



THE  
**ALLIANCE**

United to Prevent Alcohol Misuse &  
Promote Community Wellness

---

**NEW MEMBER ORIENTATION PACKET**

# HELLO! AND WELCOME.

Thank you for taking the time to learn more about The Alliance: United to Prevent Alcohol Misuse and Promote Community Wellness. We are a group of individuals and organizations with a personal or professional commitment to **reducing alcohol misuse and building community wellness in Alaska**. We invite you to familiarize yourself with who we are. We value the lived experience each person brings and know there is a place for you, your voice, and your values in The Alliance.

In this new member orientation packet, you'll find:

- The Alliance common agenda
- Introductions and contacts for Alliance regional co-chairs and the coordinator
- Additional information on how to get involved

Our common agenda is the story of who we are, what we do, and how we do it. Our mission, vision, broad strategic direction, and objectives are housed in our common agenda. If all of this work was left to one organization alone, it would be improbable to achieve. The strength of the Alliance comes in **our shared commitment to our collective vision**.

If, after reading through this packet you are interested in learning more, we also encourage you to visit our website, [www.alaska-alliance.org](http://www.alaska-alliance.org). And to add your name to the growing list of engaged members, please sign up for our listserv on our contact page, [www.alaska-alliance.org/contact](http://www.alaska-alliance.org/contact).

Be well,

Alliance members





# COMMON AGENDA

## PART ONE: THE STRATEGIC DIRECTION

### WHO WE ARE

The Alliance is a system-shifting network of multiple and diverse partners across Alaska who recognize the impacts of alcohol misuse on individuals and communities. We are personally and professionally committed to working together to address this complex problem in our state.

A system-shifting network is defined as a network of people who are focused on transforming systems so that they work for everyone. View our Guiding Frameworks at [alaska-alliance.org/how-we-do-it/guiding-frameworks](https://alaska-alliance.org/how-we-do-it/guiding-frameworks).

### HOW WE DEFINE EXCESSIVE ALCOHOL USE

Excessive alcohol use includes binge and heavy drinking by adults over the age of 21, and any alcohol use by those who are underage or pregnant, and exists on a spectrum from mild to moderate to severe. There are multiple pathways to recovery, requiring interventions and treatments appropriate to the level of severity and impact. While excessive alcohol use is typically defined as use by individuals, we recognize the systemic inequities that perpetuate excessive alcohol use within certain populations. Therefore, whole-system work is required to address excessive use.

### OUR VISION FOR COMMUNITY WELLNESS

Community Wellness means to us that our people are healthy and experience overall well being, and no one among us is suffering from the effects of trauma. We all feel like we belong, are connected, are valued, and contribute. We recognize our diverse cultural and personal strengths. We are using healthy coping mechanisms and good self-care. Our local, geographic communities are thriving and safe. Our lands and waters are as resilient and healthy as our people. We are all adequately resourced to respond to everyone in the community and to help individuals and families who need it. Our regions are connected and sharing ideas, resources, successes, and failures.

**PART ONE: THE STRATEGIC DIRECTION CONT.**

**OUR MISSION**

To engage people and communities as partners, to promote individual and community wellness, and prevent excessive alcohol use and harms in Alaska.

**OUR GOALS**

To Build Relationships	To Build Shared Meaning	To Build Power
among and across organizations, efforts, communities, and individuals.	about the nature of alcohol misuse, upstream prevention, and community wellness.	for everyone to have what they need to thrive and contribute to the mission, based on where they are and where they sense to go.

**THE DIFFERENCE WE CAN MAKE TOGETHER: OUR AUDIENCES**

We shape this Common Agenda in recognition of the groups that are impacted by our collective work. We represent, acknowledge, and honor the following:

- \* Community members, especially:
  - People with lived experience
  - Future generations
  - Our elders and ancestors
  - Rural and other priority communities to be named
- \* Prevention professionals in organizations and agencies
- \* People and organizations who have an impact on the lives of others e.g., schools, health care providers, etc.
- \* Policy makers/People who make governmental and institutional decisions

## PART ONE: THE STRATEGIC DIRECTION CONT.

### THE DIFFERENCE WE CAN MAKE TOGETHER: OUR OBJECTIVES

#### We commit to:

1. Help each other to understand and address the underlying conditions that influence and drive alcohol misuse.
2. Use inclusive and open practices so everyone can participate and connect in meaningful ways, feel a sense of belonging, share stories, validate experiences and insights, and learn from each other.
3. Collect and organize useful, timely, accurate, and meaningful knowledge and evidence on prevention and recovery.
4. Work to reduce stigma to allow our communities to talk openly and compassionately about risks, harms, and behaviors that contribute to excessive alcohol use. Move from conversation to action.
5. Help each other return to a culture of health through practices that restore wellness for all communities, based on respect for cultural differences, even when it is uncomfortable.
6. Provide opportunities for powerful storytelling to influence policies that support community wellness, upstream prevention, and funding that is responsive to community needs.

### USING DATA TO UNDERSTAND STRATEGY AND IMPACT

The Alliance recognizes that no one data source provides a complete picture of the assets and challenges within the communities across the state. Therefore, The Alliance is moving forward with a data-based decision-making protocol that places equitable emphasis on statewide population health measures, localized datasets, and data collected by communities to develop strategy and understand impact.

”

*It's bringing our own skill sets, talents, and lived experiences to the table. Each person brings a piece of the puzzle. Each person has an answer. Sometimes those answers aren't brought out of someone until a question is asked.*

**EVA GREGG**

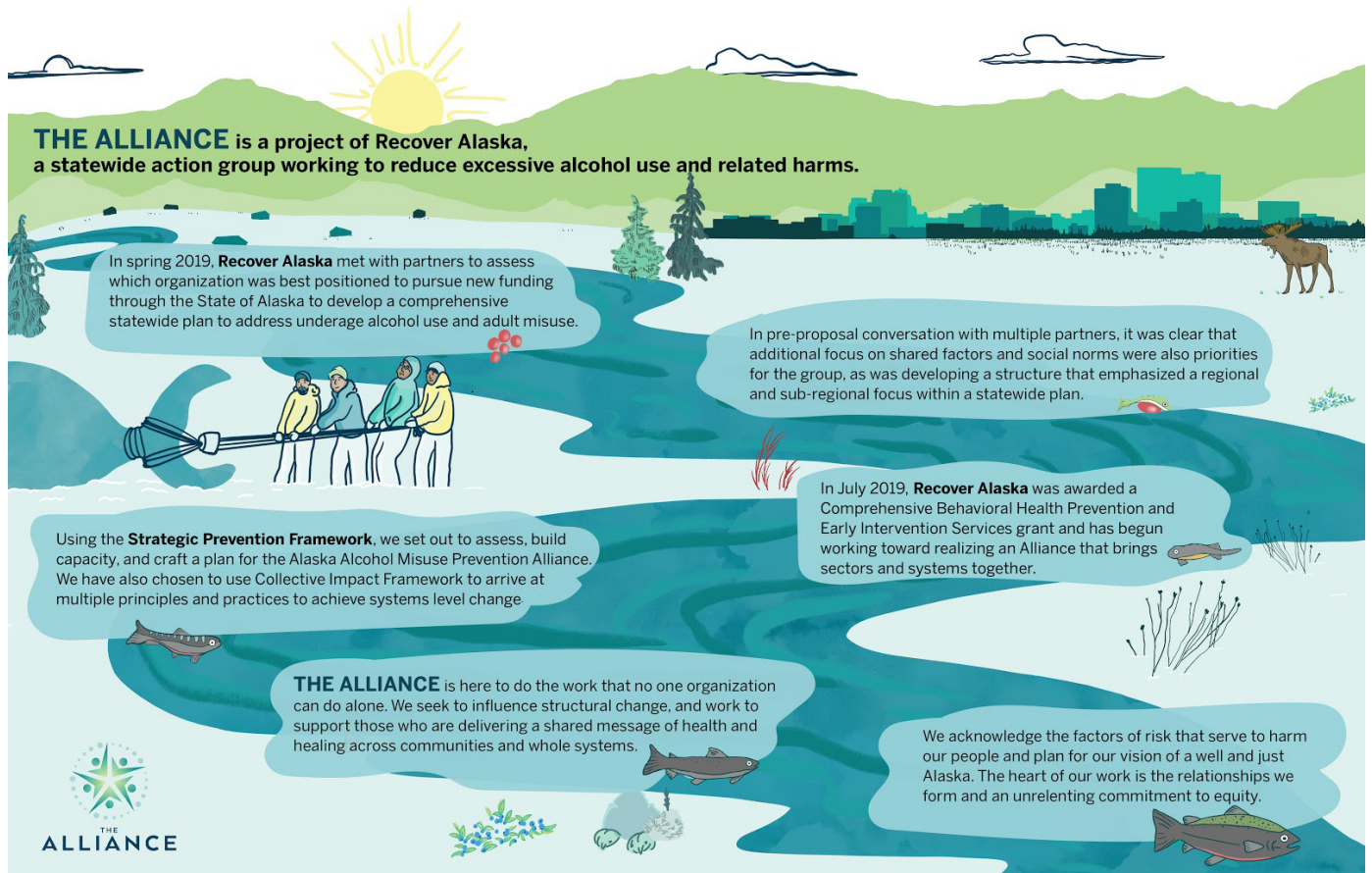
## PART TWO: THE NARRATIVE OF CHANGE

### OUR SHARED JOURNEY

The story of our shared journey of learning, research, and development unfolds in [The Alliance's Emergent Strategy: Laying a Strong Foundation for Change](#).

First, this narrative frames the problem of excessive alcohol use in Alaska, and the rationale for why we are working together to do the work that no one organization can do alone.

Second, it forms the theory of change for The Alliance – a novel and deliberate approach that seeks to create the conditions for systems change. This is a complex and unpredictable path, so we are using an emergent strategy. This is unlike linear logic models. The learning that has been gleaned so far is organized within the seven core elements of emergent strategy defined by adriane maree brown.



## PART THREE: THE TOOLS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

### OUR GUIDE

**The Alliance Toolkit for How We Work** takes the place of a governance charter. It contains links to the tools and structures developed to date, organized for members who are a part of decentralized decision-making work groups. It is the aim of the Organizational Design Workgroup to facilitate and guide this infrastructure development for distributed governance in the Alliance, ensuring that it is understandable and accessible, and that each of the areas in the Toolkit are being effectively addressed.

### ADDITIONAL PLANS AND TOOLS

A coherent Common Agenda is the aim of the Strategy Workgroup. This includes the **Common Agenda Roadmap**, which is a planning tool that can be found in the Toolkit that tracks the emerging strategies for the next year or so to meet The Alliance's objectives. The Strategy Workgroup also aims to develop clear tools and processes that enable all key stakeholders to understand and participate in developing and launching strategies to meet collective objectives.

A key strategy is for the network to develop more connectedness; the **Prevention Landscape Map** is a tool that provides a visual representation of who is involved in the prevention ecosystem and how they connect to the work, so that intentionality can be brought to building relationships.

As they are completed, other specialized plans and tools will be a part of our Toolkit, such as:

- The Evaluation Plan
- The Strategic Communications Plan, held by the Communications Workgroup
- The Resourcing Model for Sustainability

# REGIONAL CO-CHAIRS

In Alliance pre-proposal work, it became apparent that in order to do this work effectively we cannot simply rely on meeting at a statewide level. Regional breakouts of The Alliance help determine what is working and what challenges and expectations exist at the regional level. There is also the reality that Recover Alaska does not hold all the important relationships, nor should we.

The purpose of identifying and collaborating with a regional co-chair is to empower leaders around the state to interact with their regional partners in real time, acting as liaison between their region and the overall Alliance. The regions, as defined for the purposes of The Alliance, are: Northern, Southwest, Anchorage/Mat-Su, Gulf Coast, Interior, and Southeast. This regional breakout is likely to expand as The Alliance grows.



## **LOYD PLATSON**

*Prevention Director, H.O.P.E.*

Southeast region

**MY VISION OF A HEALTHY AND WELL ALASKA:** Connected communities based in equity for all community members and working on personal and collective healing.

**CONTACT:** [lplatson@scpsak.org](mailto:lplatson@scpsak.org); 907-747-3636



## **AARON OSTERBACK**

*Volunteers of America Alaska*

Anchorage region

**MY VISION OF A HEALTHY AND WELL ALASKA:** A healthy Alaska is a place where people have access to the care they need, whether its physical, behavioral, or spiritual. A place where people can come together and work towards supporting one another in a journey of health and wellness.

**CONTACT:** [aosterback@voaak.org](mailto:aosterback@voaak.org); 907-419-7852



## **ISHA TWITCHELL**

*SPF-PFS Grant Administrator, Knik Tribe*

Mat-Su Borough

**MY VISION OF A HEALTHY AND WELL ALASKA:** My vision of a healthy and well Alaska is a place where we have healthy community members who enjoy and support each other through kindness, love and compassion. To live in a place where we no longer have to heal, but are healed.

**CONTACT:** [itwitchell@kniktribe.org](mailto:itwitchell@kniktribe.org)



## REGIONAL CO-CHAIRS



### **GORDON IYA**

*Prevention Specialist, Native Connections*  
Northwest region

**MY VISION OF A HEALTHY AND WELL ALASKA:** My healthy Alaska is one whose people are unafraid to seek help, and provide any assistance, however small, to anyone in need - a "neighborly" approach if you will. One of empathy, understanding, acceptance, and accountability.

**CONTACT:** [gsiya@nshcorp.org](mailto:gsiya@nshcorp.org); 907-443-3215



### **TILLILA BEETUS**

*Independent Consultant*  
Interior/Fairbanks region

**MY VISION OF A HEALTHY AND WELL ALASKA:** My vision is one where people no longer live with systemic oppression, are able to address and heal from their trauma(s) and can thrive personally and socially.

**CONTACT:** [tilbeetus@gmail.com](mailto:tilbeetus@gmail.com)



### **STEPHANIE STILLWELL**

*SRS Consulting*  
Gulf Coast region

**MY VISION OF A HEALTHY AND WELL ALASKA:** Community connectedness across the state, access to prevention, treatment and recovery support services.

**CONTACT:** [stephanie@gsquared.solutions](mailto:stephanie@gsquared.solutions); 907-513-9656



### **JENNA LARSON**

*Aleutian Pribilof Islands Association*  
Southwest/Aleutian Pribilof

**MY VISION OF A HEALTHY AND WELL ALASKA:** Wellness for all in mind/body/soul by means of implementing culture and an integrated system of mental and physical health modalities

**CONTACT:** 1131 East International Airport Rd., Anchorage Alaska 99518; 907-222-9748



### **LEONA STARR**

*Systems of Care Youth Lead, Tanana Chiefs Conference*  
Interior/Rural

**CONTACT:** [bifeltlj@hotmail.com](mailto:bifeltlj@hotmail.com)

## THE ALLIANCE COORDINATORS



### JESS LIMBIRD

(she/they)

*Program Manager, Recover Alaska*

**CONTACT:** [jlimbird@recoveralaska.org](mailto:jlimbird@recoveralaska.org)

Jess is originally from Nashville, Tennessee, and made her way to Alaska permanently in 2007, by way of Olympia, Washington, where she studied liberal arts at the Evergreen State College.

In 2009, she took a position with Anchorage School District's Title VI/Indian Education program, where she advocated for Alaska Native and Native American families and students, working with grant initiative Project Ki'L as well. Her work with Title VI/Indian Education won her a Denali Award in 2011.

With a keen awareness of the inefficiencies of people-serving systems, and a strong desire to create change, Jess pursued a Master's of Arts in Education degree through Goddard College, based in Vermont. She brought those same values to her work at YWCA Alaska as a Youth Empowerment Manager. Her work with Recover Alaska began in 2017, where she manages programs, including Education and Prevention. Jess has been The Alliance coordinator since 2019.

Jess is mother to a sweet boy. Jess and Solomon enjoy being Alaskan – adventuring, fishing, and visiting with family. They are also the proud owners of three wonderful cats.



### AUTUMN CANTU

(she/her)

*Youth Wellness Coordinator*

**CONTACT:** [acantu@recoveralaska.org](mailto:acantu@recoveralaska.org)

Autumn Cantu is originally from Ruby, Alaska but resides in Fairbanks. Autumn spends her free time with her husband and children, enjoying the outdoors, reading and running as much as possible. Autumn is currently attending the University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF) for her

bachelor's degree in Social Work and plans to graduate in spring 2023. She intends to go for her master's degree in Social Work as well, in hopes to better serve her home state.

In addition to being the Youth Wellness Coordinator for The Alliance, Autumn works with Native Peoples Action Community Fund through her business, Cantu Tactics and Consulting as a Climate Campaign Coordinator. She has years of knowledge with training staff, establishing rapport with clients and strategic planning. She has experience as a Tribal Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor (TVR), Strategic Prevention Framework Partnerships for Success (SPF-PFS) Project Director, and a Suicide Prevention Coordinator at Tanana Chiefs Conference, where she worked for five years. Autumn also worked at the Yukon Koyukuk Elder Assisted Living Facility (YKEALF) in Galena as a Certified Nurse's Assistant (CNA).

Autumn believes that communication, trust, and follow-through are important in any successful relationship, so she works hard to build successful relationships within a community or company.

# HOW TO GET INVOLVED



## ATTEND AN ALLIANCE MEETING

John A. Powell stated that **“Change moves at the speed of trust.”** With that being true, we have placed a lot of importance on building relationships and cultivating that trust to help grow the collaborative muscle of the group. Being connected and in conversation with those delivering a shared message of health and healing and focusing as much on how we do the work as the work we do are critical aspects that guide the practices of The Alliance.

The Alliance hosts two general meeting spaces:

- **Alliance open member meetings** are held monthly on the third Tuesday of each month, 1-2pm. These are a space for us to gather, connect and build relationship, and be guided through wellness practice and systems learning by guest facilitators. This monthly meeting is a great way for folks new to The Alliance and systems change, or for those wanting to engage in wellness practice, to come and learn together.
- **Alliance integration sessions** are held every other month. These continue to be open to all Alliance members. They are particularly geared toward people who actively participate in workgroups. The intention for this space is to increase communication, support, and collaboration between Alliance workgroups and teams, in order to move toward our strategic goals and objectives, as outlined in our common agenda. For more information on when the next Alliance integration session is, visit our community calendar at [www.recoveralaska.org/events](http://www.recoveralaska.org/events).



## BUILD CONNECTION WITH OTHER PRACTITIONERS VIA OUR MEMBER PORTAL

The member portal is intended to connect people to archived Alliance notes, reports, and workgroup documentation through a shared Google folder. Building relationships and strengthening connections will get us to our goal of a healthy and healing Alaska, making the way we work be an example of what's possible. We are currently using Slack to connect to one another, as a shared digital space. You can access the member portal at:

[www.alaska-alliance.org/partner-portal/](http://www.alaska-alliance.org/partner-portal/).

## HOW TO GET INVOLVED



### JOIN AN ALLIANCE WORKGROUP

Workgroups of The Alliance are decision-making spaces, as they work toward their aims.

**Organizational design** – This workgroup aims to guide the infrastructure development of collaborative governance in the Alliance network, ensuring that it is understandable and accessible. And, to practice and test collaborative governance in our own workgroup, honoring flexibility and fluidity while hearing other perspectives with openness.

» The organizational design workgroup meets on the first Thursday of each month, noon - 1:30 p.m.

**Communications** – This workgroup aims to lead decision-making around internal and external communications of The Alliance.

» The communications workgroup meets on the second Tuesday of each month, 1 - 2 p.m.

**Strategy** – This workgroup aims to provide ways for people to connect, share valuable stories and insights, and influence regional and statewide prevention strategy. This includes producing clear tools and processes for aligning with and contributing to emergent strategies in The Alliance. It is also the aim of this group to maintain the common agenda, or strategic framework for action, in collaboration with other working groups.

» The strategy workgroup meets on the third Tuesday of each month, 10:30 a.m. - noon.

**Data and learning** – This workgroup aims to increase data equity and justice in data collection and decision-making. This includes supporting capacity building for data collection and use for smaller communities and organizations in Alaska, and coordinating advocacy for statewide data collection efforts to be more responsive to community-specific needs.

» The data and learning workgroup meets on the second Monday of each month, alternating 12:30 - 2 p.m. (odd months) and 2 - 3:30 p.m. (even months).

**Evaluation and Learning** – This workgroup aims to increase data equity and justice in data collection and decision-making. This workgroup aims to be key decision-makers for Alliance evaluation activities and establish a community of learning around network evaluation so it is accessible and inclusive.

» The evaluation and learning workgroup meets the fourth Wednesday of each month, 9-10 a.m.