

# **Anchorage Reentry Coalition Data Sheet**

## **INCARCERATION IN THE UNITED STATES**

By the beginning of 2017, estimates were that more than 6.6 million adults were being held in a prison or jail, or under some other form of correctional supervision in the United States. This figure equates to roughly 1 in 38 adults being under a form of correctional supervision.<sup>1</sup> Recent estimates (pre-COVID-19) were that 2.3 million people are in confinement in the United States, spanning a vast and complex system of jails, prisons, detention facilities, juvenile facilities, Indian country prisons, military prisons, and psychiatric hospitals all operated by a mix of local, state, and federal jurisdictions and authorities.<sup>2</sup> No other comparable democratic nation in the world has incarceration rates near to that of the United States.<sup>3,4</sup>

## **INCARCERATION AND RECIDIVISM IN ALASKA**

The Alaska Department of Corrections (DOC) currently operates twelve state correctional facilities and is responsible for housing and supervising nearly the entire adult population of misdemeanants, felons, pretrial defendants, and supervision violators.<sup>5</sup> Alaska is one of only six states with a unified, or integrated correctional system in which the jail and prison system are operated by a single agency.<sup>6</sup> Of the twelve DOC facilities located around Alaska, one is located in the Municipality of Anchorage while six institutions are situated within relative proximity to Anchorage and in the vicinities of Eagle River, Wasilla, Palmer, Seward, and Kenai.

At mid-year 2019, DOC reported holding in-custody or supervising a total of 8,299 individuals. The population in Alaska in 2019 was estimated to be 731,007 people, indicating 1.1% of the State's entire population was under a form DOC custody or supervision. Refining data to reflect only the adult population 18 years or older, estimates are that 1 in 65 adults in Alaska were in-custody or under DOC supervision at mid-year 2019.<sup>7,8</sup>

Among those individuals subject to DOC supervision at mid-year 2019, a total of 4,482 individuals were housed inside an in-state correctional facility, 16 were housed in an out-of-state correctional facility, 203 were housed at a community residential center, 138 individuals were in the community on electronic monitoring, and 3,460 individuals were on parole or probation.<sup>7</sup>

Among all levels of supervision and custody across Alaska, about 88% of individuals were identified as male and 12% female. DOC reports that among all those in-custody and under supervision, 45% were Caucasian/White, 37% Alaskan Native, 9% Black/African American, 5% Asian/Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, 3% Hispanic/Latino, and 1% other/unknown. Across all levels of supervision and custody, individuals between 25 and 39 years old account for more than half of the entire population (53%).<sup>7</sup>

Total admissions into DOC facilities have risen each year since 2016, with more than 34,700 admissions reported in 2019. While the total institution population declined between 2015 and 2017, the total number of people incarcerated in Alaska has increased each of the last two years in 2018 and 2019.<sup>7</sup> DOC defines recidivism as a conviction and return to incarceration for any reason, for any person convicted of a felony within three years from release. As of mid-year 2020, it was reported that the most recent cohort of offenders dating to CY16 demonstrated a recidivism rate of just under 60%, which continued a trend in declining recidivism rates in Alaska.<sup>9</sup> Despite declining recidivism rates, Alaska is experiencing increasing incarceration rates which runs counter to national trends where there has been declining incarceration rates over the last decade.<sup>10,11</sup>

Estimates are that only five other states have a smaller number of individuals in custody or under a form of community supervision compared to Alaska, based on total volume. However, only 19 other states have a higher rate of adults under some form of correctional supervision.<sup>1</sup> In other words, the total number of individuals in custody or under state corrections supervision is relatively low in Alaska; however, compared to other states, Alaska incarcerates or supervises a relatively high proportion of its residents.

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## INCARCERATION AND REENTRY IN ANCHORAGE

According to DOC data, a total of 7,108 unique individuals were released from a DOC facility in CY19, 46% (3,248) of whom were released to Anchorage. This is despite the Municipality of Anchorage accounting for just under 40% of the State's entire population.<sup>8,12</sup> A separate statistic reported by DOC is the number of releases, reflecting each instance there was a person released from custody to the community. In CY19 there was a total of 8,315 releases from DOC custody, 47% of which were to Anchorage, 10% each to Mat-Su and Fairbanks, 6% to Kenai, 4% to Bethel, 3% each to Nome and Juneau, with the remainder going to other communities across the state.<sup>12</sup>

Similar to system-wide DOC demographics, people being released to Anchorage are predominately White (38%), Alaskan Native (35%), or African American (12%), and 80% of all those released to Anchorage fall within the 20-44 year old range. Somewhat in contrast to other statistics is the proportion of males and female releases, in that 22% of releases to Anchorage are females compared to 78% males.<sup>12</sup>

There were almost 1,600 people on probation/parole in Anchorage at mid-year 2019.<sup>7</sup> In terms of classification, 57% of DOC releases to Anchorage during CY19 were identified as having committed a misdemeanor, 42% were identified as having committed a felony, and 1% unknown/other. About 83% of releases to Anchorage reflected non-violent offenses, while 17% were for violent offenses.<sup>12</sup>

DOC administers the Level of Service Inventory-Revised (LSI-R), a validated and reliable tool that is used to measure recidivism risk and inform supervision and delivery of services and treatment. An LSI-R score is a composite measure that considers various factors, including criminal history, attitudes, alcohol and drug use, family and marital status, and other relevant factors.<sup>13</sup> LSI-R scores were made available based on the categorization of scores: minimum, medium, maximum. More than half of releases statewide during CY19 corresponded to "minimum" LSI-R scores, however, among all DOC releases statewide during CY19, nearly 58% of all releases that corresponded to a "maximum" LSI-R score were released to Anchorage.<sup>12</sup>

Most recently available DOC data demonstrates that there continues to be an outsized proportion of Alaska's reentry population being released to Anchorage. People returning to the Anchorage community predominately identify as White, Alaskan Native, or African American; the vast majority are young adults or early middle age adults; most are males; the majority were convicted of non-violent offenses and a modest proportion were deemed to be at low-risk of recidivating. There is, however, also a large proportion of high-risk, high-need individuals releasing to Anchorage when compared to other Alaskan communities. The most recent data continues to justify and validate the need for continued investments in a comprehensive range of resources and services for the relatively high number of former DOC inmates being released to the Anchorage community that reflect the composition, demographics, and a range of needs and risk factors contained within this particular reentry population seeking to integrate into the Anchorage community.

*Note:* The preceding analysis does not include criminally-involved youth, nor does it include data for individuals from Alaska that are in Federal custody or under Federal supervision.



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## DATA SOURCES

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