



April 2024
Volume 4, Issue 4

Inside this issue

A Proclamation on Second Chance Month, 2024.....	2
Proclamation from Governor Mike Dunleavy of April 2024 as Second Chance Month in Alaska.....	3
Monthly Highlight of Resources in the Mat-Su.....	3
Mat-Su Reentry Events.....	3
Knik Tribe Events.....	3
Mat-Su Job Center Update....	4

April 2024 is “Second Chance Month”

Greetings,

The President of the United States and the Governor of Alaska both recognize April 2024 as “Second Chance Month”. The question is, what does that actually mean?

All the articles and information I have looked up about “Second Chance Month” indicates that we should use this month to recognize the importance of supporting reentry services for individuals returning to their community from incarceration. “Second Chance Month” highlights the importance of states, local, and Tribal governments, and community-based service providers assisting these individuals so that they can overcome the many obstacles they face and reintegrate as productive members of our community.

While it is great that since 2017, April has been recognized as national “Second Chance Month”, the Mat-Su Reentry Coalition treats every month of the year as “Second Chance Month”. Our mission is to promote public safety by identifying and implementing strategies that increase former prisoners’ well-being within the community and reduce the likelihood of their return to prison through recidivating.

We do this through a variety of ways, but one of our coalitions biggest strengths is the community partnerships we have built. Through these partnerships, we are able to not only work on the major barriers facing all reentrants, but we are also able to collaborate together to assist individuals. Below is a Reentry Success Story that highlights the type of partner collaborations we utilize to assist individuals who have been impacted by the criminal justice system.

Reentry Success Story:

Ashley Smith, from the Mat-Su Job Center, provided a Job Center Services Workshop at Palmer Correctional Center, an inmate in attendance mentioned release to our local area within the next few weeks and was in need of housing and other services. Ms. Ashely referred this individual to Brian Galloway, the Reentry Program Case Manager at Valley Charities, for support and highly recommended he visit the Job Center for his employment needs. Once released Brian brought this individual into the Mat-Su Job Center and he received assistance with drafting a functional resume, job searches, and job applications for a laborer, ASRC positions, and Enstar positions. This individual told Mat-Su Job Center staff at the Employer Expo held on March 27, 2024 that he had just moved into permanent housing that Brian helped him to secure, was dressed for success with the help of the Valley Charities Turn A Leaf interview clothing voucher, and had copies of his resume targeted for jobs he was seeking. He is currently working with People Ready doing temporary day labor as he continues to look for a long term position with benefits.

If you or your organization is interested in learning more about the work that the Mat-Su Reentry Coalition does or would like to become a member of our reentry coalition please contact me via e-mail at barbara.mongar@valleycharities.org or by phone at (907) 414-4077.

Barbara Mongar

Coordinator, Mat-Su Reentry Coalition

A Proclamation on Second Chance Month, 2024

By: **The White House** / **March 29, 2024** - [A Proclamation on Second Chance Month, 2024 | The White House](#)

America was founded on the promise of new beginnings. During Second Chance Month, we recommit to building a criminal justice system that lives up to those ideals so that people returning to their communities from jail or prison have a fair shot at the American Dream.

Every year, more than 650,000 people are released from State and Federal prisons, some leaving with nothing more than a few dollars and a bus ticket to start their new lives. In total, over 70 million Americans have a criminal history record, which can make it hard to secure a steady job, safe housing, affordable health care, or a good education — all important things to have when trying to build a good life. Studies show that when these needs are met, we do not just empower formerly incarcerated people — we prevent crime and make our communities safer.

That is why, last year, my Administration released a comprehensive strategic plan to improve the criminal justice system and strengthen public safety. It includes over 100 concrete actions that my Administration is taking to boost public safety by improving rehabilitation in jails and prisons, helping people rebuild their lives, and reducing unnecessary interactions with the criminal justice system so police officers can focus on fighting crime.

We have also invested nearly \$1 billion in job training, addiction recovery, and reentry services across the country, and we have expanded access to Pell Grants so people can earn a college degree while they are incarcerated, starting over with new skills. We are also helping folks find good-paying jobs rebuilding America on projects funded by our historic infrastructure law and expanding opportunities to serve in the Federal Government. We are working to make sure those who have served their time have an equal opportunity to obtain health care, housing, education, and consideration for small business loans. By meeting these needs, we not only empower people to chase their dreams and fuel our economy — we also prevent crime and make our communities safer and stronger.

At the same time, my Administration has taken historic steps to end America's failed approach to marijuana. Incarceration for marijuana possession alone has destroyed too many lives, particularly for Black and brown Americans, who have been arrested, prosecuted, and convicted at higher rates than other racial and ethnic groups. In 2022, I asked the Secretary of Health and Human Services and the Attorney General to start formally reviewing how marijuana is scheduled under Federal law. I have issued categorical pardons for people convicted for simple possession and use under Federal and D.C. law while urging governors to do the same on the State level. It is simple: No one should be in jail or prison for using or possessing marijuana alone. Meanwhile, my Administration has made historic investments to expand access to mental health and substance use services. We have also provided \$400 million to prevent juvenile justice involvement and make these systems more responsive to the needs of youth. We have provided over \$3 billion in funding for education programs that provide support, services, and interventions, which keep students positively engaged in their schools and communities. **(Continued on page 3)**

If we pursue this work together, our communities will be safer, stronger, and more just. It will make families and communities whole and help grow our economy, giving everyone a fair chance. I have always believed that our Nation's best days are ahead — and that is true for every single American too. This month, we recommit to fulfilling the fresh promise that every second chance holds.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, JOSEPH R. BIDEN JR., President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and the laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim April 2024 as Second Chance Month. I call upon government officials, educators, volunteers, and all the people of the United States to observe this month with appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-ninth day of March, in the year of our Lord two thousand twenty-four, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and forty-eighth.

JOSEPH R. BIDEN JR.

Proclamation from Governor Mike Dunleavy of

April 2024 as Second Chance Month in Alaska:

By: **Office of Governor MIKE DUNLEAVY** / April 1, 2024 - [Second Chance Month - Mike Dunleavy](#)

WHEREAS, every person is entitled to the inalienable right of being treated with dignity and compassion, and those who have stumbled should be given the opportunity to become contributing members of our Great State once again; and

WHEREAS, approximately 70 million Americans have a criminal record, with 4,400 individuals incarcerated and 3,400 individuals on probation and parole in Alaska; and

WHEREAS, the number of legal collateral consequences of a criminal conviction nearly reaches 44,000, including 590 specific to Alaska, and these barriers can contribute to recidivism, which increases victimization and decreases public safety; and

WHEREAS, reentering society after incarceration can be a daunting transition with significant barriers such as disadvantages finding housing and gainful employment and difficulty rebuilding trust and relationships with family and friends; and

WHEREAS, the Alaska Department of Corrections provides collaborative release planning including individualized case management, programming, and positive family, community, and peer support services to assist those reentering society and reduce the likelihood of reoffending; and

WHEREAS, the State of Alaska is committed to a proactive reentry process that supports individuals transitioning out of incarceration, as helping former inmates reenter society with valuable skills and available support networks increases public safety and reduces recidivism rates.

NOW THEREFORE, I, Mike Dunleavy, GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF ALASKA, do hereby proclaim April 2024 as: Second Chance Month

in Alaska and urge all Alaskans to recognize the need for closure for those who have paid their debt, to commend those who have successfully reentered society, and for individuals, employers, congregations, and communities to extend second chances to former inmates.

Monthly Highlight of Resources in the Mat-Su

April marks National Alcohol Awareness Month

- **Set Free Alaska: Set Free Alaska is a Christian outpatient substance abuse treatment center.**
Address: 7010 E. Bogard Rd. Wasilla, AK 99654; **Phone:** 907-373-4732;
Website: [Set Free Alaska | Substance Abuse Treatment | Alcohol and Drug Rehab](#)
- **Addiction & Recovery Services: Adults—Cook Inlet Tribal Council: They provide outpatient substance– use support services in Anchorage and the Mat-Su Valley**
Phone: 907-793-3200;
Website: [Addiction & Recovery Services: Adults - Cook Inlet Tribal Council \(citci.org\)](#)
- **True North Recovery: They provide substance misuse and dual diagnosis treatment, recovery, reentry, and crisis services**
Address: 591 S. Knik Goose Bay Rd, Wasilla AK 99654; **Phone:** 907-313-1333
Website: [Alaska Drug and Alcohol Treatment Center, Addiction Treatment Program \(tnrak.org\)](#)

Mat-Su Reentry Events:

- **Virtual Mat-Su Reentry Services Forum**
Wednesday, April 17
10:00 to 11:00 AM

The Mat-Su Reentry Coalition and Reentry Case Management Program invites you to join us in a virtual Reentry Services Forum every third Wednesday of the month. All are welcome.

- **Mat-Su Reentry Coalition Steering Team Meeting**
Tuesday, May 7
9:00 to 10:30 AM

The Mat-Su Reentry Coalition has a virtual Steering Team Meeting on the first Tuesday of each month. The next meeting will be on Tuesday, May 7, 2024. All are welcome.

SAVE THE DATE!!!

September 5 & 6, 2024

The Mat-Su Reentry Coalition will be holding its 2024 Mat-Su Reentry Summit on September 5 & 6 at the Menard Sport Center in Wasilla.

More info to come.

For questions or zoom links to the above events please contact Barbara Mongar at:
barbara.mongar@valleycharities.org

Knik Tribe Events:

- **Knik Tribe Family Culture Nights — Bi-Weekly,**
Wednesday, 5:30 - 7:30 PM;
Location: 758 Shoreline Dr. Wasilla, AK; Open to All (See Attached Calendar)
Compact@KnikTribe.org
907-373-7991
- **Talking Circle—Tuesday,** at 6:30 and Wednesday at 5:30; Same location above;
Contact Ralph Lewis at 907-841-9773
- **Talking Circle—Thursday,** from 12 to 2PM; Location: Willow Library, Willow, AK

Mat-Su Reentry Coalition

The Mat-Su Reentry Coalition is a collaboration of individuals, community stakeholders, public and not-for-profit agencies, faith-based and business partners who are united and committed to reducing recidivism among returning citizens to the Mat-Su community.

Our Mission

To promote public safety by identifying and implementing strategies that increase former prisoners' wellbeing within the community and reduce the likelihood of their return to prison through recidivating.

We will accomplish this by:

- Improved communication and collaboration between Alaska Department of Corrections (DOC) and the community.
- Building community partnerships to strengthen local services.
- Identifying barriers for those being released from incarceration and taking an active role in addressing those concerns.
- Promoting community educational and training opportunities for those releasing regarding resources.
- Work in conjunction with Alaska DOC to inform and promote reentry efforts in Alaska.

Note: For more information on the Mat-Su Reentry Coalition contact Barbara.mongar@valleycharities.org or go to our Webpage at Mat-Su Valley Reentry Program | Valley Charities Inc



Mat-Su Job Center Update

By: **Amanda Carlson**, Mat-Su Job Center Manager

Happy Spring from your Mat-Su Job Center staff and a huge thank you to everyone who attended our Annual Employer Expo at the Menard center. This year our job fair counted 656 job seekers and 125 employers, partners, training vendors and community members in attendance. Thanks for your assistance in getting the word out so we can continue to build on this important event each year for our Mat-Su community.

In this month's Alaska Economic Trends Commissioner Designee Catherine Muñoz discusses "Funding and providers that support career-ready training". "The Department of Labor and Workforce Development and the Alaska Safety Alliance, with support from the Denali Commission, are nearing the release of a new cross-industry workforce plan called Workforce 2030, the plan will include recommendations to improve the development of Alaska's workforce; build a talent pipeline to recruit, educate, and train Alaskans for in-demand jobs; reduce outmigration; and strengthen economic development statewide. Your input on the plan is needed! Visit www.alaskaworkforce.org to read more and find out how you can participate in an Industry Advisory Council Interest Group". To access the full Trends issue, visit the Research and Analysis website at <https://live.laborstats.alaska.gov/>.

The Seafood unit in the Anchorage Midtown Job Center is hosting an At-Sea Processors Association Job Fair April 18th starting at 10am. Room, board and transportation are provided for those who complete their contract. Work averages 16 hour days and a percentage of the catch or case rate (depending on the company). There are many opportunities for professional growth in the seafood industry, please share the flyer with any job seekers that can work remotely, and want to make great money over the summer season.

For the most up to date information on open recruitments, job fairs, and virtual job readiness workshops please visit www.jobs.alaska.gov/jobfairs. The Mat-Su Job Center hosts various recruitments each month, if you are an employer looking to hire and would like more information about how we can promote and host a recruiting event for your business, please reach out to our Business Connections staff Stacey Andrist at (907) 352-2515 or Stacey.Andrist@alaska.gov. The Mat-Su Job Center is open to the public Monday-Friday from 8am-5pm and we are located at 877 W. Commercial Drive in Wasilla. Contact us by phone at (907) 352-2500 or email at matsu.jobcenter@alaska.gov.



April Trends: After two years of high inflation, Alaska's cost increases slowed to 1.5 percent in 2023. Also in this issue: How recently announced seafood processor sales and closures might affect jobs, and a look at population patterns in the years since COVID.