

# **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 were under some other form of correctional supervision in the United States. This figure equates to roughly 1 in 38 adults being under some form of correctional supervision.<sup>1</sup> Pre-COVID estimates were that 2.3 million people were 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 13 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 unique in that it 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 13 DOC facilities located around Alaska, two are located within the boundaries of the Municipality of Anchorage (Anchorage Correctional Complex and Hiland Mountain Correctional Center) and six other institutions are situated within relative proximity to Anchorage and in the vicinities of Wasilla, Palmer, Seward, and Kenai.

At mid-year 2020, DOC reported holding in-custody or supervising a total of 8,237 individuals which equated to approximately 1.1% of the State's entire population. Among the adult population 18 years or older, an estimated 1 in 66 adults were in-custody or under DOC supervision at mid-year 2020.<sup>7,8</sup>

Among all those individuals in-custody or under DOC supervision at mid-year 2020, a total of 4,240 individuals were housed inside an in-state correctional facility, 17 were housed in an out-of-state correctional facility, 238 were housed at a community residential center, 165 individuals were in the community on electronic monitoring, and 3,577 individuals were on parole or probation.<sup>7</sup>

Among this population of justice-involved people, 88% were identified as male and 12% female. DOC reported this population to be comprised primarily of people identified as Caucasian/White (44%), Alaskan Native (37%), Black/African American (9%), and Asian/Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander (5%). Across all levels of supervision and custody, individuals between 25 and 44 years old accounted for 63% of the entire population.<sup>7</sup>

Total annual admissions into DOC facilities rose each consecutive year from 2016 to 2019. Conversely, in 2020 the total number of admissions went down and is very likely attributable to the COVID-19 pandemic. Similarly, the total number of people incarcerated at mid-year 2020 went down from 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 their release. The latest recidivism rates reported for the FY2017 cohort of released people indicates that there was a slight increase in recidivism rates from the prior year, from 60.04% to 60.61%. Although it is a minor change, it reverses a four-year trend of continually decreasing recidivism rates dating back to the FY2013 cohort.<sup>7</sup>

# **Anchorage Reentry Coalition Data Sheet**

## **INCARCERATION AND REENTRY IN ANCHORAGE**

According to DOC data, a total of 5,297 unique individuals were released from a DOC facility in CY20, 44% (2,351) 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, number of releases, reflects each instance there was a person released from custody to the community. In CY20 there were a total of 5,842 releases from DOC custody, 45% of which were to Anchorage, 11% to Fairbanks, 10% to Mat-Su, 5% to Kenai, 4% each to Bethel and Juneau, 3% to Nome, with the remainder going to other communities across the state.<sup>12</sup>

The COVID-19 pandemic surely impacted incarceration and reentry in Alaska during 2020. During CY20 the number of individuals released from incarceration statewide was nearly 25% lower than the previous year, with the percentage of total releases decreasing by nearly 30%. Similarly, 27% fewer individuals released to Anchorage as compared to the previous year. While the pandemic likely played a significant role in these decreases, a downward trend in month-to-month releases began in January prior to the emergence of the pandemic.

Similar to system-wide DOC demographics, releases from custody to Anchorage during CY20 were predominately identified as Alaskan Native (37%), White (33%), or African American (14%). In terms of age, 78% of all releases to Anchorage were of individuals between 20-44 years old. Based on sex, male releases accounted for 77% of releases and 23% were female releases; nearly half of all female releases statewide were to Anchorage in CY20.<sup>12</sup>

In terms of classification, about 54% of DOC releases to Anchorage during CY20 reflected misdemeanor offenses and 46% reflected felony offenses. About 83% of all releases to Anchorage reflected non-violent offenses, while 17% were related to violent offenses.<sup>12</sup> There were more than 1,660 people on probation/parole in Anchorage at mid-year 2020.<sup>7</sup>

DOC administers the Level of Service Inventory-Revised (LSI-R), a validated tool 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. Among those with a reported LSI-R score, slightly less than half (48%) of releases statewide during CY20 corresponded to "minimum" LSI-R scores; however, among all DOC releases statewide during CY20, 56% of all releases that corresponded to a "maximum" LSI-R score were released to Anchorage.<sup>12</sup>

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 Alaskan Native, White, or African American; the vast majority are young adults or early middle age adults; most are males; and the vast majority of individuals were released after committing non-violent offenses. 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. Such reentry resources and services should be sensitive of the characteristics, strengths, needs and risk factors of this population that is integrating back into the Anchorage community.

# **Anchorage Reentry Coalition Data Sheet**

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.

*Anchorage Reentry Coalition  
November, 2021*

## **DATA SOURCES**

1. "Correctional Populations in the United States, 2016", U.S. Dept. of Justice (Accessed: [www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/cpus16.pdf](http://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/cpus16.pdf)).
2. "Mass Incarceration: The Whole Pie 2020", Prison Policy Initiative (Accessed: <https://www.prisonpolicy.org/reports/pie2020.html>).
3. "State of Incarceration: The Global Context 2018", Prison Policy Initiative (Accessed: <https://www.prisonpolicy.org/global/2018.html>).
4. "World Prison Population List" (Twelfth Edition), Institute For Criminal Policy Research (Accessed: [https://www.prisonstudies.org/sites/default/files/resources/downloads/wppl\\_12.pdf](https://www.prisonstudies.org/sites/default/files/resources/downloads/wppl_12.pdf)).
5. Personal Correspondence with DOC representative, October 2018.
6. "Terms & Definitions: Prison" Website, Bureau of Justice Statistics (Accessed: <https://www.bjs.gov/index.cfm?ty=tdtp&tid=13>).
7. "2020 Offender Profile", Alaska Dept. of Corrections (Accessed: [doc.alaska.gov/admin/docs/Offender%20Profile%202020.pdf](http://doc.alaska.gov/admin/docs/Offender%20Profile%202020.pdf)).
8. "Alaska Population by Age and Sex, 2010 to 2020", Alaska Dept. of Labor and Workforce Development (Accessed: [live.laborstats.alaska.gov/pop/index.cfm](http://live.laborstats.alaska.gov/pop/index.cfm)).
9. "Rehabilitation, Reentry & Recidivism" Presentation, Alaska Department of Corrections. Presentation delivered at the Alaska Criminal Justice Commission, Rehabilitation, Reentry and Recidivism Reduction Workgroup meeting on July 23, 2020.
10. "Prisoners in 2017", U.S. Department of Justice (Accessed: <https://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/p17.pdf>).
11. "Prisoners in 2018", Bureau of Justice Statistics (Accessed: <https://www.bjs.gov/index.cfm?ty=pbdetail&iid=6846>).
12. 2020 DOC Release Data, Personal Correspondence with DOC representative, March, 2021.
13. "LSI-R, Level of Service Inventory-Revised" Website, MHS Assessments (Accessed: <https://storefront.mhs.com/collections/lsi-r>).

