

## Goose Creek Correctional Center Resource Fair

The Alaska Department of Corrections hosted a resource fair on October 15, 2025 from 11:00 AM until 2:00 PM at Goose Creek Correctional Center (GCCC).

The Resource Fair connected incarcerated individuals with organizations offering rehabilitation and reentry support. Twenty-two reentry resource tables were set up at GCCC.



*Photo of providers that attended the Goose Creek Correctional Center Resource Fair on Oct 15, 2025*

The booths featured the following programs and services:

- Anchorage Recovery Center
- Alaska Addiction Rehabilitation Services
- Alaska Housing Finance Corporation
- Alaska Ironworkers Local 751
- Alaska Joint Electrical Apprenticeship & Training Trust (IBEW)
- Alaska Laborers Training School
- Alaska Teamsters
- Anchorage Reentry Coalition
- Associated Builders & Contractors
- Cook Inlet Tribal Council
- Department of Corrections – Reentry
- Department of Corrections – Anchorage Probation
- Food Bank of Alaska
- International Union of Painters & Allied Trades
- Mat-Su Health Services
- Department of Labor and Workforce Development—Mat-Su Job Center
- Daybreak, Inc.— Reentry Program
- Valley Charities Inc.—Mat-Su Reentry Coalition and Reentry Program
- Partners for Progress
- Southcentral Foundation
- Veterans Justice Outreach
- Western States Regional Council of Carpenters

The event was held in two sessions and approximately 200 incarcerated individuals participated in this event. This was the first Resource Fair held inside GCCC since 2019.

I want to give a big thanks to the Alaska Department of Corrections for holding this event to provide an opportunity for GCCC's incarcerated population to connect one-on-one with community partners who offer release services and support. Resource Fairs such as this one are a vital part of the reentry process, offering incarcerated individuals valuable information and resources needed to assist them with their successful transition back into the community.

**Barbara Mongar**  
**Mat-Su Reentry Coalition Coordinator**

# One stop at a time, mobile reentry center helps people get back on their feet after incarceration

By: Rachel Crumpler, NC Health News, September 11, 2025

On a recent Friday in Greenville, a black bus parked outside the Joy Community Center and Soup Kitchen, drawing attention from those arriving for a hot meal. White lettering on the side of the vehicle read “Recidivism Reduction Center” — a name that sparked curiosity, questions and, for some, cautious hope.

A team of reentry specialists — each with their own experiences of incarceration — greeted those who approached, ready to listen as visitors recounted their challenges in rebuilding their lives after prison or jail.

Their goal: to provide the support people need for a successful transition from incarceration to the community — by meeting them where they are and connecting them to vital resources like Medicaid, Social Security, mental health and substance use treatment, housing, education and more.

In North Carolina, roughly 18,000 people are released from state prisons each year, with thousands more leaving county jails. Many struggle to stay out.

An [April 2024 report](#) from the [North Carolina Sentencing and Policy Advisory Commission](#) found that among nearly 13,000 people released from North Carolina state prisons in fiscal year 2021, 44 percent were re-arrested within two years of their release, and 33 percent were sent back to prison. These returns to North Carolina’s carceral system come with a high price tag — it costs about \$54,000 a year to house someone in a state prison.

The mobile reentry center is part of a grassroots effort to change that recidivism statistic.

## From skepticism to hope

Some potential clients eyed the [Mobile Recidivism Reduction Center](#) — operated by the nonprofit [Recidivism Reduction Educational Program Services](#) — with skepticism at first, hesitant to share their struggles. But when the reentry specialists shared their own lived experience — or explained that the center was founded by someone who spent more than 11 years behind bars — it often helped break the ice. Others came with immediate openness, desperate for help with [navigating the many barriers that can make it difficult](#) to land — and stay — on their feet after incarceration.

“You’ve got to listen and decipher, what is the most immediate need?” reentry specialist Shahonda Pittman said. “What can I help them with to put them in a better position today? What’s going to make them walk away feeling like they got something accomplished?”

When someone voiced a need, the team sprang into action, drawing from the organization’s statewide database of more than 1,200 resources to help address people’s most pressing challenges.

One such moment unfolded around lunchtime, when a man and woman — both recently released from being incarcerated — stopped by the mobile reentry center with their two young children. Looking tired, they described to Pittman the obstacles they’ve faced trying to find stable housing, employment and health care since arriving in Greenville.

The man shared that he had a broken tooth and needed his dental bridge repaired, but he lacked dental coverage and couldn’t afford the cost. Pittman immediately opened her laptop, searched the database and found a nearby clinic that she thought would work with him. She provided the name and phone number — a starting point for care.

The woman, who said she lives with depression, explained she had been without health insurance for some time. Pittman invited her aboard the bus — which has been converted into a welcoming space with two seating areas and walls decorated with positive affirmations — where they completed her Medicaid application online.

“That is so crazy how you did that,” the woman said, breaking into a smile, explaining that she had tried multiple times before without success.



*The mobile recidivism reduction center pictured in Greenville on Sept. 5, 2025. Credit: Rachel Crumpler / NC Health News*

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# One stop at a time, mobile reentry center helps people get back on their feet after incarceration

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As they continued talking, another challenge came up: work. The woman had secured a food service job but needed a black collared shirt for her first shift the next day — something she didn't have. Pittman told her not to worry; she would pick one up at Walmart. NC Health News tagged along when Pittman delivered the shirt to the woman's hotel room just hours later.

Some challenges are harder to solve than others, Pittman acknowledged. But she said she and the other reentry specialists work hard to ensure that everyone they meet feels supported and on a path to making progress on their reentry goals.

Pittman gave the woman a pep talk before she stepped out of the mobile center: "Where you are right now does not define where you are going."

"I know," the woman replied, and her voice seemed to carry a bit more hope than it had when she first arrived.

## Mobile approach/ One Stop at a time

Kerwin Pittman, executive director of the nonprofit [Recidivism Reduction Educational Program Services](#), [launched North Carolina's first Mobile Recidivism Reduction Center in January](#).

Drawing from his own reentry experience after his release from prison in 2018, Kerwin Pittman (who is also Shahonda Pittman's brother-in-law) said he knew how lack of transportation can put critical support services and resources out of reach. That awareness informed his decision to transform what he described as "an old and dusty" bus into a mobile support center designed to take reentry services directly to people in need.

When the mobile center arrives in a new city, it stays at least a week — if not longer, Pittman said. That's because it can take a day or so for some people to move past their skepticism or grow open to receiving help. And as the reentry specialists begin connecting people to services, word tends to spread, drawing more people to the center.

The team initially targets high-traffic areas to park the mobile unit — often homeless shelters are a first stop, given the [high rates of housing insecurity among formerly incarcerated people](#). Other locations are chosen based on input from community members who know where the need is the greatest.

When the bus moves to a different city, Pittman said the support doesn't stop. Reentry specialists hand everyone they meet a business card with the number for the [Recidivism Reduction Call Center](#), a statewide reentry hotline launched by Pittman's nonprofit in April 2024. The [hotline provides on-demand assistance](#) to callers who are struggling to reenter the community. More than 3,300 calls have been answered to date, Pittman said.

## State focused on improving Reentry Support

The growing reach of the mobile reentry centers comes as North Carolina is increasingly focused on [boosting support for people returning from incarceration](#) as part of the national [Reentry 2030](#) initiative. Since January 2024, [state leaders have been taking action to lessen obstacles](#) that could derail a successful transition into the community. The effort is guided by a [detailed strategic plan](#) developed by the state's [Joint Reentry Council](#). The plan's four overarching goals are: Improve the economic mobility of formerly incarcerated people; improve access to mental and physical health care; expand housing opportunities for formerly incarcerated people; and remove barriers to successful community reintegration.

Pittman serves on the Joint Reentry Council to represent the perspective of people who have been incarcerated.

**Link to Full Article:** [Mobile reentry center helps people get back on their feet after incarceration](#)

## Mat-Su Reentry Events:

- **Mat-Su Reentry Simulation**  
Thursday, Nov 6, 2025  
10:00 AM to 12:00 PM

[At the Menard Sport Center](#)

Experience an interactive event that highlights the struggles individuals face when transitioning from incarceration back into their communities.

- **Mat-Su Reentry Forum**  
Wed, Nov 19, 2026  
9:00 to 10:00 AM

The Mat-Su Reentry Forum is every third Wednesday of the month. Services Providers, Field PO's, Case Managers, and any others in attending are welcome.

**For questions, to sign up, or for zoom links to the above events please contact Barbara Mongar at:**  
[barbara.mongar@valleycharities.org](mailto: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](mailto:Compact@KnikTribe.org)  
907-373-7991
- **Talking Circle**—Tuesday, at 6:30 and Wednesday at 5:30;  
**Same location above;**  
**Contact Ralph Lewis,**  
907-841-9773
- **Women's Talking Circle**—  
Supporting women who have been victimized by Domestic & Dating Violence, Sexual Assault, Stalking, and Sex Trafficking.  
Nov 7th & 21st;  
10:30am - 12:30pm  
**Location:**  
1001 S Knik Goose Bay Rd  
**For More Info: 907-373-7991**  
[socialservices@kniktribe.org](mailto:socialservices@kniktribe.org)
- **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: **Michele Bentz**, Mat-Su Job Center Manager

The Mat-Su Job Center is open Monday through Friday, from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Our staff is available to assist one-on-one with employment or training needs. We currently offer the following workshops at our job center during regular 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 provide certified typing and 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.

Our center offers two conference rooms, available to partners and community members at no cost, that can accommodate recruitment sessions, staff training, testing, or meetings. One of the conference rooms has a computer lab of 15 computers available. If you are interested in learning more or scheduling a visit to view our space, please call our main line.

In December, we are excited to welcome back the Alaska Primary Care Association's Pre-Apprenticeship Training in Healthcare (PATH) Academy at the Mat-Su Job Center. This pre-apprenticeship training course is free, and we need your help getting interested customers registered so we can continue to offer these courses locally. Register online at [Get Started with Training & Support - Alaska Primary Care Association](#). Course dates are Monday—Friday, December 8-12 (in-person) and December 15-19 (on-line), 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM.

Starting on October 28<sup>th</sup>, 2025, we are hosting The Alaska Literacy program in the Job Center on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 1:30 pm to 3:30 pm. They are offering drop-in Digital Literacy support for anyone needing to learn how to:

- Identify safe and secure websites
- Avoid scams and viruses
- Fill out online forms
- Search and apply for jobs
- Set up and use e-mail
- Pay bills online
- Stay in touch with friends and family (social media, video calls)
- Translate websites
- Use online portals for school, healthcare, and job applications
- Use Microsoft Word and Microsoft Excel
- Use Google Docs & Google Sheets
- Improve typing skills
- ...and more!



[November Trends](#): Alaska lost seafood harvesting jobs for a fifth straight year in 2024, bringing the total fishing job count to its lowest level since data collection began. Also inside: Alaska has the highest percentage of veterans in the nation.

## Monthly Highlight of Resources in the Mat-Su

### November is National Homeless Youth Awareness Month

- **MyHouse:** Dedicated to empowering homeless and at-risk youth in the Mat-Su and beyond.  
**Phone:** (907) 373-4357; **E-Mail:** [info@myhousematsu.org](mailto:info@myhousematsu.org)  
**Website:** [MY House – Providing Exits to Homelessness for Alaskan youth](#)
- **Mat-Su Youth Action Board (YAB):** They are dedicated to improving our system and services through community engagement. They believe that when our community is aligned with collaborating with young leaders to strengthen our homeless response system, we will be at our best.  
**E-Mail:** [matsuyouthactionboard@gmail.com](mailto:matsuyouthactionboard@gmail.com)  
**Website:** [People, Programs, and Projects — Mat-Su Youth Action Board](#)

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