



THE
ALLIANCE

United to Prevent Alcohol Misuse &
Promote Community Wellness

NEW PARTNER ORIENTATION PACKET

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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 formal group of individuals and organizations with a personal or professional connection to reducing alcohol misuse and building community wellness in Alaska. Please take some time to move through materials and familiarize yourself with who we are. We value the lived experience each person engaged in the work brings and know there is a place for you, your voice and your values in The Alliance.

The Alliance Common Agenda is a foundational document and housed in this packet. You can read more about who we are, what we do, and how we do it. Within our common agenda is also our journey map, which tells our origin story. Our primary goal, strategic direction and six modes of action are also 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**.

In addition to reading through this packet, we also encourage you to visit our website, alaska-alliance.org. From there, you can visit the [Who We Are](#) page to learn more about the various groups that have committed to working within the Alliance toward our goal of a healthy and healing Alaska. Early on, it was clear that in order to develop a statewide network, we needed to build in regional infrastructure. Regional co-chairs of The Alliance offer valuable place-based insights and hold important relationships in their respective regions.

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, as well as focusing as much on how we do the work as the work we do, are critical aspects that guide the practices of The Alliance.

To increase collaboration, we ask you to visit the [Who We Are](#) page of the website and add your organization to the stakeholder map, which is a visual representation of the prevention landscape in Alaska. To increase knowledge and understanding, we encourage you to visit our [resources](#) page. To track on population-level shared indicators of The Alliance, visit our [data dashboard](#). And to add your name to the growing list of engaged partners, please [contact us](#). All this and more can be found on our website.

Be well,

The Alliance partners



COMMON AGENDA

WHO WE ARE

The Alliance is a collaborative effort 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.

HOW WE DEFINE ALCOHOL MISUSE

Alcohol misuse is defined by excessive use of alcohol. Excessive use includes binge and heavy drinking by adults over the age of 21, and any alcohol use by those who are underage or pregnant. Alcohol misuse is a spectrum. Mild, moderate, and severe alcohol misuse require differing interventions and treatments. Alcohol consumption on the spectrum of misuse is coupled with consequences, also ranging from lower-impact to significant and span the eight dimensions of wellness. While alcohol misuse is typically defined as use by individuals, we recognize the systemic inequities that perpetuate excessive alcohol use within certain populations, and that part of that inequity may be in the very definition of alcohol misuse itself.

OUR VISION FOR COMMUNITY WELLNESS

The Alliance takes a broad definition of community. We see community as a source of social norms and cultural values and as interconnected social structures and institutions.

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.

OUR PRIMARY GOAL

To connect and engage communities as partners — increasing protective factors, reducing risk factors, and changing social norms — to prevent underage alcohol use and eliminate adult misuse in Alaska. We define risk and protective factors as follows:

RISK FACTORS

Conditions within systems, communities, families and individuals that create an environment of unhealthy behaviors, such as substance misuse, violence, adverse childhood experiences, and suicide. When risk factors are reduced, we see the health of the community restored. We look for health in the reduction of mental illness and social issues, alcohol and other substance use disorders, and the elimination of racism and other forms of oppression. We can also increase wellness within our systems by holding them accountable and ensuring they are responsive to the most vulnerable and under-resourced in our communities.

For example:

- Family conflict
- Lack of commitment to education
- Racism and other forms of oppression
- Community laws and norms favorable to easy access and use

PROTECTIVE FACTORS

Conditions within systems, communities, families or individuals that increase the opportunity for healthy behaviors, such as the ability to cope with problems and life challenges. People thrive when they are connected, empowered and autonomous, and able to make impactful decisions in their lives and communities. Protective factors are instrumental in healthy development; they build skills, resilience, and validate one's humanity.

For example:

- Social and emotional competencies and skill-building
- Self-determination
- Opportunities for positive social involvement
- Reduction of days and hours of alcohol sales; reducing outlet density

WHAT WE DO

The Alliance is here to do the work that no one organization can do alone. We seek to influence structural and systemic change¹ and work to support those who are delivering a shared message of health and healing across communities and whole systems. We acknowledge the factors of risk for alcohol misuse that serve to harm our communities and plan for a vision of a well and just Alaska. The heart of our work is the relationships we form and an unrelenting commitment to equity.

¹ See [The Waters of System Change](#)

OUR STRATEGIC DIRECTION

We align our efforts around our primary goal and:

THREE STRATEGIES

+

SIX INTERSECTING MODES OF ACTION

BUILD RELATIONSHIPS

Apply community-based and participatory practices -- across organizations, efforts, regions, and communities -- to improve the system of coordination in upstream prevention work.

BUILD POWER

Act as a bridge between organizations (especially in rural and marginalized areas) and government & institutions, so that resources are equitably allocated and policies and initiatives are responsive to community needs.

BUILD SHARED MEANING

Collect new information, support shared learning (trauma-informed, evidence-based, and de-colonized) across communities, especially communities of practice**, and communicate new narratives for a healthy and healing Alaska.

CONNECTING AND CONVENING

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

SHARING EVIDENCE* AND LEARNING

ADDRESSING RESOURCE FLOWS

FRAMING THE CONVERSATION

ADVOCACY AND POLICY CHANGE

* Evidence is defined along a [spectrum of different types](#) that can be considered in decision-making.

** A community of practice (CoP) is a group of people who share a craft, a profession, a concern, or a passion for something they do, and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly. Members are brought together by a learning need they share, and their collective learning becomes a bond among them over time.

HOW WE WORK

Our Strategic Direction is informed by:

GUIDING FRAMEWORKS

- The Strategic Prevention Framework
- The Collective Impact Framework (3.0)
- Six Conditions for Systems Change

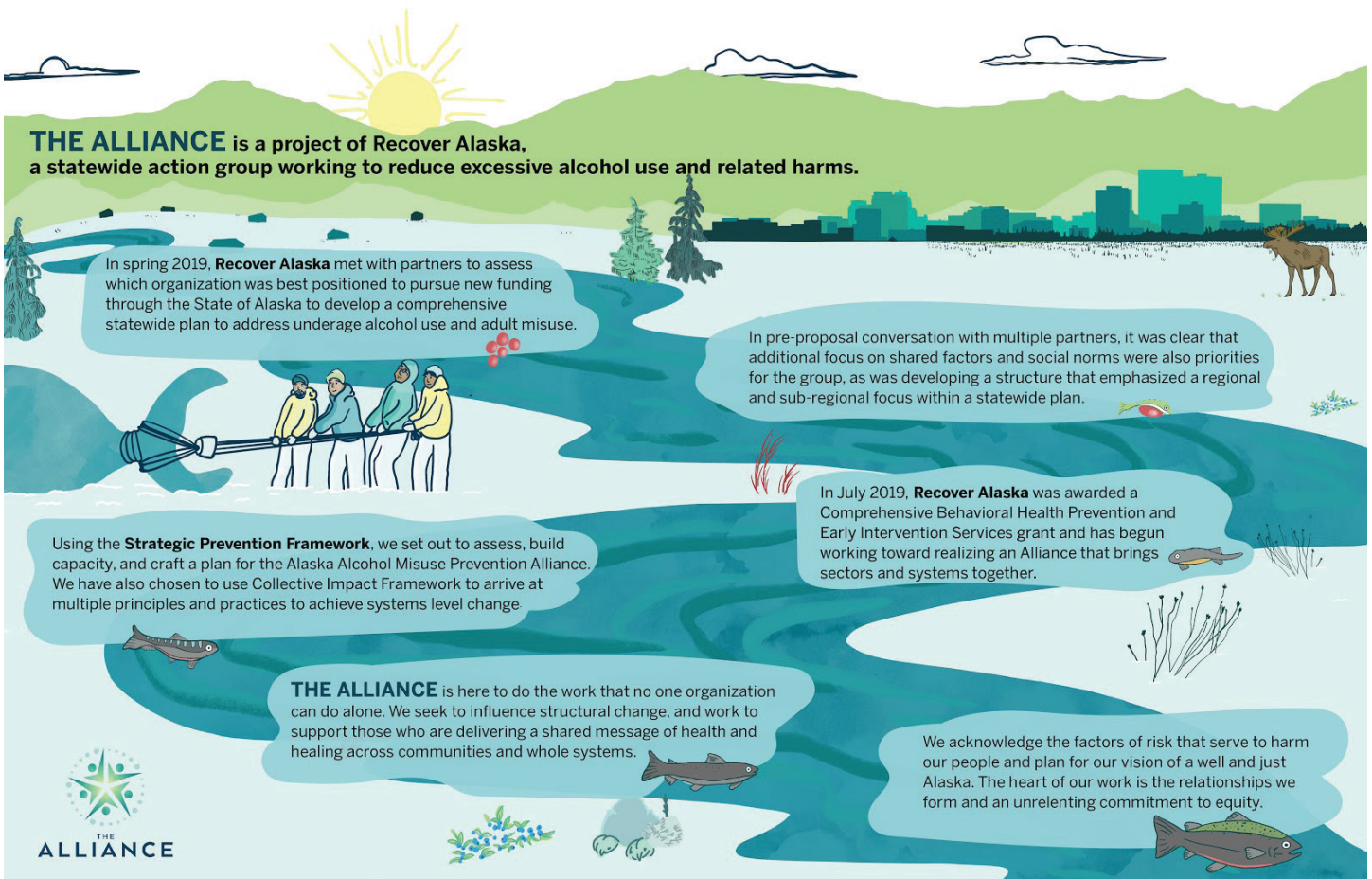
GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- [The Dawn of Systems Leadership](#) (2015) by John Kania, Mark Kramer, and Peter Senge
- [The Waters of Systems Change](#) (2018) by John Kania, Mark Kramer, and Peter Senge, which describes systems change, as “shifting the conditions that are holding the problem in place.”
- Emergent Strategy, by adrienne maree brown

GUIDING PRACTICES

- [Alliance Touchstones for Collaboration](#)

OUR JOURNEY HERE



USING DATA TO UNDERSTAND STRATEGY AND IMPACT

The Alliance recognizes that no one data source provides a complete picture of the risks and assets within the communities across the state. Therefore, the Alliance is using a multi-focal process that combines qualitative data, collected by others and the Alliance itself, along with smaller more localized datasets, and the statewide population health measures listed below to develop strategies and understand impact.

SHARED MEASURES

To track population health changes, The Alliance will use the following indicators, tracked on [this data dashboard](#):

ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION

- Binge Drinking, Adults
- First Drink of Alcohol Before Age 13, High School Students
- Current Alcohol Use, High School Students

MENTAL HEALTH

- Poor Mental Health Days, Adults
- Felt Sad or Hopeless, High School students

YOUTH CONNECTEDNESS

- Youth Matter, High School Students
- Caring Adult Relationships, High School Students

ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES AND MALTREATMENT

- Adverse Childhood Experiences

SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH

- Poverty
- Education

MEASURES OF INTEREST

The following measures have been identified as priorities but require further inquiry before the data can be incorporated into the dashboard.

- Child Maltreatment
- Housing
- PRAMS
- Built Environment

OUR ACTIONS TOGETHER IN FY2021 WILL INCLUDE:

ASSESSMENT

- Continue to gather network data, Stakeholder mapping
- Begin to gather systems effects data
- Outreach and engagement activities to support community-level data sourcing
- Community readiness assessment, statewide
- Coalition capacity survey, Alliance-specific

CAPACITY-BUILDING

- Equity operationalized across Alliance structures and offerings
- Training: “Setting the Course: a cohort journey of learning for equity and justice”
- Alignment with Alaska Wellness Coalition
- Website and member portal developed

PLANNING

- Alignment around Alliance modes of action
- Fund development planning
- Strategic communications planning

IMPLEMENTATION

- Communities of learning and practice
- Prevention and Wellness Symposium or other statewide training opportunity

EVALUATION

- Evaluation plan developed

REGIONAL CO-CHAIRS

In Alliance pre-proposal work, it became apparent that in order to do this work effectively we cannot simply rely on only convening at a statewide level; we need to host regional breakouts of The Alliance to determine what is working and what unique challenges and cultural expectations exist at a 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.

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LONNIE RIDGEWAY

Coalition Director, V.O.A. Alaska
Anchorage/Mat-Su region

MY VISION OF A HEALTHY AND WELL ALASKA: A stable economy, low unemployment, affordable healthcare, vast opportunities to be active, and attainable access to support and services for those who are in need.

lridgeway@voaak.org; 907-265-1904



DESHAUN WHISKEY

Public Health Projects Manager, North Slope Borough Health & Social Services
Northern region

MY VISION OF A HEALTHY AND WELL ALASKA: People having understanding of how their action can impact not just themselves but the people around them, easier access to public health resources.

deshaun.whiskey@north-slope.org



TILLILA BEETUS

Coordinator, Fairbanks Wellness Coalition
Interior 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.

tilbeetus@gmail.com

REGIONAL CO-CHAIRS CONTINUED



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.

stephanie@gsquared.solutions; 907-513-9656



NICHOLAI JOEKAY

Tundra Women's Coalition
Southwest region

MY VISION OF A HEALTHY AND WELL ALASKA: People who never feel like they need an escape from life.

nicholai_joekay@twcpeace.org

THE ALLIANCE COORDINATOR



JESS LIMBIRD

(she/her)

Program Manager, Recover Alaska

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.

RESOURCES



ADD YOUR ORGANIZATION TO THE STAKEHOLDER MAP

The Alliance invites your organization to participate in mapping the prevention landscape in Alaska. Your work is important to the goals of The Alliance. Please join us! We are working to make an ongoing navigation resource for the landscape of prevention work in Alaska, and **we want your organization to be visible**. The stakeholder map will be viewable and navigable on The Alliance website to The Alliance members as well as the public, and you will have a link to edit your profile in the future.

Your organization's participation in this stakeholder mapping is completely optional. We are encouraging all prevention and wellness coalitions, agencies, organizations, and projects to complete the form, as you will then be visible to other organizations doing similar work statewide. The value of this is hopefully transparent, but we seek to increase communications and connections among agencies and within the sector.

TO ENGAGE WITH ALASKA PREVENTION LANDSCAPE MAPPING:

1. Enter your organization's profile information [here](#). (This takes around 30 minutes and includes information such as your website, mission, and logo.)
2. Click SUBMIT at the bottom of the form to add this information about your organization to this network resource for the Alliance.



BUILD CONNECTION WITH OTHER PRACTITIONERS VIA OUR PARTNER PORTAL

Interested in learning more or participating in ongoing conversations within The Alliance? Visit the [partner portal](#) on The Alliance website. Building relationships and strengthening connections will get us to our goal of a healthy and healing Alaska, making the way we work together an example of what is possible.

This portal is intended to connect people to one another, as we all hold wisdom and experience that can guide the work; The Alliance documentation - archives of where we've been, information you may want to share with your circles of influence, current agendas and notes; and community forums that will offer a space to engage with new thinking and hold digital dialogues.

RESOURCES



STAY IN THE KNOW ABOUT THE ALLIANCE MEETINGS

The Alliance currently meets monthly, with bi-annual gatherings. Workgroups of The Alliance also meet once a month. Other events of interest to The Alliance-engaged people and organizations are housed on Recover Alaska's calendar, available at www.recoveralaska.org/events. You are welcome to add an event to our community calendar there.

