

mat-su Reentry coalition Newsletter

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LINKS Resource Fair

Randy Miller, the Durable Medical Equipment Manager for Valley Charities, and I participated in the LINKS Resource Fair in Wonderland Park on June 27, 2025.

This event is held each year to connect Mat-Su residents with local nonprofits and for-profit resources, featuring over 100 booths.

Along with booths from the different organizations in the Mat-Su, the fair also includes games, inflatables, face painting, raffles and a vender bingo card game for grand prize drawings. All the different activities were free of charge and there were also several food trucks where community members could purchase food.

According to Aaron Wright, LINKS Executive Director, "We want to allow the community to know what's available to our Mat-Su residents. Everyone invited to this either lives in the Mat-Su, or the organization is part of the Mat-Su, or they serve the Mat-Su area." ([Annual free fair in Wasilla aims to connect Mat-Su residents with local resources](#))

It was a beautiful, sunny Alaskan day and there was a large turnout at this event. It was a great place to not only meet and answer questions from community members, but to also connect with other organizations that provide services in the Mat-Su.

Over 250 community members stopped by our Valley Charities booth, where we gave out promotional items and information on our medical lending program and reentry services.

I would like to thank LINKS and the organizations that sponsored this event, to include the Mat-Su Health Foundation, Alaska Relay, MTA, Matanuska Valley Federal Credit Union, Silva Insurance Services, AM Vets Post 11, and Dirtworks.

Community Resource Fairs, such as this one, serve as a gathering point for diverse communities to strengthen their social connections and for individuals to learn how to access vital resources.

Barbara Mongar,
Mat-Su Reentry Coalition Coordinator



Valley Charities booth at the LINKS Resource Center fair at Wonderland Park on June 27, 2025



Children attend a LINKS Resource Center fair at Wonderland Park in June 2024. (Photo courtesy of LINKS)

Mat-Su Food Pantry celebrates new name in rededication to their founder

By: Max Treece-Noran, Your Alaska Link, Jun 27, 2025

In Wasilla, friends, family, and community members gather at the Mat-Su Food Bank for a re-dedication event of their Food Pantry. Now renamed to the Betty White Food Pantry, in honor of their founder.

Fred Becker, the Mat-Su Food Bank's Executive Director, excitedly exclaims, "Just the legacy of Betty White with her daughter still volunteering here, really made an impact to me that it is generational. It's something that her family was really - meant something to give back to the community."

Since 1984 the Mat-Su food pantry has been a staple of the Mat-Su valley community. Founded by Betty Lou White in the basement of the Good Shepherd Lutheran Church. Since then, it's only continued to grow.

Wasilla Mayor Glenda Ledford, who was the keynote speaker for the re-dedication ceremony, added, "It feeds a lot, a lot of people. It means the difference between going hungry and having something to eat."

It does feed a lot of people, since 2008 the Food Pantry has distributed over 14.5 million pounds of food to those in the community. With volunteers during that period donating around 25,000 hours of their time. But this is about more than just numbers.

Joseph Davis, President of the Mat-Su Food Coalition, proclaimed, "It's about giving back. It's about supporting and helping people with a hand up in something crucial, and that's food."

Food, family, and friends, that is what you'll find here at the newly named Betty White Food Pantry. [The Mat-Su food bank is always accepting donations and volunteers.](#)



All are welcome to the **FREE**

COMMUNITY CLOTHING GIVEAWAY

Saturday, July 19th
11:00 am – 3:00 pm

at Wasilla Lake Church of the Nazarene
2001 E Palmer – Wasilla Hwy in Wasilla

Free Hot Dog Lunch Included!

All Shapes & Sizes

(907) 357-8600
frontlinemission.org
helpfrontlinemission@wflm.org



BACK-TO-SCHOOL FAIR

**TUESDAY, JULY 29
2PM-6PM**

**AMAZING GRACE
ACADEMY
2238 S. INNER
SPRINGER LP.
PALMER, AK**

Backpacks & school supplies.
Activities & games by Thrive Mat-Su.
Gently-used clothing, outerwear &
footwear courtesy of turn-A-leaf.
Haircuts (for K-12 students only).
Back-to-school resources.
Local booths & information.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

Register at: unitedwaymatsu.org/volunteer-opportunities

**Mat-Su Borough School District students
grades K-12, with proof of enrollment.**



Monthly Highlight of Resources in the Mat-Su

- Front Line Mission:** A faith-based organization that provides hot meals, cloths, showers, and food items to patrons.
Address: 2001 E. Palmer-Wasilla Hwy, Wasilla, AK 99654
Phone Number: 907-357-8600
Website: [Frontline Mission](#) | [Welcome copy](#)
- Mat-Su Food Bank:** They are dedicated to eliminating hunger and building food security in the Mat-Su Valley by providing reliable access to nutritious food for individuals, families, and children in need.
Address: 5099 East Blue Lupine Drive, Wasilla, AK 99654
Phone Number: 907-357-3769
Website: [MatSu Food Bank - MatSu Food Bank - Wasilla, AK](#)

Mat-Su Reentry Events:

- Mat-Su Reentry Coalition Steering Team Meeting**
 Tuesday, Aug 5, 2025
 9:00 to 10:30 AM

The Mat-Su Reentry Coalition has a virtual Steering Team Meeting on the first Tuesday of each month. All Welcome to attend.

- Mat-Su Reentry Services Forum**
 Wed, July 16, 2025
 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. Service providers, PO's, Case Managers, and anyone interested

- SAVE THE DATE:**
2025 Mat-Su Reentry Summit
 Sep 4 - 5, 2025

In-person at the Menard Center in Wasilla, Alaska (See attached Flyer)

For questions, to sign up, or for 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
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
- Youth Wellbriety Circle** —
 Fridays, from 1 to 3PM;
 Location: MyHouse, Wasilla

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.



Mat-Su Job Center Update

By: **Amanda Carlson**, South Central Regional Manager

Summertime in Alaska is in full swing, and with the start of the 2026 State fiscal year, the Mat-Su Job Center is bustling with activity! Our staff are hard at work, assisting customers with summer job opportunities and apprenticeship openings across the state. The Mat-Su Job Center is open Monday-Friday 8am-5pm, our staff are available to assist one on one with employment or training needs. We currently offer the following workshops at our job center during normal business hours - Effective Resumes, Employment after Incarceration, Interviewing Strategies, Workplace Alaska (how to apply for State of Alaska Jobs), and Career Support & Training Orientation for grant funding. We also proctor WorkKeys and provided certified Typing/10-Key testing, all at no cost. You can reach us at (907) 352-2500 or in person at 877 West Commercial Drive, in Wasilla.

Due to the passage of Ballot Measure 1 in November 2024, Alaska's minimum wage increased to \$13.00 per hour on July 1, 2025. It will subsequently increase to \$14.00 on July 1, 2026, and to \$15.00 on July 1, 2027. Thereafter, the minimum wage will be adjusted annually for inflation starting January 1, 2028. More information about Alaska's wage laws can be found at: <https://labor.alaska.gov/lss/whhome.htm>.

If you would like to stay informed on current job openings, recruitments, or employment/training related happenings in the local Mat-Su area, please contact Faith Woolsey our Business Connection staff and request to be added to the Mat-Su mailing list. Faith can be reached at (907) 352-2515 or send a quick email to Faith.Woolsey@alaska.gov.

For the latest information on recruitments, job fairs, virtual job readiness workshops, and training opportunities, visit Alaska's Job Center Network at jobs.alaska.gov and explore the main menu options.



[July Trends:](#) Our annual cost of living issue takes a look at inflation, which has slowed to low levels historically after three erratic years. We also look at costs around Alaska and how they compare to each other and the nation.

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](https://www.valleycharities.org/mat-su-reentry-program)