning with the OMP2, the OMPs are developed by a Transition Team that includes institutional staff, probation/parole supervision staff, and community agencies and service providers.

Thus, the membership of the Transition Team and their respective roles and responsibilities change over time as the returning citizen moves through the reentry process. During the institutional phase (OMP1) institutional probation officers leads the team. During the reentry and community supervision phases (OMP2 and OMP3) Prison In-Reach specialists – if they are available – or probation/parole offices lead the team with both institutional staff and community services providers as partners in the collaborative process. After returning citizens have successfully completed community supervision, their OMP will continue as needed and be managed by staff of human services agencies as the returning citizen continues to receive services and support (OMP4). At each stage in the process Transition Team members will use a collaborative case management model to monitor progress in...
implementing the OMP.  

The OMP reduces uncertainty in terms of release dates and actions (and timing of actions) that need to be taken by returning citizens, prison staff, the parole board, parole and probation agents, and partnering community agencies. Increased certainty will motivate returning citizens to fully participate in the OMP process and to become engaged in fulfilling their responsibilities and will ensure that all parties are held accountable for timely performance of their respective responsibilities. (See the last page of this Issue Brief for an illustration of the OMP Process)

The most pivotal activity that distinguishes the old way of doing business from the new way is the Prison In-Reach process that is the centerpiece of AK-PRI Phase II, the Reentry Phase. Prison In-Reach is the process by which community-based human service organizations work with the department on the development of the OMPs. When reviewing the Policy Statements and Recommendations that comprise the AK-PRI Model, the importance of the Prison In-Reach process becomes more focused. There are a series of Policy Statements in the AK-PRI Model that require an aggressive and productive Prison In-Reach process followed by an equally aggressive supervision strategy – especially during the pivotal first month of release.

**PRINCIPLES THAT GUIDE THE OMP PLAN DEVELOPMENT PROCESS**

1. The OMP process starts during returning citizen’s classification soon after their admission to prison and continues through their ultimate discharge from community supervision.

2. OMPs define programs or interventions to modify individual returning citizen’s dynamic risk factors that were identified in a systematic assessment process; address the returning citizen’s needs and build on the identified strength of each individual. Thus, the returning citizen is at the center of the OMP process.

3. OMPs are sensitive to the requirements of public safety, and to the rational timing and availability of services. In an ideal system, every returning citizen would have access to programs and services to modify dynamic risk factors. In a system constrained by finite resources, officials need to rationally allocate access to services and resources, using risk management strategies as the basis for that allocation.

4. Appropriate partners should participate in the planning and implementation of individual returning citizen’s OMPs. These include the returning citizen, institutional staff, parole board authorities, supervision authorities, victims, returning citizen’s families and significant others, community-based treatment agencies, housing organizations and other human service agencies, and volunteer and faith-based organizations. While corrections staff lead the Transition Team, community representatives are vital partners in the process. The design of the OMP is a collaborative process.

5. Individual OMPs delineate the specific responsibilities of returning citizens, correctional agencies and system partners in the creation, modification, and effective application of the plans. The OMPs hold them accountable for performance of those responsibilities.

While all four OMPs should include the types of services that are needed to address identified needs, reduce identified risks and build on identified strengths, beginning with the OMP2, they should encompass the enrollment of the returning citizen in the agencies responsible for the services. The OMP2 is the first OMP that is developed as a “prison in-reach” process that brings community representatives into the prisons to interact with the returning citizens. **Prison In-Reach – that is, the process by which community-based human service organizations work with the DOC to develop the OMP - is a major distinction between the way business has**
been done in the past and the way it is improved and the single most important innovation of the AK-PRI Model.

6. OMPs provide a long-term road map to achieve continuity in the delivery of treatments and services, and in the sharing of requisite information, both over time and across and between agencies. This is particularly essential during the re-entry phase (Phase II) when the boundaries between agencies are literally fences and brick walls. The OMP2 must serve as more than a plan – it must serve as a highly specific schedule of events beginning with the first hour that a returning citizen is released and has his or her Orientation Session with the probation parole officer, and must include the expectations of how the returning citizen will spend his or her time during at least the first month of release. Perhaps the most vulnerable time for returning citizens is their first month in the community.

7. The CCMS process is used to arrange, advocate, coordinate, and monitor the delivery of a package of services needed to meet the specific returning citizen’s needs. During the prison portion of the OMP process, institutional probation officers function as case managers. As returning citizens prepare for release and adjust to community supervision, their field probation parole officer serves as the central and primary case manager. When they are successfully discharged from supervision, a staff member from a human service agency may assume case management responsibilities for returning citizens who continue to need services and support.

As can be seen from these principles, perhaps the most pivotal activity that distinguishes the old way of doing business from the new way is the Prison In-Reach process that is the centerpiece of AK-PRI Phase II, the Reentry Phase. When reviewing the Policy Statements and Recommendations that comprise the AK-PRI Model, the importance of the Prison In-Reach process becomes more focused.

THE AK-PRI MODEL: TARGETS FOR CHANGE AFFECTING PRISON IN-REACH

There are a series of Policy Statements in the AK-PRI Model that require an aggressive and productive Prison In-Reach process followed by an equally aggressive supervision strategy – especially during the pivotal first month of release. There are eight (8) Policy Statements that affect the manner in which the Prison In-Reach process is utilized to create strong Offender Management Plans during what is the most important phase of the AK-PRI Model (both OMP2 and OMP3). Each of these Policy Statements is discussed below in terms of how AK-PRI Phase II and specifically, the Prison In-Reach process should be utilized to meet the expectations of the Model. References to the information that should be included in the OMP2 are underlined for emphasis. When applicable, other actions that should be considered by the Steering Team are also mentioned.

**Target for Change 3.2: Housing**

**Goal: To facilitate returning citizens’ access to stable housing upon reentry.**

Safe, affordable, supportive and sustainable shelter is fundamental to the reentry process. Many returning citizens have a place to stay upon release but few have a place to live. It is critical, therefore, that during Phase II and the Prison In-Reach process that the Transition Team, as representatives of the local community-based organizations to which the returning citizen will return, are familiar with the full range of housing options available in each community and maintain lists or inventories of available housing.

This information must be matched to the specific needs of the returning citizen as the Transition Team determines - on an individualized basis - the particular housing needs for each returning citizen, taking into account the feasibility, safety, and appropriateness of an individual living with family members after his or her release. The linkage here with Family Reunification activities are critical as they can help ensure that family violence risks are
recognized and addressed in the housing plan of any returning citizen whose return to the community may pose a risk to the individual or to his or her family or partner.

The OMP2 must clearly identify the appropriate housing option for each returning citizen well in advance of release and complete the paperwork needed to ensure enrollment or placement.

As part of the education program during Phase II, efforts should be made to educate returning citizens about strategies for finding and maintaining housing in the community, and teach them about their legal rights as tenants in the private rental market. Local Community Coordinators will work with the Steering Teams to encourage private sector or nonprofit housing developers or community-based organizations to develop housing accessible to returning citizens.

Most of the Pilot Site communities have or are developing Community Plans to end homelessness and local Steering Teams need to be involved in these efforts so returning citizens who have histories of homelessness as part of the homeless priority population, to facilitate their access to supportive housing.

**Target for Change 2.7: Education**

**Goal:** To teach returning citizens educational competencies while they are incarcerated.

Many people in prison have low levels of educational achievement, low rates of employment, and report low earning prior to incarceration. Prison educational programming can greatly increase the number and quality of employment opportunities, as well as improve behavior and attitude, and reduce recidivism. Accordingly, returning citizens should be encouraged to participate. Community organizations, the prison in-reach team, as well as the family of the returning citizen, can be helpful in encouraging returning citizens to participate in available educational opportunities.

While the educational programming takes place within the prisons, other state agencies and community-based adult education providers should collaborate with the Department of Corrections and engage in curriculum design and delivery. The curriculum should teach basic literacy and skills in the areas of language, math, and computers for the returning citizens who have the requisite cognitive capacity and ability. Programs should prepare participants to be functionally literate and capable of receiving high school credentials. When appropriate, opportunities to gain occupational competence through postsecondary education should also be made available to returning citizens.

The OMP2 must identify the educational needs of each returning citizen well in advance of release and give them adequate time to complete the necessary programming.

To ensure the success of the educational programming, basic policies must be in place. The Department of Corrections should ensure that all program staff meets the standard qualifications and have access to professional development opportunities. For maximum effectiveness, individual learning plans should be developed based on assessments of each individual’s goals, skill level and need. Education should be integrated with other facility programming, including substance abuse treatment, cognitive behavioral programming, vocational training, and other activities. To prepare the returning citizen for working in a technology-driven workforce, the use of computers and other contemporary technology should be incorporated into the education curriculum.

A positive learning environment is critical to the success of the participant. The Department of Corrections should ensure that education programming is delivered in environments that support learning and in which participants feel safe and comfortable. In each classroom, the staff-to-student ratio should be appropriate for the subject matter and skill level of class participants. Participants with different skill levels will not be mixed in the same classroom. In order to ensure returning citizens acquire the necessary educational competencies, programs should
incorporate materials and activities that have been demonstrated to be effective with adult learners and are relevant and meaningful to participants’ life contexts. They should be designed using multiple forms of learning experiences and modes of delivery, including workplace learning to help participants connect learning to employment success.

**Target for Change 2.8: Vocational Training and Other Meaningful Activities**

Goal: To teach returning citizens vocational competencies based on employment market demand and public safety requirements.

Participation in some type of job training is a critical step in preparing for release and integration into the community. Incarceration provides a tremendous opportunity to provide returning citizens with skills and job training that will enhance their success after release from prison. Unfortunately, many returning citizens don’t participate in vocational and job training programs while incarcerated. Accordingly, corrections staff, the transition team, community organizations, volunteers, and family members should encourage returning citizens to participate in job training opportunities that are available. Developing more robust program offerings as well as collaborating with potential employers could also increase participation. The OMP2 must identify the vocational needs of each returning citizen well in advance of release and give them adequate time to complete the necessary programming.

The most successful programs will engage employers and community-based organizations, such as volunteer and faith-based organizations in their design and delivery. Programs that have the greatest likelihood of leading to sustainable employment will attract the most participants. Accordingly, vocational classes should target the needs of the job market and the expectations of the employers in the communities to which the returning citizens will live. When possible, the Department of Corrections should ensure that returning citizens receive trade-recognized certifications and/or other means to demonstrate competency upon completion of vocational training will also increase participation in programming.

Many returning citizens have a history of failure in both the classroom and the workplace and may lack the confidence to participate in and complete educational and vocational programming. For optimum success, individual vocational and educational needs and competencies should be assessed and results used to match individuals with appropriate vocational programming or remedial education. Vocational training can be integrated with other facility programming, including motivational enhancement and cognitive behavioral programming, in order to increase basic employment readiness and life skill.

**Target for Change 2.9: Work Experience**

Goal: to provide returning citizens with opportunities to participate in work assignments and skill-building programs that give them needed experience for successful careers in the community.

As with educational and vocational programming, partnering with employers and community-based workforce agencies and engaging them in the design and implementation of institutional work experience programs is critical to the success of the prison work experience programs. Institutional work experience can help prepare returning citizens for post-release employment and should match, as closely as possible, the structure, environment, and demands of a typical community workplace. Prison job details that lead to a career and make returning citizens more marketable to potential employers should be available inside prisons and should complement the prisons’ education and vocation programs.

Correctional details that do not take into consideration the labor market typically do not prepare the returning citizen for jobs that will be available in their communities after release from prison.
In order to better prepare each returning citizen, corrections administrators should coordinate work assignments with institutional job training programs. Training and work should be developed together so that returning citizens can make use of the skills they are learning as a part of their vocational training program. Work assignments should correspond to the needs of the employment market in the communities to which returning citizens will be living. Pre-apprenticeship work assignments should also be available to provide a path to the community apprenticeship programs in high-demand occupations.

**Target for Change 3.4: Creation of Job Opportunities**

*Goal:* To promote, where appropriate, the employment of people released from prison and facilitate job opportunities for this population that will benefit communities.

While many of the recommendations needed to meet this policy statement are about community development, others are quite germane to the Phase II and Prison In-Reach process. To set the stage for developing the OMP2, local Steering Teams and their community coordinators need to be aggressive and clear about their plans to “soften” the labor market for returning citizens. As the recommendations suggest, several activities are critical. Employers should be educated about financial incentives, such as the Federal Bonding Program, Work Opportunity Tax Credit, Welfare-to-Work programs, and first-source agreements, which make a person who was released from prison a more appealing prospective employee. State agencies, community organizations, and the reentry council can greatly increase the number of available jobs by working collaboratively to determine which industries and employers are willing to hire people with criminal records and encourage job development and placement in those sectors.

The State Policy Team should review employment laws that affect the employment of people based on criminal history and eliminate those provisions that are not directly linked to improving public safety. Because many employers have restrictive hiring policies and practices in place, the policy team should also work with employers to promote individualized decisions about hiring instead of blanket bans.

Alaska’s new Ban the Box policy should go a long way in serving as an example to private employers who wish to support successful reentry by hiring qualified returning citizens. The State Policy Team should work with state agencies to encourage and support the implementation of the new hiring policy. Upon release from prison, returning citizens should be provided documented means to demonstrate rehabilitation. For those who cannot find work immediately, community service opportunities and internships should be made available in the community so they can acquire real work experience and on-the-job training.

**Target for Change 5.4: Workforce Development and the Transition Plan**

*Goal:* To connect returning citizens to employment, including supportive employment and employment services, before their release into the community.

If housing is one of the most essential ingredients of successful re-entry, employment is the most important. As stated above, the AK-PRI envisions returning citizens having jobs waiting for them upon release as a result of a wide variety of activities but regardless of this capability. Transition Teams must initiate job searches before returning citizens are released using community-based workforce development resources and indicate the results of these efforts in the OMP2.

During Phase II and as part of the Prison In-Reach process, Transition Teams – with the fully engaged support from their Steering Teams – must encourage employers to visit the correctional facility to meet with prospective employees before release. In one sense, perhaps the most important aspect of the AK-PRI Phase II Prison In-Reach process is to engage community members and community-based services to act as intermediaries between employers and job-seeking prisoners.
The transfer of returning citizens to prisons closer to their community of release is intended to facilitate this process. As part of the OMP2, the Transition Team should work with returning citizens to maintain written information in their “re-entry portfolio” about their prospective employers or community employment service providers and official documentation of their skills and experience, including widely accepted credentials and/or letters of recommendation.

**Target for Change 2.4: Identification**

Goal: To ensure that returning citizens re-enter their communities with appropriate forms of ID.

This target for change is going to require a great degree of improved collaboration among agencies that are committed to the AK-PRI. To begin with, the Transition Teams will need to ensure that the process of applying for proper and fully acceptable forms of identification are put into motion at the earliest possible time during Phase II. Eventually, this process will begin during Phase I – as early as when the returning citizen is admitted at the reception center – but until then, the process must take place during Phase II.

The degree to which issuance of identification documents have been obtained or still need to be obtained – with specific steps in the process (phone calls, appointments and the individuals to whom the returning citizen will need to speak) must be documented in the OMP2 and contained in the returning citizen’s ReEntry Portfolio.

At the same time, the State Policy Team will be asked to work with the Alaska Department of Administration to ensure that each returning citizen has valid state identification prior to release from prison. Having the chief deputies or directors of state agencies engaged in the AK-PRI through the Implementation Steering Team is expected to pave the way for “system change”. Policy recommendations need to be addressed at the state level by the Executive Management, the Implementation Steering Team, AK-PRI Committees, and at the local level by the Steering Teams and on a case-by-case basis with each returning citizen as part of the Prison In-Reach and OMP2 development process. The Prison In-Reach and OMP2 process should include a series of activities that need to be documented in the OMP2 and/or the returning citizen ReEntry Portfolio and the transfer prisoners as the release date approaches (and as appropriate and feasible) to correctional facilities.

**COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IN THE PROCESS AND THE ROLE OF THE COMMUNITY COORDINATOR**

It is clear then, that each of the major decision points for improved reentry under the AK-PRI Model must involve community input and collaboration. Without local community involvement, the process would be viewed as “top down” and undoubtedly miss the opportunities for local expertise and experience at the ground level where service delivery must be focused.

The primary role of the APRI Community Coordinator is to be the “point person” to coordinate the community’s input so that the key local stakeholders have enhanced capability to adjust their processes accordingly and have in place a communications system to make certain everyone is clear about the process and has a voice in its development. In some jurisdictions, Prison In-Reach services may have the benefit of a Specialist who can manage the OMP2 process. The primary tasks of the Community Coordinator – and the Prison In-Reach Specialist if one is in place – include but are not limited to the following:

- **Task 1.** The Community Coordinator or Prison In-Reach Specialist will be responsible for making certain the information from the first Offender Management Plan (OMP1) is in the hands of the local AK-PRI Steering Team. (Pending implementation of Phase I of the AK-PRI.)

- **Task 2.** The Community Coordinator or Prison In-Reach Specialist will be responsible for making certain that the Targeted or Earliest Release Date and status of the returning citizen’s movement to the facility
nearest his or her city of return is communicated to the local Steering Team and the local Transition Team by the local Field Operations staff.

- **Task 3.** The Community Coordinator or Prison In-Reach Specialist will be responsible for ensuring that the local re-entry parole agent coordinates the logistics for the interaction of the Transition Team and the local prison and for the convening and facilitation of local Team meetings to develop the OMPs.

- **Task 4.** Since the Community Coordinators will be acting as staff for the local Steering Teams and their Reentry Coalitions, one of their many responsibilities will be to coordinate the planning and implementation of the fourth and final OMP (OMP4: The Discharge OMP) that will be the “hand off” of the returning citizen’s case to responsible parties in the community who will continue providing services and guidance to the returning citizen.

(See Alaska DOC policies and procedures for the OMP and for Prison In-Reach)