



Stellar Group

Research | Strategy | Impact

# The Alliance

FISCAL YEAR 2024 ANNUAL EVALUATION

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Alliance is a statewide network of individuals and organizations committed to working together to address alcohol misuse in Alaska. The Alliance, housed within Recover Alaska, was formed in 2019 and is primarily supported by a Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) Comprehensive Behavioral Health Prevention & Early Intervention grant awarded by the Alaska Department of Health, Division of Behavioral Health (DBH). The Alliance aims to *engage people and communities as partners, to promote individual and community wellness, and prevent excessive alcohol use and harms in Alaska*. To achieve its mission, the Alliance works towards three goals in its Common Agenda:

1. **Build Relationships** among and across organizations, efforts, communities, and individuals.
2. **Build Shared Meaning** about the nature of alcohol misuse, upstream prevention, and community wellness.
3. **Build Power** 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.

Membership in the Alliance is defined as being on the email listserv, and a person can join at any time. At the time of reporting, the Alliance has 172 members. Aside from general members, the Alliance has three unique member roles that seek to foster greater member leadership in the network: Regional Co-chairs, Regional Co-chair Builder, and Workgroup Weavers.

Alliance meetings are held bi-monthly on an alternating schedule and include Open Space Sessions and All Alliance Meetings. Workgroups are decision-making spaces in the network and are open to any interested member. There are currently four workgroups in the Alliance: Communications, Data & Learning, Evaluation & Learning, and Strategy Design.

## ABOUT THIS REPORT

The fiscal year (FY) 2024 evaluation report explores the achievement of the Alliance's three goals during the current grant cycle. The Evaluation & Learning Workgroup played a significant role in defining evaluation questions and methods. The evaluation questions guiding this report are:

1. *What activities have taken place in support of the Alliance's goals?*
2. *How are members onboarded and continually supported to participate in the Alliance? How effective is the onboarding and ongoing support?*
3. *How are members being empowered to lead in the Alliance?*
4. *To what extent do internal communications keep members informed and engaged with the Alliance? Are communications timely?*

## METHODOLOGY

This evaluation uses a mixed-methods approach, drawing on a member survey (N=44, 26% response rate), interviews with Workgroup Weavers (three) and Regional Co-chairs (seven), membership data from Knack meeting sign-in platform and the network membership list, and a review of documents such as quarterly reports, meeting notes, and network documents. Findings from all data sources were triangulated to identify overlapping themes and insights. Data limitations include the small sample size for the member survey, potential response bias (i.e. members who are more engaged may be more likely to respond to the survey), and the self-reported nature of Knack meeting sign-in which makes it possible for members to decline or forget to sign in (although reminders are usually given during meetings).

## KEY FINDINGS

Members of the Alliance expressed generally positive experiences participating in the network, with all but one survey respondent saying they were satisfied or very satisfied with their experience. Even with the overall positive experience and perspective that members have of the Alliance, there are still areas for continued improvement, many of which have been ongoing themes in the network.

## ALLIANCE GOALS

- » *Most members believe the network is very or somewhat effective in achieving its goals.*
- » *While there is a general shared understanding of the mission and big-picture goal of the Alliance, there is a more varied understanding of the plans and actions to achieve this, such as interpretation around whether the network's goals are to build relationships, shared understanding, and power within the Alliance, or throughout Alaska's prevention landscape.*
- » *While some believe shared action to address alcohol misuse would be rushing and could result in unintended harms, others voice concern about the continual harms happening in their community, which gives them a sense of urgency.*
- » *Three-quarters of respondents believe the Alliance is very or somewhat ready to develop new goals focused on areas such as data, policy changes, economic costs, etc. However, in general, the longer a member has been a part of the Alliance, the less likely they are to feel that it is ready.*
- » *There are also diverging opinions as to the correct scope of these goals. Specifically, whether the network should maintain its focus on alcohol or should expand to a broader focus on substance misuse prevention.*

## MEMBER ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

- » *Most surveyed Alliance members (80%, n=35) are clear on their roles and responsibilities in the network. However, there have been ongoing requests from members in recent years for greater clarity.*

- » *While people may be clear on their own roles and responsibilities, they may not be clear on those of others, creating confusion about how to engage with the network.*

## Meeting Participation

- » *Sixty-nine members attended at least one of the Alliance's 38 meetings in FY 2024, accounting for 40% of the total membership. This means that most members engage in the Alliance through less active means such as reading newsletters and quarterly reports.*
- » *Meetings are most commonly attended by contractors, Recover Alaska staff, as well as Regional Co-chairs and Workgroup Weavers.*
- » *Further, of the 69 individuals who attended a meeting, about one-quarter (23%) attended just one, most commonly an All Alliance or Open Space meeting.*
- » *Forty-two members (24% of the total) attended a workgroup meeting in FY 2024, the decision-making spaces in the network. Of these individuals, about one-third (29%) attended just one meeting.*
- » *Of those survey respondents who attend meetings at least rarely (n=31, 74% of all respondents), most found Open Space Sessions useful (87%), and almost all found All Alliance Bi-monthly meetings and Workgroup meetings useful (93% and 94%, respectively).*
- » *The most common reason members do not regularly participate in Alliance meetings is their limited capacity (38%) followed by a lack of clarity on how to get involved (24%).*

## LEADERSHIP ROLES

- » *Some Regional Co-chairs expressed a lack of clarity on where their role within the Alliance stops and where work for their respective employers begins, and many felt unclear about their roles and responsibilities.*
- » *Many said role clarity developed over time through participation, rather than through a clear onboarding process, highlighting a need for robust onboarding and support. This is particularly true with the recent, abrupt departure of the Coordinator and the upcoming vacancy of most Co-chair positions at the start of the next FY.*
- » *Workgroup Weavers expressed similar confusion around roles and responsibilities. This role will not be continued in the next FY, with responsibilities absorbed into the Regional Co-chair role.*

## New Member Recruitment & Onboarding

- » *Just under two-thirds (62%) of surveyed members reported they were comfortable recruiting new members. Those who expressed discomfort ranged in their length of membership and cited various reasons including inability to articulate the purpose, benefits, roles, or engagement opportunities with the Alliance.*

- » *About one-quarter (23%) of surveyed members reported that they have helped onboard a new member in the past year, a notably lower percentage than those who say they are comfortable doing so. These members did their onboarding through one-on-one informal conversations, relationship building, sharing the Alliance website, and encouraging meeting participation.*
- » *Even among those comfortable with recruiting members, there is uncertainty on how. The New Member Orientation Packet, which has been in revision since the December 2022 retreat, was also cited as too lengthy, and no member reported using it.*

## INFLUENCE & INCLUSIVENESS

- » *Since FY 2023, the representation of various groups by geographic community, race, ethnicity, and gender has remained relatively consistent.*
- » *Half of all active members in the network live in Anchorage; there is an overrepresentation in the network within the Anchorage and Southeast regions, an equivalent representation in the Southwest, but underrepresentation in other regions.*
- » *Alliance membership closely resembled the racial diversity of residents in the state, while gender representation is heavily weighted towards female-identifying members (76% vs 47% of the state population).*
- » *One-fifth (19%) of individuals participating in the Alliance are contractors or Recover Alaska staff, and an additional 16% are Regional Co-chairs or Workgroup Weavers who receive a small stipend. Additionally, many members participate as part of their job and are therefore paid for their participation through their own organization.*

## Power & Influence

- » *While the Alliance does have a diverse, statewide representation, it has struggled to translate that representation into equally diverse engagement and influence.*
- » *Network analysis shows that the Coordinator remains central in all three measured areas of power (collaboration, information, and influence), similar to FY 2022.*
- » *Regional Co-chairs and contractors also have a strong role in collaboration and information sharing, a shift from FY 2022 when there were significantly more members named when asked about collaboration. This points to the growing role of Regional Co-chairs, but also a continuing centralization of power.*
- » *In terms of who members believe has the greatest influence, staff and Regional Co-chairs have continued to be most frequently cited across both fiscal years.*
- » *Moreover, the core people who generate the most influence are in Anchorage, the biggest urban center of Alaska.*

## DECISION-MAKING

- » *Two-thirds (65%) of surveyed members agree or strongly agree that they are comfortable with how decisions are made in the network. However, 30% said they are unfamiliar with how decisions are made.*
- » *Those unfamiliar with decision-making ranged in the length of participation within the network. In other words, the length of membership is not indicative of greater clarity.*
- » *Most (86%) of surveyed members said they are comfortable voicing their opinions in the network.*
- » *Some members identified challenges to the current decision-making model. These include discomfort in voicing non-consent, keeping forward momentum in an often lengthy process, understanding who truly has power in decision-making, and lack of transparency of when the consent model is and is not used.*
- » *Several members noted that consent-based decision-making has been less closely followed in the past fiscal year, with some describing it as more of a consensus-based voting.*

## INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS

- » *About three-quarters of surveyed members (77%) agree or strongly agree that they receive relevant and timely information about updates and decisions in the network.*
- » *According to surveyed members, the Alliance monthly newsletter is the most common way of getting updates, followed by quarterly reports, and participation in meetings. Additionally, about one-quarter (26%) get information most commonly by word of mouth. One-third (33%) said they would prefer to get updates differently.*
- » *Suggestions included direct contact by phone or email, during meetings, and through social media (this survey was conducted before the Alliance social media accounts were launched). There were a couple of comments expressing a desire to have documentation and follow-through after the Open Space sessions.*

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### **RECOMMENDATION I: Strengthen Recruitment and Onboarding Efforts**

Objective 1.4 in the new Alliance Strategic Plan is to increase membership by 20% with equitable representation from all regions of Alaska by June 30, 2025. Recruitment necessitates first creating more clarity for existing members on role expectations and providing supportive documents to quickly and easily summarize the Alliance's structure and purpose and how to get involved. People also need to see the benefits to their work/community to prioritize engagement. In addition to revising the New Member Orientation Packet, supports such as a mentor/buddy system and regular new member introductory meetings may be helpful. Considering that member demographics tend to be more Anchorage-based, White, and identify as women, there continues to be a need to diversify membership representation, engagement, and power-sharing.



**RECOMMENDATION 2: *Enhance Supports for Members in Leadership Roles***

Members in leadership roles need clearer guidance on roles and responsibilities. The lack of clarity, despite a written contract, suggests that a deeper disconnect is happening in the actual functioning of these roles, which merits further exploration. In addition, the Alliance can explore the possibility of offering professional development opportunities and discuss with member leaders what makes them feel successful and supported in their roles to inform these offerings and additional supports. This will be an important consideration given that there will be five open Co-chair positions at the start of the next fiscal year and the planned restructuring of leadership roles. Importantly, the Alliance should offer training on consent-based decision-making to all members, particularly those facilitating decision-making.

**RECOMMENDATION 3: *Increase Integration of Network Structures***

Given the structure of the Alliance, it can be easy for knowledge to be siloed within the workgroups, leading to a lack of clarity about what is happening in the network, how/what decisions were made, and the potential for missed opportunities for cross-group collaboration. There is also an ongoing lack of clarity as to the Alliance's being a network versus a coalition, and what that means for the network. The 2024-2027 Strategic Plan includes Objective 3.7 to strengthen internal communication and connection by June 30, 2026. Connection across workgroups can be increased further as the network structure shifts to have Regional Co-chairs take over related responsibilities. For all members, having an easily accessible, centralized location for documents, resources, and meeting agendas/minutes can improve internal communication.

**RECOMMENDATION 4: *Revisit and Create Clarity Around Network Frameworks***

The Alliance currently has six different frameworks listed in its Common Agenda as guiding frameworks to network structure and functioning. While there is beneficial guidance from the various frameworks, having this number of frameworks can lead to competing perspectives and focuses and impedes the ability to implement each one with fidelity. Depending on which frameworks a member is more familiar with (and is aware are used in the Alliance), this can create different expectations and interpretations of the network. It would be beneficial to revisit these frameworks, create clarity around each, and select one or two to implement with fidelity. This can be particularly supportive for the network as the Alliance begins implementing its 2024-2027 Strategic Plan.

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## INTRODUCTION

The Alliance is a statewide network of individuals and organizations committed to working together to address alcohol misuse in Alaska. The Alliance, housed within Recover Alaska, was formed in 2019 and is primarily supported by a Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) Comprehensive Behavioral Health Prevention & Early Intervention grant awarded by the Alaska Department of Health, Division of Behavioral Health (DBH).

The mission of the Alliance is *to engage people and communities as partners, to promote individual and community wellness, and prevent excessive alcohol use and harms in Alaska.*

To achieve its mission, the Alliance works towards three goals outlined in its Common Agenda:

1. **Build Relationships** among and across organizations, efforts, communities, and individuals.
2. **Build Shared Meaning** about the nature of alcohol misuse, upstream prevention, and community wellness.
3. **Build Power** 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.

In addition, the Alliance draws on six frameworks to guide efforts towards identified goals. These are discussed in further detail in Appendix A.

## ALLIANCE MEMBERSHIP

Membership in the Alliance is defined as being on the email listserv, and a person can join at any time. At the time of reporting, the Alliance has 172 members. Members are not required to participate in Alliance meetings or workgroups but are welcome to do so.

Aside from general members and the network Coordinator (Recover Alaska staff), the Alliance has three unique member roles that seek to foster greater member leadership in the network: Regional Co-chairs, Regional Co-chair Builder, and Workgroup Weavers.

The Regional Co-chair role was created when the network was formed to increase representation from each public health region in the state. Co-chairs receive an annual stipend of \$4,027.50 - \$5235.70 (depending on cost of living in their given region) from Recover Alaska for their role. Due to funding delays and a transition to a new network Coordinator this fiscal year, Regional Co-chairs did not sign contracts for their work until around November 2023. According to their contracts, responsibilities include:

- » **Work towards collaboration in their community**
- » **Recruit members from their region**

- » *Provide a quarterly report of activities related to prevention for DBH reporting*
- » *Attend Regional Co-chair meetings, Open Space, and All Alliance meetings*
- » *Facilitate one Open Space meeting per year*
- » *Support the planning and leading of All Alliance meetings*
- » *Participate in one Alliance workgroup*

Regional Co-chair contracts also include one or two additional deliverables specific to what is possible and relevant for their region, such as hosting or participating in community-specific activities such as hosting town halls on underage drinking prevention or visiting schools and community settings.

The Regional Co-chair Builder role was created to assist in onboarding and supporting Regional Co-chairs, particularly those new to the Alliance, is a new role this fiscal year. This role was taken on by the Southwest Regional Co-chair through a nomination process by the Co-chairs. Due to the same delays mentioned above, the contract for this role was not finalized until around December of 2023.

The Workgroup Weaver is also a new role initiated this fiscal year that was created to operate as a liaison between their respective workgroup and the broader Alliance. At the time of interviews, the Data & Learning, Communications, and Strategic Design workgroups had Weavers. The Strategic Design Weaver has since left the network. Workgroup Weavers receive an annual stipend of \$9,200 from Recover Alaska for their work. According to their contracts, their responsibilities include:

- » *Facilitate monthly workgroup meetings, set agenda, and communicate with workgroup*
- » *Ensure completion of workgroup quarterly update*
- » *Coordinate with other weavers, contractors, and Recover Alaska*
- » *Processing, synthesizing, dreaming the work and making connections*

## **ALLIANCE MEETING STRUCTURE**

Alliance meetings are held bi-monthly on an alternating schedule and include:

- » **Open Space Sessions** - *Formerly called Integration Sessions, these are meetings with an open agenda. Participants check in as a group and then can propose a topic for breakout room discussions. Other participants then select which discussion they would like to participate in.*
- » **All Alliance Meetings** - *These typically include updates from workgroups and Regional Co-chairs, as well as any updates or information from Recover Alaska. Members can also share information or updates from their respective organizations or coalitions, such as upcoming initiatives or relevant trainings.*

Workgroups are decision-making spaces in the network and are open to any interested member, though they tend to draw in a smaller number of active members. Workgroup meetings are held monthly, though there is no requirement for how often someone participates; a member can attend just one meeting or all, depending on interest and availability. There are currently four workgroups in the Alliance:

1. **Communications** - responsible for leading decision-making around internal and external communications of the Alliance, as well as the youth alcohol prevention social marketing campaign
2. **Data & Learning** - aimed at increasing data equity and justice in data collection and decision-making in Alaska
3. **Evaluation & Learning** - serving as the decision-making body for the Alliance evaluation, such as evaluation questions and methods
4. **Strategy Design** - aimed at supporting and refining the structure of the Alliance and foundational documents to support members

The Alliance sometimes holds special events as well. In FY 2024, this included a Data Listening Session and a two-day Strategic Planning Session. This Strategic Planning Session was attended by 44 total members who attended in a hybrid virtual/in-person format and resulted in the 2024-2027 Strategic Plan for the Alliance.

All Alliance meetings are paused in the summer months and typically begin in September of the fiscal year.

## ABOUT THIS REPORT

The FY 2024 evaluation report explores the achievement of the Alliance's three goals during the current grant cycle. The Evaluation & Learning Workgroup played a significant role in defining evaluation questions and methods.

The evaluation questions guiding this report are:

1. *What activities have taken place in support of the Alliance's goals?*
2. *How are members onboarded and continually supported to participate in the Alliance? How effective is the onboarding and ongoing support?*
3. *How are members being empowered to lead in the Alliance?*
4. *To what extent do internal communications keep members informed and engaged with the Alliance? Are communications timely?*

## METHODOLOGY

This evaluation uses a mixed-methods approach, drawing on a member survey, interviews, membership data from Knack meeting sign-in platform and the network membership list, and a review of documents such as quarterly reports, meeting notes, and network documents.

The member survey was fielded in February of 2024 and received 44 responses out of 172 members (26% response rate). A \$50 gift card was offered to those who completed the survey as compensation for their time and input. At an All Alliance Bi-monthly meeting in March 2024, attending members engaged in a sense-making session to discuss key findings from the survey in order to develop deeper understanding of the data. A total of eight members (including two staff) participated. In addition, structured interviews were conducted with Workgroup Weavers (three) and Regional Co-chairs (seven) in March 2024. Interviews were transcribed and then coded and analyzed by the evaluation team using Dedoose software.

Limitations to the data include the self-reported nature of Knack meeting sign-in, which makes it possible for members to decline or forget to sign in (although reminders are usually given during meetings); the small sample size for the member survey; and the fact that members who are less active in the Alliance are also less likely to respond to the member survey. Findings from all data sources were triangulated to identify overlapping themes and insights.

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## KEY FINDINGS

Members of the Alliance expressed generally positive experiences participating in the network, with all but one survey respondent saying they were satisfied or very satisfied with their experience. Further, almost all members (97%) agree or strongly agree that the Alliance creates an environment of trust, respect, and inclusiveness. Even with the overall positive experience and perspective that members have of the Alliance, there are still areas for continued improvement, many of which have been ongoing themes in the network. The themes and key findings from this evaluation are explored in the following sections:

- » *Alliance Goals*
- » *Member Roles & Responsibilities*
- » *New Member Recruitment & Onboarding*
- » *Influence & Inclusiveness*
- » *Decision-Making*
- » *Internal Communications*

## ALLIANCE GOALS

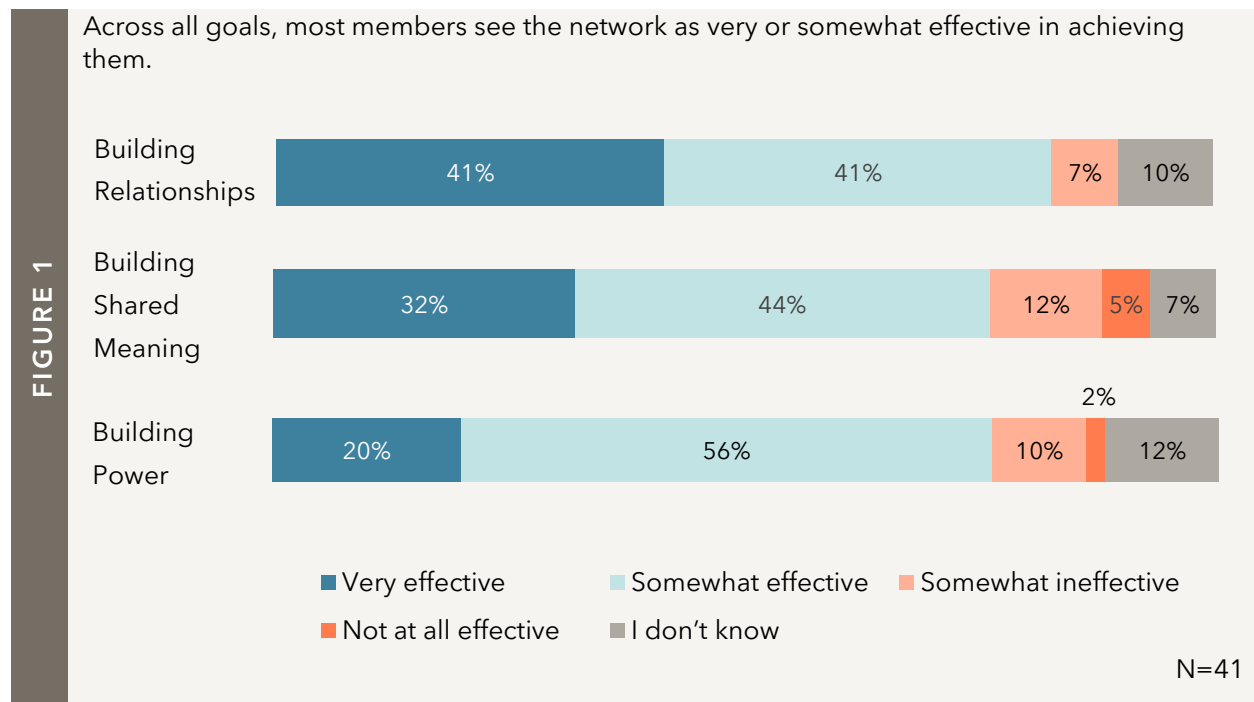
Members join the Alliance for both professional reasons and personal passion for alcohol misuse prevention. When asked about their familiarity with the Alliance's three goals - Building Relationships, Building Shared Meaning, and Building Power - just under three-quarters (71%) of surveyed members said they are somewhat or very familiar. Familiarity grows the longer one has been involved with the Alliance; while just 43% of respondents who have been with the Alliance for less than a year are somewhat or very familiar with the goals, 100% of those who have been with the Alliance since its inception are.

Members in leadership roles (Regional Co-chairs and Workgroup Weavers) discussed that **while there is a general shared understanding of the mission and big-picture goal of the Alliance to reduce alcohol misuse, there is a more varied understanding of the Alliance's plans and actions towards achieving this.** This was also evidenced in survey responses, as explored further below. As one person summarized, *"I think we all have an understanding of 'yes, this is what we're about,' but we've yet to have an understanding of how we're going to do it."* Some pointed to the lack of a formal onboarding process, enabling members to develop their own understanding of the network's means of achieving its goals.

*"I'd say it's really impossible [to get shared agreement] without those conversations because there's not a formal onboarding. [There's] not a formal identity of the Alliance; I have instead formed an identity of the Alliance based on the people I'm around with in the Alliance." - Alliance Member*

## PERCEIVED EFFECTIVENESS IN ACHIEVING GOALS

Most surveyed members reported that the network is somewhat or very effective across all three goals, though respondents were slightly more likely to say so for Building Relationships than other goals. There is also high variation in what percent of members said the network is very effective. This has remained relatively consistent since the same question was first asked in FY 2022.



When asked about their involvement in efforts towards achieving the Alliance's goals, many (71%) of respondents said they are involved in efforts to build relationships. Examples included reaching out to home communities, engaging with other organizations, and participating in Alliance meetings.

A little over half (56%) of members said they're involved in efforts to build shared meaning. Examples included working with other community wellness initiatives and organizations, as well as participating in Alliance workgroups and special events, i.e., the data listening session, 2023 Wellness & Prevention Symposium, Alliance 2024 strategic planning, and other activities that involved, as one member stated, *"Seeking greater clarity on the impacts and the issues that need to be addressed."*

Half (49%) said they were involved in efforts to build power. Examples included sharing Alliance resources, knowledge, and opportunities to their greater community as well as participating in decision-making spaces and workgroups in the Alliance.

**Across open comments, there were differences in interpretation around whether the network’s goals are to build relationships, shared understanding, and power within the Alliance itself, or build them throughout Alaska’s prevention landscape.** Depending on how someone interprets the goals, they have different perceptions of how effective the Alliance is in achieving them, or how they see their own role in supporting the goal. As potential activities are finalized, the new 2024-2027 Strategic Plan can serve as a valuable tool for creating a more cohesive understanding among members of each goal and related objective and how the Alliance achieves them.

## READINESS FOR NEW GOALS

There has been ongoing tension in the Alliance in recent years regarding whether the Alliance should stick to the oft-cited philosophy of “the network is the strategy” and remain with its current relationship-based approach or if it is ready to move towards concrete shared action. While some believe moving to action would be rushing and could result in unintended harms, others voice concern about the continual harms happening in their community from alcohol misuse, which gives them a sense of urgency to take action. Indeed, 74% of respondents said that the Alliance is very or somewhat ready to develop new goals focused on areas such as alcohol misuse data, policy changes, economic costs, etc. This tension may also be due to differences in understanding about the structure of the Alliance - while it is a network, members sometimes refer to it as a coalition, suggesting a lack of clarity. Further, the Alliance is funded by a coalition-building grant, which implies an intention for shared action.

*“We’ve got people out here dying. We’ve got people out here passing on their trauma to the next kids from alcohol... Let’s get things done because there’s too much hurt and harm out here.” - Alliance Member*

It may be noted that the Emergent Strategy framework (a central framework used by the Alliance) can accommodate both relationship-building and action-oriented approaches, as they are not mutually exclusive. However, in general, **the longer a member has been a part of the Alliance, the less likely they are to feel that it is ready to develop action-oriented goals.** Relatedly, the longer a member was part of the Alliance, the less likely they were to feel that its structures and processes support achieving its goals. As one member expressed, *“It feels for years we just keep talking about what we’re talking about and not really making any actionable plans, in my opinion.”*

## FOCUSING GOALS

**There are also diverging opinions about the correct scope of these goals.** Specifically, whether the network should maintain its focus on alcohol or if it should expand to a broader focus on substance misuse prevention. While some members see a benefit to having a



broader focus on substance misuse because of the related risk and protective factors, others think that it is important to keep a narrowed focus on alcohol to maintain clear direction and avoid, as one person framed it, “*spreading member attention too thin.*”

**Several members commented that during the two-day Strategic Planning Session they sensed a new momentum that could help give the Alliance some direction.** The resultant new plan includes a new goal aimed at collective action: **Support strategies that reduce alcohol misuse and promote overall well-being.** Moving forward, it will be important to balance the relationship-building focus of the network with this additional focus on external-facing action to address alcohol misuse. This movement into more external-facing activities may also bring differing opinions on the Alliance’s scope and focus more to the forefront.

It is important to note that the Alliance has already begun introducing action-oriented activities with the implementation of the social norms campaigns to address underage alcohol consumption - [In Case You Missed It](#) and [Choose Connection](#). The campaigns were planned and launched by the Communications Workgroup and communications contractor, Walsh Sheppard, in January 2024 through online platforms such as online streaming television and social media, and contractors and members also hosted booths at community events around the state. At the end of the Strategic Planning Session, the communications contractor gave members an overview of the campaign and a virtual outreach toolkit with printable materials to share through their own organization.

This campaign is poised to continue through June 30, 2024, and the Communications Workgroup is exploring additional funding opportunities to extend the campaign into the next fiscal year. While a campaign evaluation has not yet been conducted at the time of reporting, there has been anecdotal evidence from the communications contractor of high engagement, particularly at events, with requests for participation in additional events, and visitors taking materials to share with their peers and in schools around the state. **The way in which the Alliance has balanced this work with maintaining the focus on relationship building is a good example that can help inform this balance as the Alliance begins implementing its strategic plan.**

## MEMBER ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

The Alliance’s membership is its biggest strength, as it is through the action of its members that it is able to affect change. Most surveyed Alliance members (80%, n=35) agree or strongly agree that they are clear on their roles and responsibilities in the network. However, there have been ongoing requests from members in recent years for greater clarity about their roles as well as other members’ roles and responsibilities.

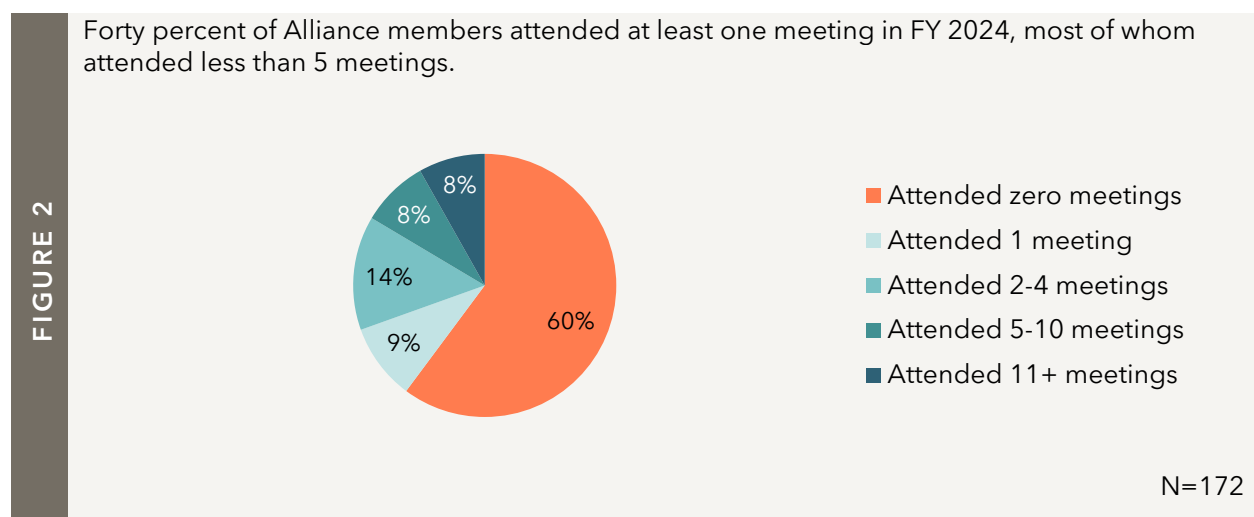
During the sense-making of survey data, some members suggested that **while people may be clear on their own roles and responsibilities, they may not be clear on those of others, which can cause confusion about how to engage with the network.** One member

pointed out that the process of defining workgroup charters/overall structure was never finalized, which may have contributed to this ongoing ambiguity of roles and processes. Defining roles and responsibilities for members is included in the 2024-2027 Strategic Plan for the Alliance.

## MEETING PARTICIPATION

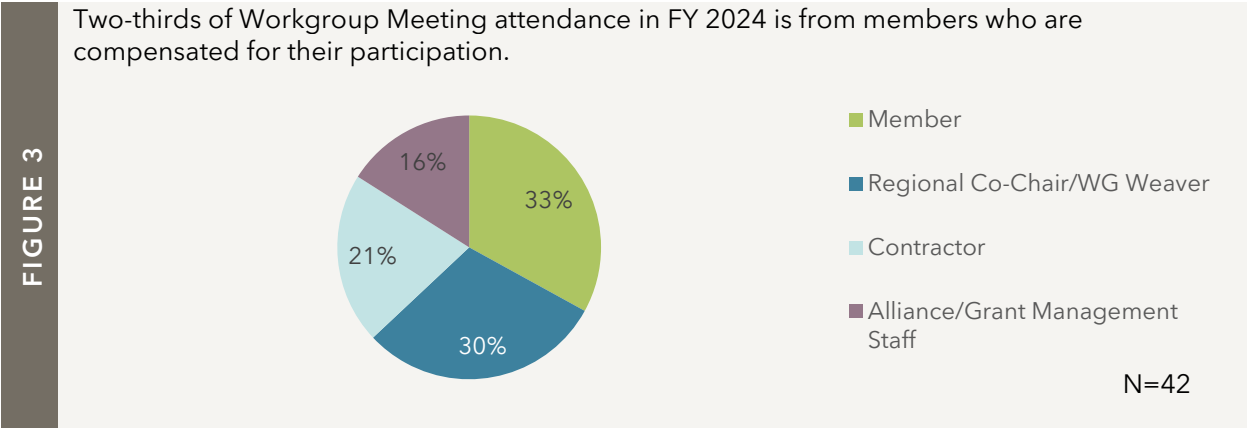
Member roles and responsibilities are connected to participation since members can engage in meetings more effectively when they are clear on them. When asked how often they attend the different Alliance meetings, survey responses were varied, though in general, all meetings were attended regularly or sometimes by about half of respondents (53% for Open Space Sessions and All Alliance Bi-monthly meetings, and 48% for Workgroup meetings). The remaining half reported rarely or never attending these three types of meetings.

This survey data is corroborated by meeting sign-in data from Knack, which showed that **69 members attended at least one of the Alliance's 38 meetings in FY 2024, accounting for 40% of the total membership.** This means that most members engage in the Alliance through less active means such as reading newsletters and quarterly reports shared via the listserv. Further, **of these 69 individuals, about one-quarter (23%) attended just one meeting,** most commonly an All Alliance or Open Space meeting.

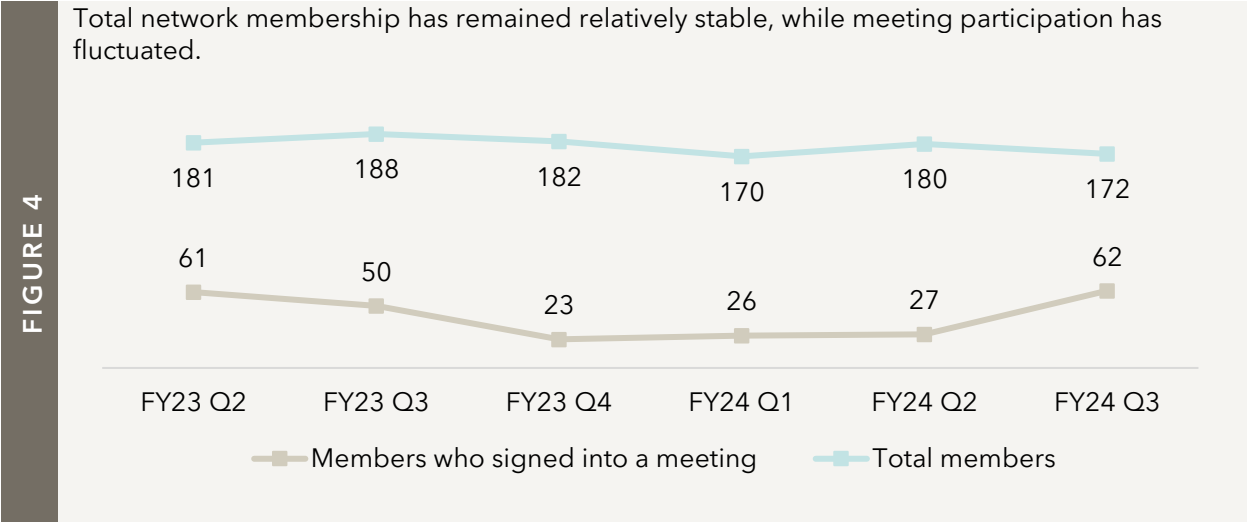


It is also important to note that **42 people (24% of total members) attended a workgroup meeting, the spaces where decision-making for the network take place.** Of these 42 individuals, about one-third (29%) attended just one meeting in FY 2024. **Two-thirds (67%) of workgroup meeting attendance is from Regional Co-chairs/Workgroup Weavers, contractors, and Recover Alaska/grant management staff,** who also receive compensation for their involvement. Relatedly, most (81%) individuals who have attended more than three

all-network spaces (Open Sessions or All Alliance meetings; total 11) are contractors, Regional Co-chairs, and one Workgroup Weaver.



Comparing Knack sign-in data with the total membership numbers over the past six quarters (since Knack was implemented), it can be seen that while the total membership has stayed fairly stable (though there has been a slight dip), the **total number of members who have signed into a meeting at least once in a quarter has significantly declined from 61 in Quarter Two of FY 2023 to 27 in Quarter Two of FY 2024**. While the numbers rose back up during Quarter Three of FY 2024, this is largely due to the March Strategic Planning Session during that quarter, during which a total of 44 unique members signed into one or both sessions.



Of those survey respondents who attend meetings at least rarely (n=31, 74% of all respondents), most found Open Space Sessions useful (87%), and almost all found All Alliance Bi-monthly meetings and Workgroup meetings useful (93% and 94%, respectively).

Of those who rarely attend meetings, they most commonly said they were either unclear on how to get involved, had changed work roles, or were too busy (see Figure 5 below).

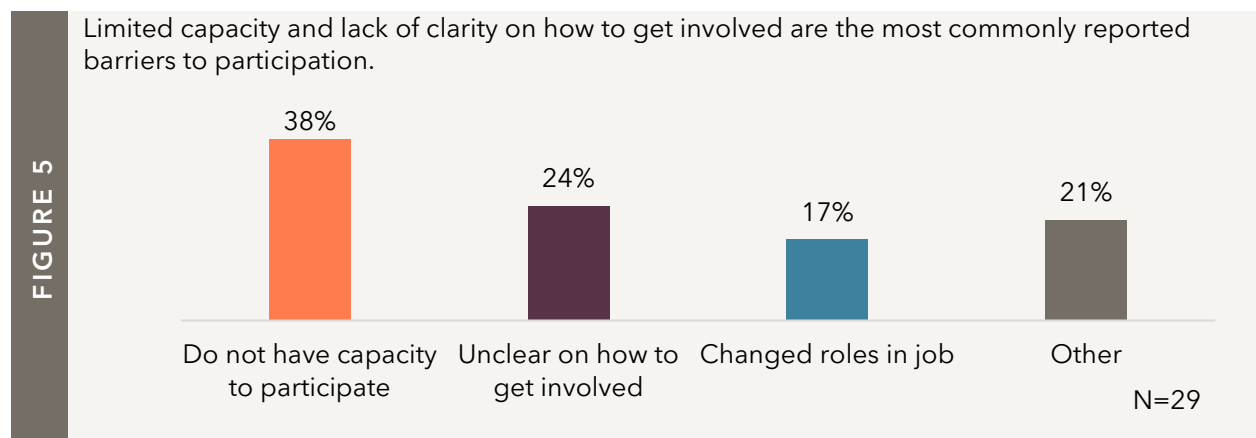
*"I like the Alliance... I just don't have as much capacity to be involved... I've often felt like the Alliance workgroups do a lot of talking and very little doing. I will continue to engage with the bi-monthly meetings because the connections that the Alliance provides are really valuable." - Alliance Member*

With the different types of meetings that the Alliance holds, it can be difficult for members to engage without having clarity on the purpose and intention of each. Some people did appreciate the openness and opportunity for connecting and networking in network-wide meetings, though a few noted it lacked structure or clarity on purpose. As mentioned above, **the lack of clarity in meeting spaces makes members hesitant to invite new people into the Alliance. In addition, it creates barriers to members' own involvement.**

*"[The Alliance needs to] establish roles and responsibilities more clearly, as well as update processes for communication and decision-making. It's not necessarily that these processes need to be changed and more-so that new members need to be fully onboarded so that they can follow these processes." - Alliance Member*

### Barriers to Participation

**The most common reason members do not regularly participate in Alliance meetings is their limited capacity.** One member expressed that they would like to invite people to Open Space meetings, but others are often unable to because they occur during the workday. It is important to consider the balance of member capacity with the desire to increase member participation and engagement, particularly as the Alliance explores opportunities for shared action. Further, one-quarter of respondents who do not regularly attend meetings said they were unclear on how to get involved, further pointing to the need for more robust onboarding. For those unclear about how to get involved, their length of membership ranged from less than one year to two to three years.



Among those who selected “other,” a few people noted they just joined the network so hadn’t had enough time to participate yet, and a couple noted the scheduling difficulties for their workgroup, which limited their participation. These barriers to participation are also reflected in members’ engagement in new member recruitment and onboarding.

## LEADERSHIP ROLES

As mentioned in the introduction, the Alliance has three unique member roles created to foster greater member leadership in the network: Regional Co-chairs, Regional Co-chair Builder, and Workgroup Weavers. Of Alaska's seven public health regions, six are currently represented by the Alliance's current seven Regional Co-chairs (the Southeast region is currently represented by two Co-chairs; the Northern region is not represented). However, many of these roles will become vacant at the start of the next fiscal year. The Regional Co-chair Builder role was filled by the existing Southwest Regional Co-chair but will not be renewed for FY 2025. In the next fiscal year, the recruitment responsibilities will be held by the Coordinator, and the funding from this position will go towards Regional Co-Chair positions to support greater representation.

Some Regional Co-chairs expressed that there is a lack of clarity on where their role within the Alliance stops and where work for their respective employers begins. In any case, some Regional Co-chairs voiced a desire for more professional development opportunities like those they have received in the past, such as meeting facilitation and training on consent-based decision-making.

Some members in these roles have come into them through ongoing engagement with the network, while others were recruited from outside the network. This suggests that there are multiple pathways for someone to come into a leadership role beyond fostering leadership growth within the network itself.

### Onboarding and Clarity on Role

Most Regional Co-chairs stated that they felt clear about their responsibilities currently. However, **many said this clarity developed over time through participation, rather than through a clear onboarding process, and there was a mix of clarity across Co-chairs at the time of interview.** As a result, several Co-chairs explained that they were less engaged in their role than they sense they could or should be. Part of the lack of clarity is due to the open, emergent nature of their role in engaging the community, which can look drastically different depending on the region and individual. This again highlights a need for robust onboarding and support for members to thrive in their leadership roles.

During interviews, Regional Co-chairs described a shift in this fiscal year in terms of contract deliverables becoming more explicit and openly discussed than in the past. For example, while quarterly reports are in their contracts, Regional Co-chairs had not been asked to

complete them until the most recent Coordinator left their position at the time of Quarter Three reporting. Further illustrating a disconnect between what is routinely requested of Regional Co-chairs versus how it is written into contracts, one person described deliverables such as attending workgroup meetings or hosting Open Space sessions as “an unspoken responsibility that’s starting to become a little more spoken.”

Similarly for Workgroup Weavers, while their scope of work is outlined in their contract, due to very informal onboarding, the newness of this role in the Alliance, and the newness of most Weavers to the Alliance itself, some reported an ongoing lack of clarity in the role. While this is to be expected to a degree as the role emerges in the network, strong support is also needed, particularly for those who are new to the network.

*“I’ve been onboarded [since last year]... I still really have no idea how it’s organized or who to go to for what. To me, it’s kind of just this amoeba of people.” - Alliance Workgroup Weaver*

**Particularly with the abrupt departure of the Coordinator in March, there is a need to focus on supporting member leaders (and the broader membership in general) to keep momentum - systematically and intentionally - and create more clarity.** Ensuring that contracts for members in leadership roles are authentic to the actual work being asked of them is an important part of creating clarity on roles and responsibilities. Greater clarity can lead to greater ownership of one’s role. Given that four of the seven Regional Co-chairs are not continuing in their role after the end of the fiscal year (largely due to capacity challenges) - leaving many vacancies to be filled - and a shifting in structure for member leadership roles, this will be an important focus in the coming fiscal year. The significant turnover in Regional Co-chairs also suggests that the leadership structure may need to be revisited or altered to make it more feasible for interested members to participate in terms of ability, availability, etc.

*“I guess we are leadership, but also, I don’t feel like we’re leadership in a way... I think if there was some sort of work meeting that included the Co-chairs plus the Weavers plus the Coordinator plus anybody else who is in a leadership position to talk about things, that could be helpful.” - Alliance Regional Co-chair*

## NEW MEMBER RECRUITMENT & ONBOARDING

There has been an interest within the Alliance to grow the network’s membership. The 2024-2027 Strategic Plan formalized this with Objective 1.4 to increase the membership by 20% by June 30, 2025. Survey responses indicate that members’ familiarity with both the Alliance goals and their own roles and responsibilities strongly affect their willingness to recruit new members into the Alliance. **Just under two-thirds (62%) of surveyed members reported they were comfortable recruiting new members.** Those who expressed discomfort in

recruiting ranged in the length of membership and cited various reasons including inability to articulate the purpose, benefits, roles, or engagement opportunities with the Alliance.

*"Maybe the opportunity didn't exist, or I could have answered and said, yeah, I feel comfortable doing it, but I just haven't really gone out and done it." - Alliance Member*

**About one-quarter (23%) of surveyed members reported that they have helped onboard a new member in the past year, a notably lower percentage than those who say they are comfortable doing so.** These members did their onboarding in a variety of ways: through one-on-one informal conversations; relationship building; sharing the Alliance website; and encouraging participation in meetings.

Even among those comfortable with recruiting members, there is uncertainty on how to do so. Several members pointed out that workgroup meetings can be too technical and context-heavy for a newcomer, while All Alliance and Open Space meetings have no agenda and may be disconcerting for first-time participants. Survey respondents even expressed their own experience of confusion when first joining Alliance spaces, given the unique way the Alliance operates. Some members suggested having a specific request or focus to invite someone to participate in.

*"I feel like our meetings are either really in the weeds...or completely open, so there's not really a good space in between. So, I think where those one-on-one conversations come in is important, and then prefacing in those conversations, 'the next meeting that we're going to have is an All Alliance meeting, and this is what that looks like', or 'the next meeting that's coming up is an Open Space session, so this is what you're going to experience during that.'... We need to develop more of a specific process of what onboarding looks like and having a good entry point into the Alliance." - Alliance Member*

**The New Member Orientation Packet was also cited as being too lengthy, and no member has reported using it.** As one member expressed, *"There's a revolving door of new people coming in and out of the Alliance... but when you have an onboarding document of 11 pages of big words, nobody's going to really read that."* Aside from this document, there are no formal processes to recruit and onboard new members. Any efforts have been scattered and informal, and success has been mixed. There has been an ongoing discussion about updating this packet since the previous annual evaluation, with the Strategic Design Workgroup continuing to work on this at the time of reporting. It may also be worth exploring alternative methods, such as videos or regular new member meetings, as was suggested by some members in previous years' evaluation feedback. Mentorship is also being explored and would benefit from a formalization to create clarity. With a new Strategic Plan objective

around growing the network membership (within the goal of Building Relationships), this will be an important component.

## INFLUENCE & INCLUSIVENESS

The Alliance has a commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion, and aims to engage multiple and diverse partners across Alaska. This section explores the demographic representation of the Alliance membership, as well as the participation, power, and influence of members.

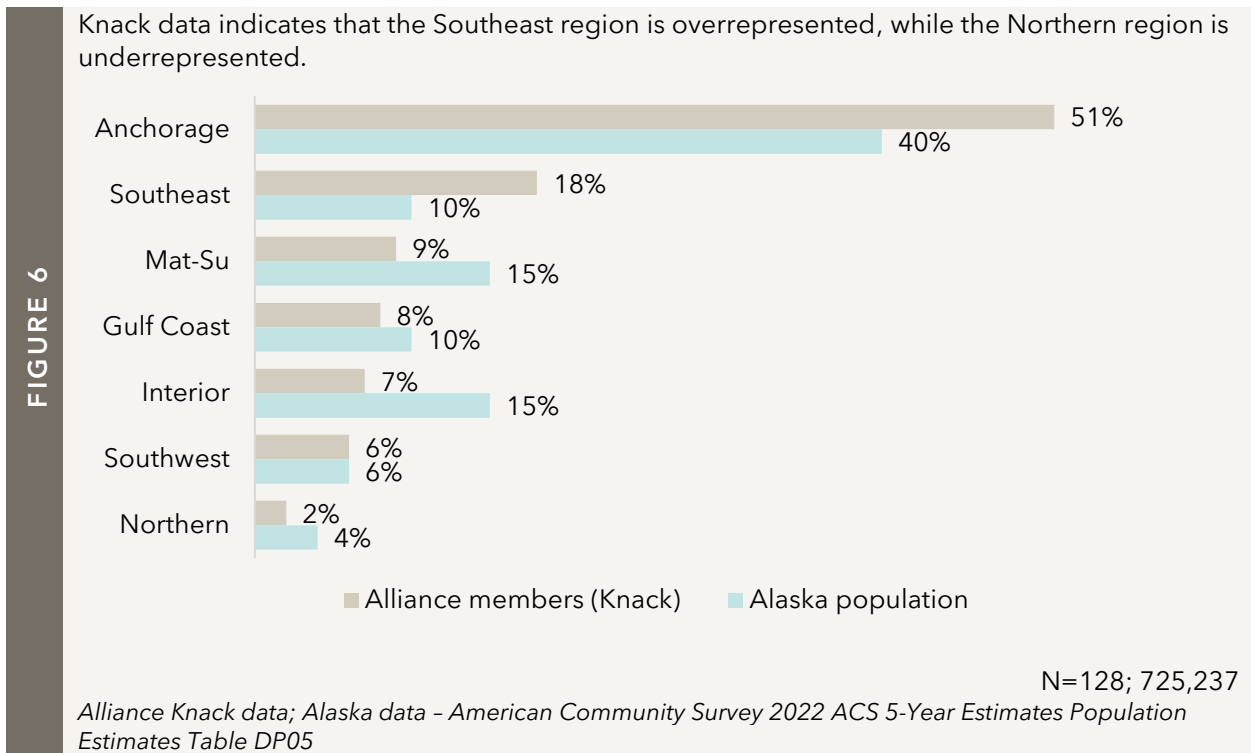
### REPRESENTATION & PARTICIPATION

Since members' demographic data started being collected in FY 2023, the representation of various groups by race, ethnicity, gender, and geographic community has remained relatively consistent.

*"We have folks that are from all different organizations and all different parts of the state. That, I think, is a really, really awesome strength, and [we are] still looking to learn and grow." - Alliance Member*

Geographic representation is an important consideration among Alliance members, particularly in ensuring adequate representation from rural and remote communities. Because a large percentage of members (41%) do not have a specified region in the full membership list (making it difficult to determine true geographic representation across the membership) Knack sign-in data is utilized to determine how representative membership is compared to state demographics. Knack data only represents members who have ever attended a meeting.



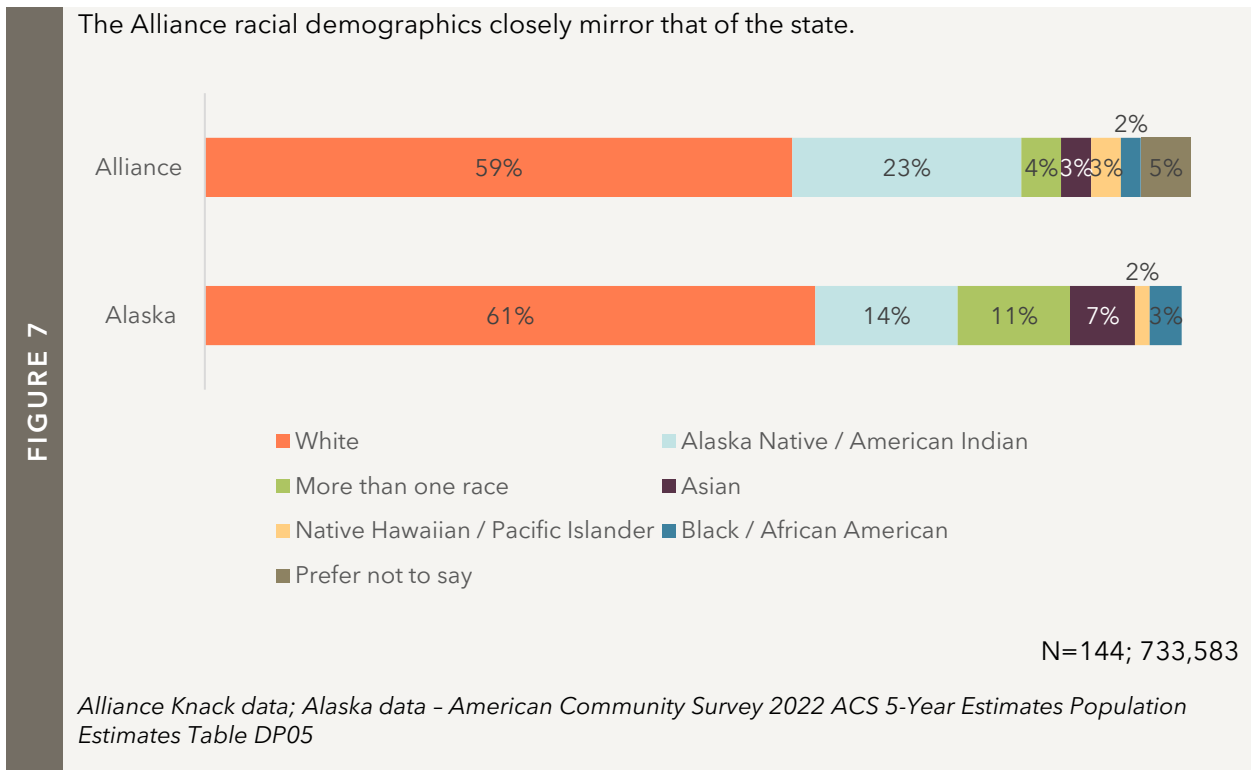


Half of all active members in the network live in Anchorage. Comparing Knack and Census data shows that there is an overrepresentation in the network within the Anchorage and Southeast regions, an equivalent representation in the Southwest, but underrepresentation in other regions.

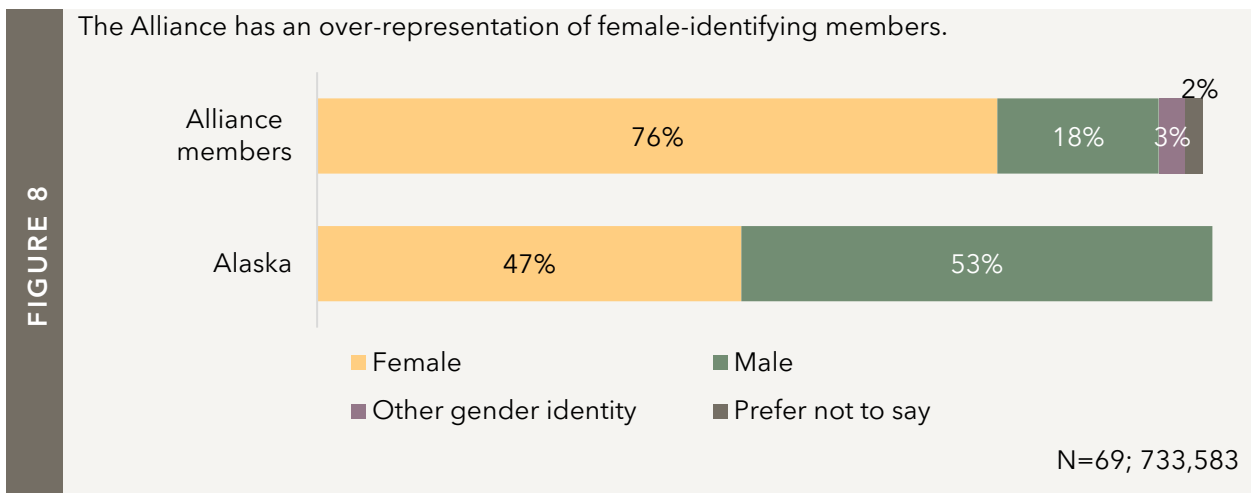
Similarly, representation from different racial and ethnic groups is of importance in the network. Currently, more than half (59%) of members who provided racial demographic information identify as White, followed by about one-quarter (23%) who identify as Alaska Native/American Indian. Other racial and ethnic groups are represented in the network by just a few individuals.

This balance of representation has stayed consistent since the previous fiscal year. Based on statewide demographic data, **the Alliance membership closely resembled the racial diversity of residents in the state.** However, there is a notable low representation of Hispanic/Latino members (8% of Alaskans<sup>1</sup> compared to 3% of Alliance members).

<sup>1</sup> U.S. Census Bureau. "ACS Demographic and Housing Estimates." American Community Survey, ACS 1-Year Estimates Data Profiles, Table DP05, 2022, <https://data.census.gov/table/ACSDP1Y2022.DP05?t=White&g=040XX00US02>. Accessed on April 26, 2024.

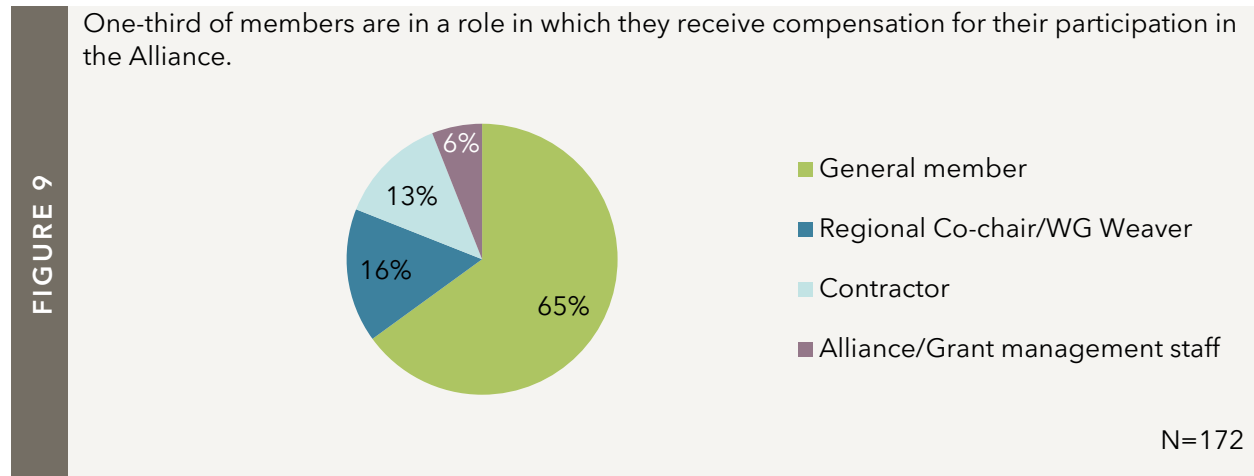


Further, **the Alliance is highly weighted towards female-identifying members**, accounting for three-quarters (76%) of all members. This is a slight increase from the previous year (71%). In contrast, the Alaska population is closer to an even split between male and female residents, although this data does not include an option for other gender identities.



One-fifth (19%) of individuals participating in the Alliance are contractors or Recover Alaska staff who receive compensation, and an additional 16% are Regional Co-chairs or Workgroup Weavers who receive a small stipend. As explored further below, most of the network's

power and influence is concentrated within this group. It should also be noted that many members participate as part of their job, which also means they are being paid as part of their participation, though from their own organization rather than from the Alliance.



## POWER & INFLUENCE

The Alliance’s decentralized structure, as well as the inclusion of member leadership roles, seeks to balance the power and influence among members and avoid typical hierarchies. **On the one hand, the Alliance does have a diverse, statewide representation. On the other hand, the Alliance has struggled to translate that representation into equally diverse engagement and influence.** As one member noted, *“The people that show up regularly - they hold more power.”*

As previously mentioned, data from Knack shows that 40% of all Alliance members attended at least one meeting in FY 2024. Fourteen of these individuals attended 10 or more meetings (of 38 total), half of whom were contractors or Recover Alaska staff. This has a direct impact on power dynamics and whose voices are most often heard in decision-making.

To better understand the dynamics of influence and power within the network, survey respondents were asked who they most often collaborate with, get information from, and who they see as having the greatest influence. Responses were mapped in a network diagram, with each member represented by a circle. The circle diameter shows how frequently someone is mentioned, and their proximity to each other is based on how often they are mentioned together.

**This basic network analysis shows that the Coordinator remains central in all three areas** (collaboration, information, and influence). These results have stayed largely similar to survey results from FY 2022. With the abrupt departure of the Coordinator, members and member leaders have expressed a challenge in navigating the gap in this position and what

to expect for the Alliance next. The charts below show how the Alliance continues to operate more like the hub-and-spoke model.

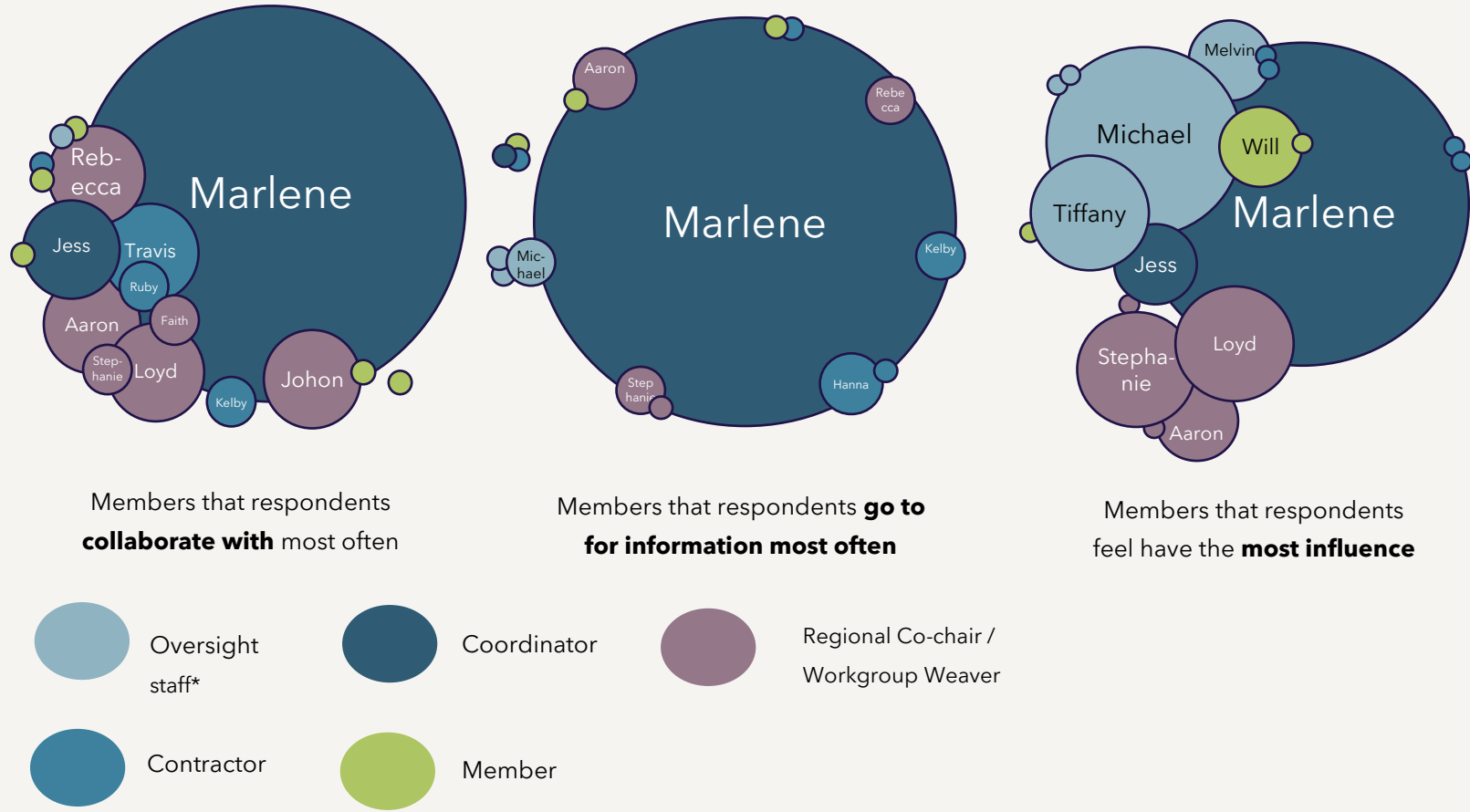
**The analysis also reveals the significant role of Regional Co-chairs and contractors in collaboration and information sharing.** In contrast, in FY 2022, there were significantly more members named when asked about collaboration. This points to the growing role of Regional Co-chairs in the network, but also a continuing centralization of power in the network. **In terms of who members believe has the greatest influence, staff and Regional Co-chairs have continued to be most frequently cited across both fiscal years.**

This reality of centralized power, coupled with the focus on growing member leadership in the network, may reveal the tension in the use of multiple different frameworks. For example, the Emergent Strategy framework has a focus on decentralization, while Collective Impact requires a central backbone organization/group, which often includes compensation for individuals in this role. The Alliance has been drawing from six different frameworks in an emergent fashion, but it may need to be more intentional in selecting one framework (or at most two) and adhering to it more to create more clarity around expectations.

There was a recognition of the need for a core person/team at this time, but members also acknowledged the need to decentralize and distribute responsibility and power. **Moreover, the core people who generate the most influence still reside and work in Anchorage, revealing how influence is still highly centralized in the biggest urban center of Alaska,** while representatives from rural and remote communities may not be as influential. One member pointed out that this can also be due to the technical limitations of living and working in rural and remote communities, which can sometimes prevent smooth communication infrastructure. Others have pointed out that individuals working in rural and remote communities often have to cover multiple roles and responsibilities in their work, thus having less capacity to engage in a network, particularly when participation does not have an immediate, direct impact on their prevention work. That being said, 95% of respondents did express that they believed the network draws on the skills and expertise of its members, suggesting that most respondents feel well-utilized by the Alliance in general.

Members heavily rely on a relatively centralized group of individuals in the Alliance.

FIGURE 10

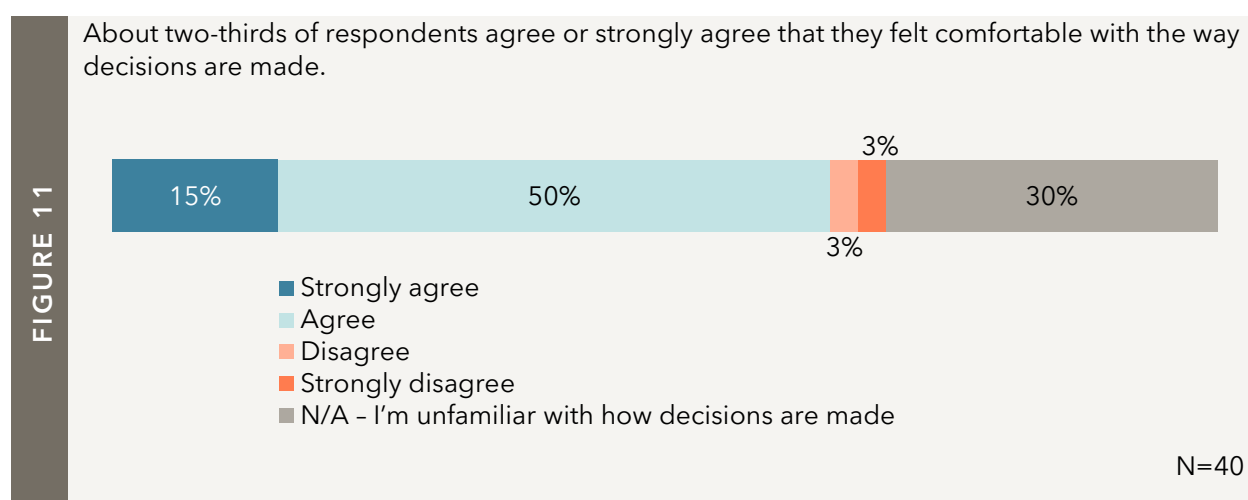


\*Oversight staff include Recover Alaska staff (excluding the Coordinator) and the DBH grant manager

N=20; 23; 17

## DECISION-MAKING

The Alliance uses a consent-based decision-making model in order to avoid majority-rules voting and provide a more equitable space for members to engage in decision-making and have space to voice counter perspectives and opinions. Among surveyed members, **65% agree or strongly agree that they are comfortable with how decisions are made in the network. However, 30% said they are unfamiliar with how decisions are made.** Those unfamiliar ranged in the length of participation within the network. In other words, length of membership is not indicative of greater clarity in the decision-making process. As one member expressed, “I’ve been here for close to two years and am just learning the dynamics of how the decisions impact the rest of the group.”



**Most (86%) surveyed members said they are comfortable voicing their opinions in the network.** Of those who are not, all have been members for two years or less. A couple said it was more due to their personality than a factor of the network, and others said they did not feel they’ve been involved long enough to make informed decisions.

Some members identified challenges to the current decision-making model. These include:

- » *Discomfort being the only individual to not give consent*
- » *Balancing the need for all members to consent with the need to move things forward (particularly when decisions are discussed across multiple meetings and there is a flux in who attends each meeting)*
- » *Understanding who has decision-making power for decisions that affect the network*
- » *Lack of transparency around when the consent-based model is used and when it is not*

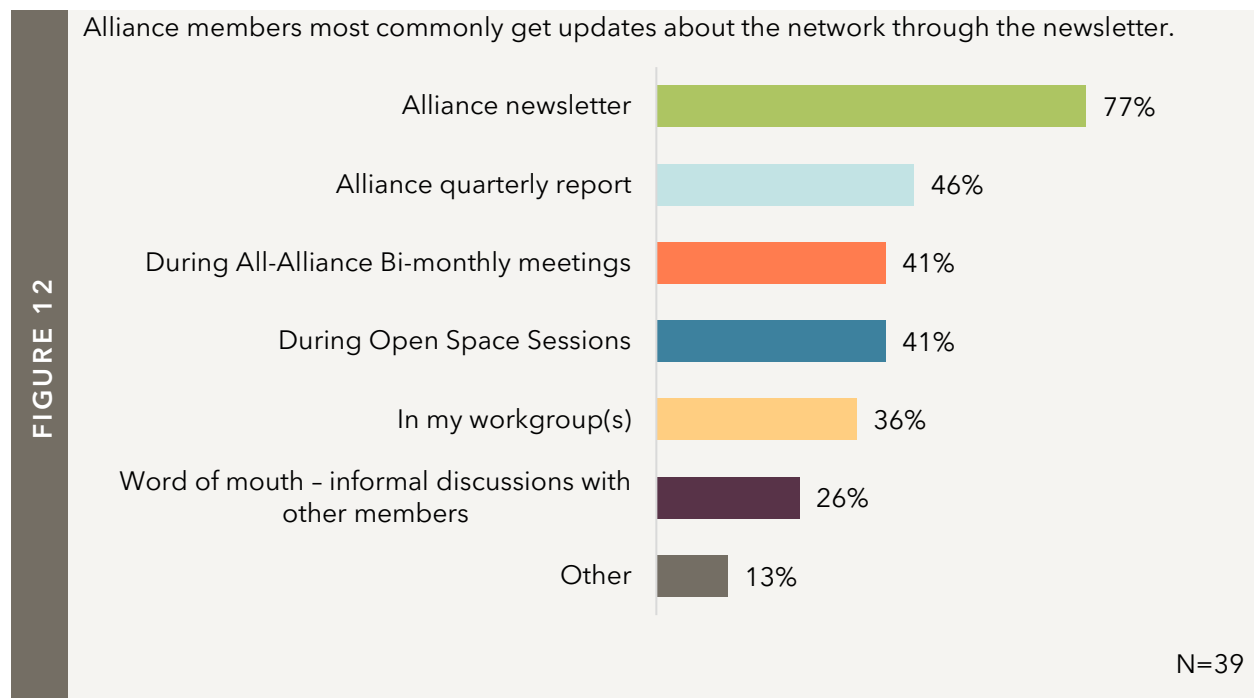
**Several members noted that consent-based decision-making has been less closely followed in the past fiscal year,** with some describing it as more of a consensus-based voting approach. Further, many shared that information is not always provided to allow members to make an informed decision, such as background information or the implications

of the options provided. Providing notice and information on upcoming decisions, for example, can provide members who are affected/interested with more awareness and opportunity to participate. This suggests that while members may be comfortable with decision-making, they see room for improvement in terms of fidelity to the model and transparency.

## INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS

Members join the network with varying levels of capacity and engagement. After all, one of the recognized strengths of the Alliance is the diversity of where people are coming from, which includes their personal and professional experiences and contexts. Some members solely want, or have the capacity to, receive newsletters and updates, while others may want or be able to be more deeply involved. For those reasons, one member suggested utilizing different avenues of communication for different levels of engagement. The new Alliance Facebook and Instagram accounts, launched in May 2024, are one initiative that will provide members and the broader public places to learn about the Alliance and initiatives for prevention.

The Alliance has several communication channels, both formal and informal. According to surveyed members, the Alliance monthly newsletter is the most common way of getting updates, followed by quarterly reports and participation in meetings. Additionally, about one-quarter (26%) get information most commonly by word of mouth.



**About three-quarters of surveyed members (77%) agree or strongly agree that they receive relevant and timely information about updates and decisions in the network.**

One-third (33%) said they would prefer to get updates differently. Suggestions included direct contact by phone or email, during meetings, and through social media (this survey was conducted before the social media accounts were launched). There were a couple of comments expressing a desire to have documentation and follow-through after the Open Space sessions. While hosts of breakout discussions are supposed to take notes of the conversation, this is not always done, and notes are not stored in a location accessible to members.



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## RECOMMENDATIONS

Members continue to express a positive experience engaging with the Alliance, though several long-standing tensions and areas of confusion remain. The new Strategic Plan includes several objectives that speak to these areas, and it will be important for the network to create a sense of clarity around roles and responsibilities implementing the plan and consistent monitoring of efforts to achieve identified goals and objectives. Based on the findings explored in this report, the following recommendations have been made.

### **RECOMMENDATION 1: *Strengthen Recruitment and Onboarding Efforts***

Objective 1.4 in the new Alliance Strategic Plan is to increase membership by 20% with equitable representation from all regions of Alaska by June 30, 2025. Recruitment necessitates first creating more clarity for existing members on role expectations (related to Objective 3.4), and providing supportive documents to quickly and easily summarize the Alliance's structure and purpose and how to get involved. People also need to see the benefit to their work/community to prioritize engagement. Further, the Alliance would benefit from defining if it wants to increase membership in terms of growing the listserv, or more specifically to grow the number of members who actively participate in meetings and workgroups.

Revamping of the New Member Orientation Packet has been underway since the December 2022 retreat. In addition, supports such as a mentor/buddy system and regular new member introductory meetings may be helpful and have been discussed to some extent in the network. Lastly, the Alliance is heavily influenced by members who are either in leadership roles, are paid for their participation, or both. When taken into account that member demographics tend to be more Anchorage-based, White, and identify as women, there continues to be a need to diversify membership representation, engagement, and power-sharing.

### **RECOMMENDATION 2: *Enhance Supports for Members in Leadership Roles***

Members in leadership roles need clearer guidance on roles and responsibilities. This guidance does not have to necessarily mean instituting hierarchies within the network; instead, this is supposed to support the empowerment of all members to be potential leaders. The lack of clarity, despite a written contract, suggests that a deeper disconnect is happening in the actual functioning of these roles, which merits further exploration.

In addition, the Alliance can explore the possibility of offering professional development opportunities, especially to those who are in, or interested in, a leadership role. It would also be beneficial to discuss with member leaders what makes them feel successful and supported in their roles to inform these offerings and additional supports. This will be an important consideration given that there will be five open Co-chair positions at the start of the next fiscal year and planned restructuring of leadership roles. Importantly, the Alliance

should offer training on consent-based decision-making to all members, and particularly those facilitating decision-making, to empower them to engage better with the Alliance. This training can also be integrated with new member onboarding.

**RECOMMENDATION 3: *Increase Integration of Network Structures***

Given the structure of the Alliance, it can be easy for knowledge to be siloed within the workgroups, leading to a lack of clarity about what all is happening in the network, how/what decisions were made, and the potential for missed opportunities for cross-group collaboration. There is also an ongoing lack of clarity as to the Alliance’s being a network versus a coalition, and what that means for the network.

The 2024-2027 Strategic Plan includes Objective 3.7 to strengthen internal communication and connection by June 30, 2026. The original intention of the Workgroup Weaver role was to facilitate (i.e., weave) greater connection across workgroups, though it has manifested into more of a role in facilitating their respective workgroup meetings. This integration component can be increased further as the network structure is shifting to have Regional Co-chairs take over these responsibilities. For all members, having an easily accessible, centralized location for documents, resources, and meeting agendas/minutes can improve internal communication. The Alliance can build from the Strategic Plan to formalize and document Alliance structures and protocols for internal communication and connection.

**RECOMMENDATION 4: *Revisit and Create Clarity Around Network Frameworks***

The Alliance currently has six different frameworks listed in its Common Agenda as guiding frameworks to network structure and functioning. While there is beneficial guidance from the various frameworks, having this number of frameworks can lead to competing perspectives and focuses and impedes the ability to implement each one with fidelity. For example, as discussed in the section on power and influence, decentralization is an element of the Emergent Strategy framework, while having a centralized backbone organization/group is an element of Collective Impact. Depending on which frameworks a member is more familiar with (and which they are aware are used in the Alliance) this can create different expectations and interpretations of the network. These six frameworks are not explicitly discussed in the Alliance aside from occasional references (typically to Emergent Strategy). It would be beneficial to revisit these frameworks, create clarity around each of them, and select one or two to implement with fidelity. This can be particularly supportive for the network as the Alliance begins implementing its 2024-2027 Strategic Plan.

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## APPENDIX A: ALLIANCE GOALS AND FRAMEWORKS

Six frameworks guide the Alliance's efforts towards identified goals:

- » **Strategic Prevention Framework:** Created by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), this framework supports groups that work to address substance abuse and related behavioral health issues through five steps (capacity, planning, implementation, evaluation, and assessment) and is guided by principles of sustainability and cultural competence.
- » **Emergent Strategy:** Based on a book by adrienne maree brown, *Emergent Strategy* is a framework to help groups and organizations grow capacity for radical transformation. It is comprised of six interrelated core elements: non-linear and iterative, adaptive, creating more possibilities, resilience and transformative justice, interdependence and decentralization, and fractal. This report is organized around those core elements.
- » **Collective Impact:** Created by John Kania and Mark Kramer of FSG, Collective Impact is a framework used by networks and other groups to learn together and align and integrate their actions to achieve population and systems-level change. There are five conditions of Collective Impact: a common agenda, shared measures, mutually reinforcing activities, continuous communication, and a backbone organization. Equity is centered within each of the conditions.
- » **Cynefin:** Designed by Dave Snowden to assist in decision making by identifying circumstance and uncertainty, the Cynefin framework outlines five situational domains that decisions may fall within: complex, complicated, chaos, simple, and disorder.
- » **Upstream Prevention:** This framework proposes to look upstream at why issues come into being in the first place by addressing shared risk and protective factors. This was first expressed in the 1986 Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion by the World Health Organization and captured the shift in focus from individual risk factors and behaviors to the societal conditions that keep people healthy, such as adequate income, meaningful work, education, community connection, decent housing, and healthy food.
- » **Systems Change:** Detailed in the 2018 book, *The Water of Systems Change*, by John Kania, Mark Kramer, and Peter Senge, this framework includes six conditions of systems change at three different levels. Structural change includes policies, practices, and resource flows. Relational change includes relationships and connections and power dynamics. Transformative change involves mental models.

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## APPENDIX B: MEMBER SURVEY

The Alliance aims to address the complex issue of alcohol misuse in Alaska using emergent strategy as a guiding framework to engage with multiple and diverse partners. As part of our annual evaluation, the Alliance is asking members to provide feedback on their experience with the network and perspective on its structure and direction. In the spirit of emergence, this feedback will help the Alliance identify areas for growth and areas of strength and determine next steps.

This survey should take about 20-30 minutes of your time. It is a bit long, with 46 questions. Many are multiple-choice, and some are open response.

You may pause at any time and resume the survey later as long as you use the same browser. All responses will be confidential and will be reported anonymously.

We really appreciate your feedback, and as a thank you, we are offering respondents a \$50 gift card upon completing this survey.

Thank you!

### BACKGROUND

Please tell us a little about yourself.

1. How long have you been a member of the Alliance?
  - Since its inception (2019)
  - Two-three years
  - One-two years
  - Less than one year
2. Please describe what your experience has been onboarding to the Alliance. This might include both formal or informal processes or supports you've had in learning about the Alliance and how to get involved.
  - Open comment
3. How did you hear about the Alliance?
  - I was invited by the Coordinator
  - From a colleague or friend
  - At a conference or similar event
  - I was asked to participate as part of my job
  - I found the website online
  - Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

4. What role(s) do you fill in the Alliance? Check all that apply.
  - Member
  - Workgroup Weaver
  - Regional Co-chair
  - Recover Alaska staff
  - Contractor
5. Do you participate in this Alliance as part of your job?
  - Yes
  - No
6. Do you get paid for your participation in the Alliance? (Either through your own organization or by the Alliance.)
  - Yes
  - No

## ALLIANCE MEETINGS

7. How often do you attend Open Space Sessions (previously called Integration Sessions)?
  - Regularly
  - Sometimes
  - Rarely
  - Never
8. Rate your level of agreement with this statement: I believe the Open Space Sessions are a good use of members' time.
  - Strongly agree
  - Agree
  - Disagree
  - Strongly disagreePlease share any comments about your response: \_\_\_\_\_
9. How often do you attend All Alliance Bi-monthly meetings?
  - Regularly
  - Sometimes
  - Rarely
  - Never
10. Rate your level of agreement with this statement: I believe the All Alliance Bi-monthly meetings are a good use of members' time.
  - Strongly agree
  - Agree

- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Please share any comments about your response: \_\_\_\_\_

11. How often do you attend workgroup meetings?

- Regularly
- Sometimes
- Rarely
- Never

12. Rate your level of agreement with this statement: I believe the workgroup meetings are a good use of members' time.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Please share any comments about your response: \_\_\_\_\_

13. If you do not regularly participate in Alliance meetings/workgroups, please share why:

- I do not have the capacity to participate
- I am unclear on how to get involved
- I changed roles in my job
- I just want to be on the listserv but am not interested in participating in meetings/workgroups
- N/A - I regularly attend Alliance meetings
- Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

14. Overall, how satisfied are you with your experience with the Alliance?

- Very satisfied
- Satisfied
- Dissatisfied
- Very dissatisfied

Please provide any comments about your response: \_\_\_\_\_

## DIRECTION AND PURPOSE

This section asks about the Alliance's mission, goals, and current direction.

15. How familiar are you with the goals of the Alliance?

- Very familiar
- Somewhat familiar
- A little familiar
- Not at all familiar

16. In your opinion, how effective has the Alliance been so far in achieving each of its goals? (Very effective, Somewhat effective, Somewhat ineffective, Not at all effective, I don't know)
- Build relationships among and across organizations, efforts, communities, and individuals
  - Build shared meaning about the nature of alcohol misuse, upstream prevention, and community wellness
  - Build power for everyone to have what they need to thrive and contribute to the mission, based on where they are where they sense to go

Please provide any comments about your response: \_\_\_\_\_

17. Have you been involved in any efforts related to the first goal of the Alliance: Build relationships among and across organizations, efforts, communities, and individuals?
- Yes
  - No

If yes, please describe: \_\_\_\_\_

18. Have you been involved in any efforts related to the second goal of the Alliance: Build shared meaning about the nature of alcohol misuse, upstream prevention, and community wellness?
- Yes
  - No

If yes, please describe: \_\_\_\_\_

19. Have you been involved in any efforts related to the third goal of the Alliance: Build power for everyone to have what they need to thrive and contribute to the mission, based on where they are where they sense to go?
- Yes
  - No

If yes, please describe: \_\_\_\_\_

20. The current strategic goals of the Alliance (i.e., building relationships, building power, and building shared meaning) are focused on building out its own processes and capacity. In your opinion, how ready is the Alliance to develop goals focused on areas such as alcohol misuse data, policy changes, economic costs etc.?
- Very ready
  - Somewhat ready
  - A little bit ready
  - Not at all ready

Please share any additional comments on your response and on any specific action-oriented goals you recommend: \_\_\_\_\_

- 21. What do you think would help increase the Alliance’s readiness to develop these new goals towards alcohol misuse harm-reduction, policy changes, etc.?
  - Open comment
- 22. What questions do you have about the Alliance’s focus and direction?
  - Open comment

## ALLIANCE STRUCTURE AND PROCESSES

The structure of the Alliance includes Workgroups, Open Space Sessions, All Alliance Bi-monthly meetings, as well as various roles such as members, Workgroup Weavers, Regional Co-chairs, and Coordinator/Contractor support. The Alliance also has several processes and protocols including consent-based decision-making and internal communications. Please share your thoughts about the Alliance’s structure, processes, and protocols and your experience with them.

Please rate your level of agreement with the following statements:

- 23. I am comfortable with the way decisions are made.
  - Strongly agree
  - Agree
  - Disagree
  - Strongly disagree
  - N/A - I’m unfamiliar with how decisions are made

Please share any comments about your response: \_\_\_\_\_

- 24. I feel comfortable voicing my opinions when we are making decisions.
  - Strongly agree
  - Agree
  - Disagree
  - Strongly disagree

Please share any comments about your response: \_\_\_\_\_

- 25. I have a clear understanding of my roles and responsibilities as a member.
  - Strongly agree
  - Agree
  - Disagree
  - Strongly disagree

Please share any comments about your response: \_\_\_\_\_

- 26. I am comfortable recruiting new members to the Alliance.
  - Strongly agree
  - Agree
  - Disagree



- Strongly disagree

Please share any comments about your response: \_\_\_\_\_

27. Have you helped support the onboarding of a new member in the past year?

- Yes
- No

If yes, please describe what this process looked like, whether formal or informal:

\_\_\_\_\_

28. Please share any thoughts on how new member onboarding could be improved:

- Open comment

29. I receive relevant and timely information about updates and decisions of workgroups and the broader Alliance.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

30. How do you most commonly stay up to date on Alliance matters? Check all that apply.

- Alliance newsletter
- Alliance quarterly report
- During All Alliance Bi-monthly meetings
- During Open Space Sessions
- In my workgroup(s)
- Word of mouth - informal discussions with other members
- Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

31. Would you prefer to learn about Alliance matters in a different way than you currently are?

- Yes
- No

If yes, please describe: \_\_\_\_\_

32. In your opinion, how well does the Alliance's current structure support achievement of its goals?

- Very well
- Somewhat well
- Not very well
- Not at all
- N/A - I am unfamiliar with the Alliance structure

33. How could the Alliance improve its structure and processes?
- Open comment

## MEMBER EXPERIENCE

Please rate your level of agreement with the following statements:

34. The Alliance fosters an environment of respect, trust, and inclusiveness.
- Strongly agree
  - Agree
  - Disagree
  - Strongly disagree
35. The Alliance draws on the expertise and skills of its members.
- Strongly agree
  - Agree
  - Disagree
  - Strongly disagree

The following questions ask about your connections with other members in the Alliance. Responses will not be tied to the respondent.

36. Who do you collaborate with most often in your work with the Alliance? (Please name up to three people.)
- Open comment
37. Who do you go to for information most often in the Alliance? (Please name up to three people.)
- Open comment
38. Who has the most influence in the Alliance? (Please name up to three people. This can include yourself.)
- Open comment

## DEMOGRAPHICS

The Alliance has a commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion. To help the network better understand member demographics and representation, please tell us a little about yourself. This information will not be used to identify respondents and will be reported in a way that protects anonymity.

39. What is your community of residence in Alaska?
- Open comment

40. What other regions or communities in Alaska do you have a personal or professional connection with, if any?
- Open comment
41. What is your gender identity?
- Woman
  - Man
  - Non-binary
  - Prefer not to answer
  - Prefer to self-describe: \_\_\_\_\_
42. Do you identify as: (Check all that apply)
- Alaska Native / American Indian
  - Asian / Asian American
  - Black / African American
  - Hispanic / Latino
  - Middle Eastern / North African
  - Native Hawaiian / Pacific Islander
  - White
  - Prefer not to answer
  - Racial/ethnic identity not listed (please describe) : \_\_\_\_\_
43. Do you identify as a member of a marginalized community? (ex. LGBTQIA+, religious minority, person with a disability, etc.)
- Yes
  - No
  - Prefer not to answer
  - Closing
44. Please share any other thoughts or comments about the Alliance and your experience in the network:
- Open comment
45. As a thank you for your participation in this survey, you may receive a \$50 gift card. Please provide your full name and email address to receive it. Your responses will remain confidential & be reported anonymously. This information will not be shared in connection with your survey responses.
- Name:
  - Email address:

46. The Alliance evaluator team will be hosting a follow-up session with interested members to engage in sense-making and discussion on key survey findings in order to get a more detailed understanding of members' experiences and perspectives. If you are interested in participating, please provide your name and email address below:

- Name:
- Email address:

Thank you for your time!

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## APPENDIX C: MEMBER LEADER INTERVIEW GUIDE

Thank you for participating in the Alliance member interview as part of its annual evaluation. This interview is part of the Alliance’s annual evaluation. Evaluation is a systematic way to reflect on the work we are doing to identify what is working well and where more attention may be needed. Evaluation helps the Alliance to continually develop and grow. We are interested in hearing your thoughts and insights on your role - as either a Regional Co-chair or Workgroup Weaver - and on member leadership in the Alliance in general.

### ANONYMITY

Findings from interviews will be included in the Alliance annual evaluation report. Given your role in the Alliance, we cannot guarantee anonymity. However, in the report, specific names of individuals will not be used when referencing these interviews, such as when using quotes. Instead, it will use a more general term such as “member leader.”

We are recording these for transcription purposes. The recording will not be shared out with others and will be kept in a secure file.

Remember, there are no wrong answers, and you may choose to skip a question for any reason. If questions arise, please feel free to ask at any time. You can also choose to end the interview at any time. Do you have any questions for me right now?

1. Overall, how would you describe your experience with the Alliance?
  - How long have you been a part of the Alliance?
2. What is your current role in the Alliance?
  - How long have you been in your role as a [title]?
3. How has your experience been as a [role title]?
  - How did you become a [role title]?
  - Why did you choose to take this role?
  - How have you been onboarded to this role?
  - To what extent do you feel clear on your responsibilities in this role?
4. Over the past year, what activities have you led or participated in as part of this role?  
How were those experiences for you?
5. Have you supported the onboarding of new members as part of your role?
  - If yes - please describe what this process is like.
6. How comfortable do you feel onboarding new members?
7. How could support of member leadership be improved?

I'd like to now ask you some questions about the broader Alliance, beyond your own role specifically.

8. In your own words, what are the Alliance's goals?
  - How did the activities you led or participated in support the Alliance's goals?
  - In your perspective, is there a shared agreement among members about forwarding the goals of the Alliance? Why or why not?
9. Describe your experience with decision-making in the Alliance.
  - When is it used?
  - When is it not used?
  - How well does the decision-making process work for the network?
  - Do you feel like you typically have a clear understanding of how and why decisions are made?
  - Who holds power in decisions you've participated in?
10. What do you think are the strengths of the Alliance? Please describe.
  - How can the Alliance continue to build off its strengths?
11. Share a story that illustrates a significant change that has resulted from your leadership or participation in the Alliance. This can be something you've learned, you've shared with others, or that you have applied to your work/community.
  - Why is this story significant to you?
12. Do you have any other thoughts you'd like to share about the Alliance or your experience as a [role title]?