



Alaska Justice  
Information Center  
UNIVERSITY *of* ALASKA ANCHORAGE

# **Alaska Results First Initiative**

Progress Report  
&  
Initial Findings

July 15, 2016

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This report presents the initial results of **Alaska's Results First (Alaska RF) initiative**. In the spring of 2015 Alaska became the 19th jurisdiction to partner with the *Pew-MacArthur Results First Initiative*. The *Pew-MacArthur Results First Initiative* is a joint effort of The Pew Charitable Trusts and the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation that assists states in implementing evidence-based policymaking using innovative and rigorous benefit-cost analytic methods. The goal of the *Pew-MacArthur Results First Initiative* is to encourage states to be good stewards of public monies by developing policies and investing in programs that rigorous research has shown to be effective.

The *Pew-MacArthur Results First Initiative* approach consists of three steps. To begin, jurisdictions conduct what is referred to as a *program inventory*, which is a full enumeration of current adult criminal justice programming in the state. Once the program inventory is completed, the next step is to *match programs to the evidence base* in order to determine each program's level of effectiveness. Finally, programs are entered into the *Pew-MacArthur Results First Initiative* benefit-cost model, which provides empirical estimates of the net monetary benefits of current programming.

**This report presents the results of Alaska's RF adult criminal justice program inventory and matching to the evidence base.**

## Organization of Report

The report is structured into three sections coinciding with the three steps of the *Pew-MacArthur Results First Initiative* method of conducting benefit-cost analyses.

The first section of the report provides an

overview of the Alaska RF initiative's program inventory process and a presentation of the program inventory results.

The second section of the report presents the program matching process and results.

Finally, the third section of the report discusses the remaining tasks necessary to execute benefit-cost analyses for Alaska's adult criminal justice programs using the *Pew-MacArthur Results First Initiative* benefit-cost model.

## Key Findings

### Alaska Results First Initiative

- **In total, 88.8% (\$20.4 million) of the funds allocated by the State of Alaska to adult criminal justice programs were for programs identified in the evidence base.**
- A total of 52 adult criminal justice programs were identified in the Alaska RF Program Inventory.
- 65.4% (n=34) of Alaska's adult criminal justice programs were funded wholly, or in part, by the State of Alaska.
- **The total amount of state funding allocated to adult criminal justice programs is approximately \$23 million each fiscal year.**
- 57.7% (n=30) of Alaska's adult criminal justice programs were matched to interventions that have been scientifically evaluated.
  - 80.0% (n=24) of Alaska's adult criminal justice programs matched to the evidence base were funded wholly, or in part, by the State of Alaska.

## Section One

### Alaska RF Initiative Program Inventory

The Alaska RF adult criminal justice program inventory was a collaborative effort of the Alaska RF Program Inventory Working Group and the Alaska Justice Information Center (AJiC). Members of the Program Inventory Working Group were tasked with identifying and providing descriptive, budget, and participant data about the adult criminal justice programs overseen by their organizations/agencies. AJiC was responsible for facilitating and coordinating the group's efforts, and for collecting, consolidating, and analyzing the program data provided by Program Inventory Working group members.

The primary objectives of the adult criminal justice program inventory were: (1) to identify and describe the full range of adult criminal justice programs in Alaska, and (2) to estimate the annual costs of those adult criminal justice programs that were funded wholly, or in part, by the State of Alaska.

### Identifying Alaska's Adult Criminal Justice Programs

In order to assemble the initial listing of Alaska adult criminal justice program names, program descriptions, and oversight agencies, AJiC staff first conducted a public domain search. An agency-specific listing was then provided to each Programs Working Group member for review and agency-specific vetting. AJiC's initial listing of Alaska adult criminal justice programs included more than 300 entries.

The program inventory was refined through several iterations of collaborative review. Some programs included in the initial program listing were removed (e.g., programs no longer offered); some programs that were not

### What Is A Program?

For the purposes of the Alaska RF program inventory, a **program** is defined as an intervention (whether a program or a practice) that is implemented to affect a discrete, well defined outcome. For adult criminal justice, this would include such outcomes as: reducing recidivism; life skills development, decreasing substance abuse, and enhancing parenting skills, among others. Adult criminal justice programs may include academic, cognitive, and vocational education; reentry and faith-based services; post-conviction jail diversion programs; and, adult prison programs.

included in the initial program listing were subsequently added to the inventory; some programs included in the initial listing that were determined to be elements of a single program were consolidated (e.g., specific vocational training courses); and some programs included in the initial listing that were discovered to be multiple offerings of the same program were combined (e.g., batterer intervention programs). After several iterations of this refinement process, **the final Alaska RF adult criminal justice program inventory included 52 programs.**

### Collecting Budgetary Data for Adult Criminal Justice Programs

After having identified and described Alaska's adult criminal justice programs, each program was then categorized into one of the following nine programmatic groupings: chaplaincy services; general, pro-social, and parenting education; vocational training; therapeutic courts; technology-assisted supervision; domestic violence; sex offender; reentry services; and, substance abuse. The first

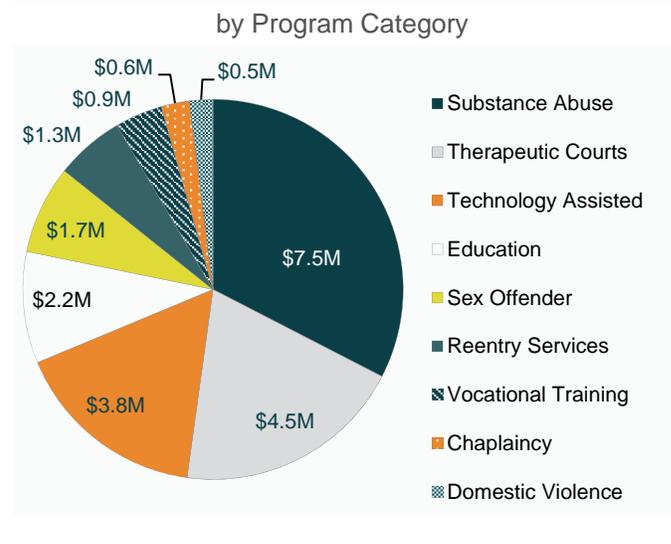
three groups – chaplaincy services; general, pro-social and parenting education; and, vocational training – represent *prison-based* adult criminal justice programs. In contrast, therapeutic courts and technology-assisted supervision programs, are offered only in community-based settings. Finally, domestic violence, sex offender, reentry services, and substance abuse programs are *mixed* programs offered in both institutional and community-based settings.

In this second phase of developing the program inventory, the focus shifted from identifying and describing to estimating overall budget allocations for each program. This was done in close consultation and collaboration with Programs Working Group members, as well as additional representatives of the state oversight agencies. In some instances program cost data were collected directly from contracted service providers. Whenever possible, budget figures for a specific program included in the inventory were provided by a Programs Working Group member employed by the designated oversight agency.

AJiC staff consolidated all of the budget data provided by agencies and service providers. When agency and/or service provider budget items did not directly align with the program inventory, *professionally informed estimates* were solicited from agency representatives, program staff, or service providers possessing detailed knowledge of a program’s budget and day-to-day operations.

Collection and compilation of these budgetary data provide an estimate of the total amount of state funds allocated to the 52 adult criminal justice programs identified in the program inventory.

Figure 1  
Distribution of Annual State Funding



**Out of the 52 adult criminal justice programs identified in the program inventory, 34 of them were funded wholly, or in part, by the State of Alaska.** The remaining 18 adult criminal justice programs operate without state funding. **The total amount of state dollars allocated to these 34 adult criminal justice programs is estimated to be approximately \$23.0 million each fiscal year** (see Figure 1).

Four programmatic groupings – substance abuse; therapeutic courts; technology-assisted supervision; and, general, pro-social, and parenting education – accounted for nearly 80 percent (\$18 million) of the State of Alaska’s annual budgeted funding for adult criminal justice programming. Of the remaining \$5 million in state funds committed to adult criminal justice programming, \$2.2 million was directed to sex offender programs, \$1.7 million was directed toward reentry services, \$0.9 million went to vocational training, \$0.6 million was allocated to chaplaincy services, and \$0.5 million was committed to domestic violence programs.

## Section Two

### Matching Adult Criminal Justice Programs to the Evidence Base

With the Alaska RF program inventory complete, the next step was to *match programs to the evidence base* in order to determine each program's level of effectiveness. The *Pew-MacArthur Results First Initiative* provided two resources to assist with completion of this step.

The first was an online resource called the *Results First Clearinghouse Database*. This database is a "clearinghouse of clearinghouses" that provides detailed program evaluation summaries from a number of program evaluation databases. Within the *Results First Clearinghouse Database*, programs with the highest rating were coded green, programs with the second-highest rating were coded yellow, programs for which there was no evidence of effects were coded gray, programs showing mixed effects were coded blue, and programs demonstrating negative effects were coded red. (This tool is publicly available at: <http://www.pewtrusts.org/en/multimedia/data-visualizations/2015/results-first-clearinghouse-database>.)

The second resource was the *Results First Ratings Database*. The effectiveness ratings provided in the *Results First Ratings Database* were independently developed using *Results First* inclusion criteria and Washington State Institute for Public Policy (WSIPP) evaluation standards and meta-analytic results. With the exception of the yellow (second-highest rating), the *Results First Ratings Database* applies the rating colors and categories used in the *Results First Clearinghouse Database*. In some instances, however, *Results First* and/or WSIPP inclusion criteria and ratings standards differ from those used by the databases included in the *Results First Clearinghouse Database*.

All of the Alaska RF program matches that were made using the *Results First Clearinghouse Database* utilized three evaluation databases: the CrimeSolutions.gov database, the What Works in Reentry Clearinghouse, and the National Registry of Evidence-based Programs and Practices.

With detailed descriptions of Alaska's adult criminal justice programs in-hand, the *Results First Clearinghouse Database* was searched first for potential matches for each program. AJiC was able to match 28 of the 52 adult criminal justice programs included in the program inventory to interventions that had been evaluated and given a rating in the *Results First Clearinghouse Database*. Two additional programs could not be matched to the *Results First Clearinghouse Database*, but were matched to program evaluations in the *Results First Ratings Database*. **Altogether, 30 (57.7%) of Alaska's adult criminal justice programs were matched to these two evidence bases.** Table 1 (next page) details the matching results for these programs.

Of the 30 adult criminal justice programs that were matched to the evidence base, 24 were funded wholly, or in part, by the State of Alaska. In total, an estimated **\$20.4 million of the \$23.0 million (88.8%) allocated by the State of Alaska to adult criminal justice programs was for programs identified in the evidence base.**

Among the 30 adult criminal justice programs that were matched to the evidence base, 11 were given the highest rating (green), 17 were given the second-highest rating (yellow), and 2 was assessed as no evidence of effects (gray) (see Table 1, next page).

Table 1a Evidence Base Effectiveness Ratings Alaska Adult Criminal Justice Programs	
Program Name	Effectiveness Rating
<b>Domestic Violence</b>	
Community BIP (Duluth)	No evidence of effects
<b>Education (General, Pro-social, and Parenting)</b>	
Adult General Education	2nd Highest
Parenting: Active Parenting	Highest
Parenting: InsideOut Dad	2nd Highest
New Path High School*	2nd Highest
Post-Secondary Academic Service*	2nd Highest
<b>Vocational Training</b>	
Vocational training	Highest
Ilisagvik College vocational training	Highest
<b>Reentry Services</b>	
Assess, Plan, Identify, Coordinate (APIC)	2nd Highest
Institutional Discharge Plus (IDP+)	Highest
Partners Re-Entry Center	2nd Highest
<b>Sex Offender</b>	
Outpatient Treatment (community-based)	2nd Highest
Outpatient Treatment (incarcerated men)	2nd Highest
Residential Treatment (therapeutic community)	2nd Highest
<b>Notes</b> * indicates not funded by State of Alaska	

Table 1b Evidence Base Effectiveness Ratings Alaska Adult Criminal Justice Programs	
Program Name	Effectiveness Rating
<b>Substance Abuse</b>	
12-Step Recovery Meetings	Highest
24/7	2nd Highest
Alcohol & Drug Information School*	2nd Highest
Alcohol Safety Action Program (ASAP)	No evidence of effects
Comm. Continuing Care	Highest
DOC Intensive Outpatient Treatment	Highest
DOC Intensive Outpatient (dual diagnosis)	Highest
DOC Psycho-educational Services	Highest
DOC Residential Substance Abuse Treatment (RSAT)	Highest
Probation Accountability with Certain Enforcement (PACE)	2nd Highest
<b>Therapeutic (Specialty) Courts</b>	
Anchorage Felony Drug Wellness Court	2nd Highest
Coordinated Resources Project/Mental Health Courts	2nd Highest
DUI Wellness Courts	2nd Highest
Hybrid Therapeutic Courts	2nd Highest
<b>Technology Assisted Supervision</b>	
Electronic Monitoring	2nd Highest
Ignition Interlock*	Highest
<b>Notes</b> * indicates not funded by State of Alaska	

### Section Three: Next Steps Transitioning to Entering Programs into the Benefit-Cost Model

The third step in the *Pew-MacArthur Results First Initiative* approach is to enter Alaska’s adult criminal justice programs into the benefit-cost model in order to estimate the net monetary benefits of the state’s current programming. Before taking this third and final step in the benefit-cost analysis process, however, a number of prerequisite tasks must be completed. This section of the report provides a brief overview and description of

the work that is currently being done to complete these interim tasks. **AJiC’s goal is to begin running cost benefit analyses for Alaska’s adult criminal justice programs by October 2016.**

#### Task #1: Estimating Per-Participant Costs for Alaska’s Programs

The primary tasks remaining for AJiC staff and members of the Programs Working Group are: (1) *to develop estimates of the (annual) per-participant costs*, and (2) *to determine program duration (in years) for participants for*

each adult criminal justice program that is to be entered into the *Pew-MacArthur Results First* benefit-cost model. **This work is currently underway, and significant progress has been made in deriving these estimates.**

## Task #2: Estimating Criminal Justice Resource Use and Cost Parameters

In the *Pew-MacArthur Results First* benefit-cost model, an appreciable portion of the *benefits* estimated is the avoided costs of criminal justice administration that result from recidivism reduction. A key aspect of determining the costs of criminal justice administration is determining the *probability of resource use*. Within the benefit-cost model, specific parameters for the probability of resource use are calculated for prison, probation, and parole (post-incarceration probation). Each of these three parameters is estimated for each of the seven *Pew-MacArthur Results First* crime categories (felony homicide, felony sex crimes, felony robbery, felony assault, felony property, felony drug/other, and misdemeanors) to reflect the differing likelihoods of resource use based on the type of offense. **With the assistance of the Alaska Department of Public Safety (which provided the data), AJiC has completed this task.**

A second aspect of determining the costs of criminal justice administration is the *duration of resource use*. For Alaska RF, two specific parameters are calculated for entry into the *Pew-MacArthur Results First* benefit cost model. The first is the *number of years of resource use (prison)*; the second is the *number of years of resource use (community supervision)*. Both of these parameters are estimated for each of the seven *Pew-*

*MacArthur Results First* crime categories (felony homicide, felony sex crimes, felony robbery, felony assault, felony property, felony drug/other, and misdemeanors) to reflect differing durations of resource use based on the type of offense. **With the assistance of the Alaska Department of Corrections (which provided the data), AJiC has completed estimation of the *number of years of resource use (prison)* parameters.**

Developing *marginal cost* estimates for each of the major points of offender contact in the criminal justice system represents the third component of determining the overall costs of criminal justice administration. For Alaska RF the task is to develop marginal cost estimates for arrest (police), adjudication (courts, prosecution, public defense), incarceration, and community supervision (probation/parole). **With the assistance of the Alaska Department of Corrections and the Alaska Department of Public Safety, AJiC has developed estimates of the marginal cost of arrest, the marginal cost of incarceration, and the marginal cost of community supervision.**

## Task #3: Recidivism Cohorts and Conducting Recidivism Analyses

The *Pew-MacArthur Results First* benefit-cost model calculates the monetary benefits of an adult criminal justice program based on its expected effect on *recidivism*. The effect on recidivism is calculated as the percentage difference between the recidivism of a *baseline cohort* and the estimated rate of recidivism for that same cohort when applying the effects of a program.

The Alaska RF team was tasked with identifying the baseline cohorts to be included

in the benefit-cost model, determining the recidivism follow-up period to be used in the calculation of baseline recidivism parameters, and calculating five recidivism parameters for each cohort.

**The Alaska RF team has successfully identified five baseline cohorts to be used in the benefit-cost model.** The five cohorts are: (1) the *prison* cohort, (2) the *probation* cohort, (3) the *sex offender* cohort, (4) the *DUI* cohort, and (5) the *domestic violence* cohort. **In addition, the Alaska RF team has successfully determined the recidivism follow-up period to be used in the calculation of baseline recidivism parameters: seven years.**

#### Task #4: Populate the Benefit-Cost Model and Conduct Analyses

Once all of the program cost, criminal justice administration cost, and recidivism parameters just discussed have been calculated (as well as some additional miscellaneous measures not discussed above), AJiC will enter them into the *Pew-MacArthur Results First* benefit-cost model and conduct benefit-cost analyses

### Summary and Conclusion

Since October of 2015, when AJiC staff and each of the three Alaska RF working groups (Programs Working Group, Recidivism and Resource Use Working Group, Resource Cost Working Group) began their work, a tremendous amount of progress has been made.

In less than 9 months Alaska's Results First Initiative has completed two of the three steps outlined in the *Pew-MacArthur Results First* approach. Alaska's adult criminal justice programs have been identified, detailed

program descriptions have been created, and overall budget data have been compiled. The Alaska RF team has also successfully completed the process of matching the state's adult criminal justice programs to the evidence base. The results of these efforts are already providing the State of Alaska with important information about its adult criminal justice program portfolio such as the number of programs, the types of programs offered, the financial investments made by the State of Alaska in these programs (overall, and by program type), and the extent to which Alaska's adult criminal justice programs are evidence-based.

In addition, the Alaska RF team has made significant progress toward completing the third and final step of the process: running the *Pew-MacArthur Results First* benefit-cost model to estimate the net monetary benefits of current adult criminal justice programming in Alaska.

The achievements of the Alaska RF team – including each of the three Alaska RF working groups, all the additional justice agency and service provider staff, and AJiC – are laudable. But the work is not complete.

Moving forward, AJiC will continue to work with all of its justice agency and service provider partners to complete all of the prerequisite steps necessary to populate the *Pew-MacArthur Results First* benefit-cost model. In the weeks and months to come, AJiC will continue to seek the data necessary to calculate the program cost, criminal justice administration resource use and cost, and recidivism parameters that must be input into the benefit-cost model to estimate the monetary benefits of Alaska adult criminal justice programs.