Alaska Safe Housing Assessment Report

Fall 2024

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Title Cover Photo: The village of Chevak in western Alaska, photo by Mike McIntyre for Native News Online

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The study team would like to thank the survivors and service providers who shared their stories of survival and persistence. Alaska is a state that is vast in geography and yet small in community – we are all connected and responsible for each other's well-being and safety. The reciprocity and sense of community that exists in Alaska is its biggest strength, and the stories included herein exemplify this strength while underscoring the immense need that exists to truly keep Alaska Native families safe. Thank you for honoring us with your stories.

Additionally, the Alaska Native Women's Resource Center (AKNWRC) would like to take a moment to extend our heartfelt gratitude for the support received from our federal partners and allies. The assistance is not only appreciated, but also significantly impacts our ability to serve and inform our community effectively. In particular, the AKNWRC extends special gratitude to Senator Lisa Murkowski and her dedicated staff for their hard work and commitment to Tribes and Tribal Organizations. Your efforts are truly appreciated, and the impact of your dedication does not go unnoticed. Thank you for your continued and unwavering service and support.

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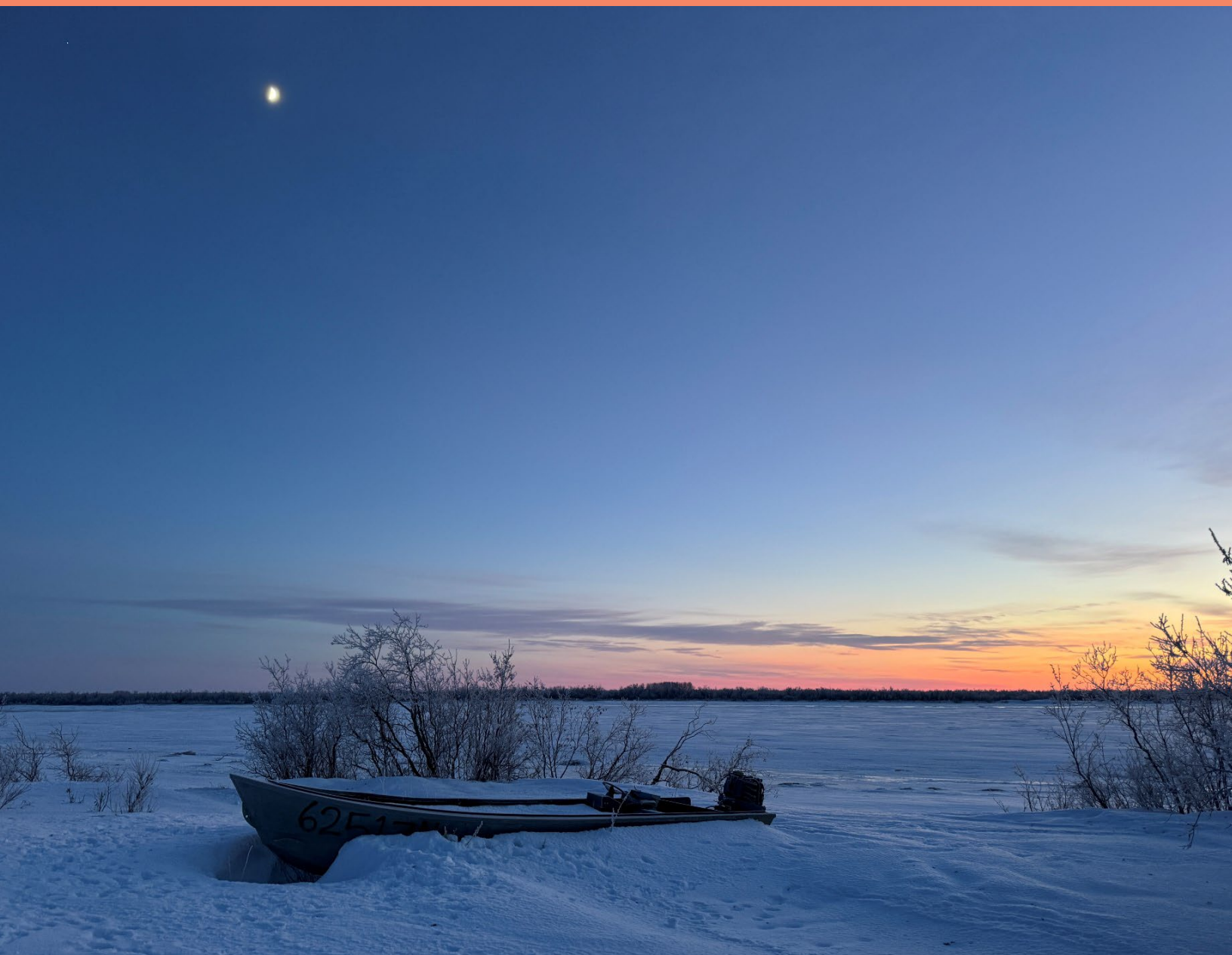
Executive Summary

"Oftentimes when people leave dangerous situations it's because their children are endangered, because a lot of people think 'oh, I can handle it and they wouldn't hurt my kid.' But when it gets to be where the kids are hurt too, that's kind of the driving factor."– Interview Participant, DV Shelter Staff



Understanding Safe Housing for Alaska Native Survivors of Domestic Violence

Domestic violence and the lack of safe, affordable housing are inextricably linked.

What's at Stake?

Alaska's housing crisis is putting families who experience domestic violence (DV) in danger. Abuse is a leading cause of homelessness for women and children. A lack of stable housing often forces survivors to stay with or return to abusive partners. This is especially concerning in Alaska, which suffers from both alarming rates of domestic violence and a severe shortage of suitable housing.

The majority of Alaska Native women have experienced domestic violence, sexual assault or both. Geographical isolation, limited services, and other socioeconomic factors compound the risks and impacts for Alaska Native survivors of DV.

Alaska's housing crisis is worse than in the rest of the United States. Overcrowding is four times the national average. In rural Alaska Native villages, over 44% of households are severely overcrowded, complicating safe housing for survivors and their children. The situation worsens due to seasonal worker and tourist influxes, which reduce rental availability and increase costs.

Key Findings

- Survivors face challenges in fleeing abuse that mirror reasons for returning, including lack of housing, abuser tactics, lack of culturally appropriate services, and co-occurring issues.
- Emergency housing is limited and often inaccessible. Long-term housing is scarcer, with insufficient stock and high costs. Existing housing programs are restrictive and complex.
- Short-term rentals for seasonal workers and tourists limit housing options for locals, especially survivors in crisis.
- Safety resources vary between villages, hub communities, and cities. Urban areas have more established services, like shelters, while villages rely on informal networks of friends, family, and public facilities not designed for housing.
- Survivors utilize a variety of services to be safely housed, and most are not DV-specific. Service provider coordination is essential to maximize resources and ensure service continuity.

The Safe Housing Assessment

The Alaska Native Women's Resource Center (AKNWRC) conducted a comprehensive statewide assessment of safe housing options for Alaska Native survivors of domestic violence. The project aimed to identify where survivors go to find safety, barriers to securing safe housing, factors that lead survivors to return to abusive situations, and innovative solutions to the complex housing and safety challenges faced in both rural and urban Alaska communities.

The findings of this assessment, conducted between February 2023-June 2024 are based on multiple data collection methods including:

- Review of Regional Secondary Data
- Two Waves of Key Informant Phone Interviews
- Brief Survey of Alaska Federation of Natives 2023 Attendees
- Statewide Listening Session in June 2024

Alaska's regions are defined in various ways. This study uses 11 regions as defined by the State Department of Behavioral Health. This breakdown balances urban-rural distinction with compatibility across State systems and regional organizations.

Statewide Listening Session, June 2024

Proposed Action Steps

1. **Increase and Leverage Funding & Improve Collaboration Across Service Providers**
   a. Increase funding for housing. Coordinate Federal, State, Tribal, and private funding streams to support comprehensive housing projects, using successful models like the Bay Haven shelter.
   b. Foster partnerships between Tribal governments, State agencies, and DV/housing nonprofits to align planning, combine resources, and avoid duplication of efforts.
   c. Utilize creative budgeting strategies, like using existing properties as collateral, to expand the supply of housing.

2. **Expand the Use of Safe Homes Beyond DV Service Providers**
   a. Partner with foster home networks, faith communities, Tribal courts, and local leaders to increase the pool of volunteer safe homes - particularly in rural villages.
   b. Work with Tribal entities, health providers, and schools to renovate under-utilized facilities that could serve as emergency accommodations.
   c. Build and staff safe homes that provide both short-term crisis housing and culturally-relevant support services.

3. **Limit the Use of Local Housing for Seasonal Workers and Tourists**
   a. Collaborate with local governments to implement caps, taxes, and zoning restrictions on short-term and vacation rentals.
   b. Create incentives for property owners to prioritize long-term rentals and accept housing vouchers.
   c. Ensure adequate housing for seasonal workers to reduce competition with local residents.

4. **Expand Current Voucher Programs**
   a. Allow flexibility in geographic restrictions and length of assistance to account for the unique challenges of housing availability in remote communities.
   b. Reevaluate fair market rent rates and housing quality standards to reflect true costs and align with region-specific housing stock.
   c. Provide landlord outreach, education and incentives to increase acceptance of vouchers.

5. **Renovate Older or Vacant Structures to Increase Housing Options**
   a. Conduct assessments to identify underutilized buildings that could be converted to emergency or transitional housing with appropriate upgrades.
   b. Collaborate with property owners, local governments and housing authorities to repurpose existing structures.
   c. Advocate for changes to federal funding restrictions to allow for both renovation and new construction as needed.

6. **Consider Options for Removing the Harm-Doer from the Home**
   a. Lean into discussions about what needs to happen for a survivor to stay in their home, and instead remove the harm-doer.
   b. Listen to what has worked for communities that have tried a more restorative approach.
   c. This approach is rooted in Indigenous ways of being and could be possible if Tribal sovereignty is exerted.

"It's just widely known that it takes somebody seven times. They're going to leave seven times before they leave for the last time. I would say in [community] people really are not leaving because they know that there's nowhere for them to go, so they're staying put. They're not even making it to seven times. They might try one time and they just know it doesn't work, so they stay… I feel like if we were able to have at least that first shelter, it would dramatically change things in the way that we're able to provide services and get those people help."
– DV Victim Advocate

Closing Discussion

The housing crisis facing Alaska Native survivors of domestic violence is severe, complex, and demands urgent action. The current situation is dire, with a critical shortage of safe, affordable, and culturally-appropriate housing options. Survivors are often forced to choose between staying with abusers or facing homelessness, putting their lives and their children's well-being at grave risk. Overcrowding, skyrocketing costs, limited services, and a lack of coordinated planning compound the challenges, especially in remote villages.

While the proposed solutions offer potential pathways forward, progress will require a significant shift in priorities, policies and resource allocation. Piecemeal approaches and short-term fixes will not suffice. Alaska Native communities must be at the forefront of developing and implementing comprehensive, locally-driven strategies that uphold Tribal sovereignty and cultural resilience.

Amplifying the voices of survivors and securing long-term, sustainable funding must be central to any initiatives. Increased collaboration across all levels of government, Tribal entities, and nonprofit sectors is essential. However, these efforts will only succeed if accompanied by a collective sense of urgency and a steadfast commitment to bold, transformative change. Failure to act decisively will perpetuate the cycle of violence and further jeopardize the lives of countless Alaska Native survivors. The housing crisis demands immediate and sweeping action to ensure safety, stability, and justice for all.

"The Alaska Native residents that come from more rural communities in the state to our facility, they really want to go back home. They want to go back to residing in their own community; it's just not safe at that point. I think that's something that's really important because they're leaving to escape the violence, but that's their home and they want to be able to go back." – DV Shelter Staff

"We're using up thousands of dollars on hotels that charge tourist season prices just to get someone a safe place to stay for a few nights" – DV Victim Advocate

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This brief presents findings and proposed action steps identified in an assessment by researchers from Strategic Prevention Solutions. To request the full report, reach out to AKNWRC at info@aknwrc.org

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Alaska Native Women's Resource Center

1. Introduction

"The Alaska Native residents that come from more rural communities in the state to our facility, they really want to go back home. They want to go back to residing in their own community; it's just not safe at that point. I think that's something that's really important because they're leaving to escape the violence, but that's their home and they want to be able to go back." – DV Shelter Staff

1. Introduction

The Alaska Native Women's Resource Center (AKNWRC) is a nationally-recognized, Alaska Native, statewide Tribal resource center designed to assist Tribes in developing resources and programming to address domestic violence (DV),[1] sexual assault, dating violence, stalking, sex trafficking, and intersecting issues in their Tribes and communities, particularly among the Alaska Native (AN) and American Indian (AI) populations. AKNWRC works in partnership with Tribes by building and delivering services to meet the high need for culturally specific services for Tribal citizens living within and outside of their communities.

A critical component of providing safety and victim services is providing emergency housing for a victim/survivor and their family. However, the extremely remote location of Alaska's predominantly Native rural communities poses challenges to adequate or equitable service for the vast majority of Alaska's Native populations. Only a few rural communities have emergency housing options, and hub communities that have DV shelters are often full or are unable to provide the supportive services needed. For example, AKNWRC staff often hears stories of survivors being turned away from emergency housing because the survivor had found a hotel room for a night and was therefore not perceived as being in immediate danger or need of emergency housing.

To better serve the communities of Alaska and inform their Alaska Safe Housing Assessment work and reporting, AKNWRC contracted Strategic Prevention Solutions (SPS), an Alaska-based research firm, to conduct a statewide assessment of safe housing for Alaska Native persons who have experienced DV. Priority study questions included:

- Where do Alaska Native people go when needing safety from DV situations?
- What are some of the challenges people tend to experience when seeking safety?
- What circumstances or housing situations would make a person return to an unsafe situation?
- What are creative solutions or next steps to the housing and safety challenges in Alaska?

The SPS study team engaged in a series of data collection tasks to build an accurate and compelling picture of the needs of Alaska Native communities experiencing housing challenges.

- The study team gathered and compiled statewide data from Alaska's 11 regions and Tribes to determine the extent and availability of safe housing offerings: emergency, transitional, and long-term supported housing.

[1] In this report, the term "domestic violence" is used because it is a familiar term in Alaska. It includes behaviors and dynamics that are also called "intimate partner violence," "domestic abuse," and "gender-based violence." The term "survivor" is used to emphasize the often-long journey and multiple attempts it takes someone to survive the complex and damaging acts of domestic violence. The term "survivor" encompasses the term "victim" that is used more often in law enforcement and court settings. The term "harm doer" encompasses the terms "perpetrator" and "abuser."

- Leveraging their networks and expertise, the study team contacted and conducted two rounds of interviews with DV survivors, Tribes, organizations working with DV survivors, law enforcement, and housing entities to identify what type of housing options are in use in each community and region.
- In June 2024, the study team hosted an in person listening session of both interview participants and select service providers to inform and validate the "next steps" to safe housing identified in interviews.

Who We Talked With / Value Statement

The AKNWRC and SPS study team chose to center DV survivors ("survivors") and community voices in its approach to this study and report. This decision was intentional, as discourse and accountability for housing and safety resources is often shifted to those who do not have the resources to fix systems. Part of this intention was to understand how federal and State resources for safe housing are being distributed in communities. While we do not provide a formal accounting of funding distribution, this report highlights the needs that have been identified by those most vulnerable to any undesirable conditions of safety and housing in Alaska. The data collected are meant to depict an accurate picture of the situations and challenges people face, and the housing and safety resources that are realistically available to people when faced with violence.

Additionally, we purposefully recruited and interviewed people with direct experience with DV and housing. Specifically, we interviewed DV survivors, survivor-advocates, and those who work in systems addressing DV and housing, who may themselves be survivors of DV. Many of the system providers we interviewed had survived DV, and members of our own research team are also survivors of DV. We caution against defining a person's contributions to this project as one-dimensional, such as only a "survivor" or only a "service provider." Many people who provide services as part of a system are survivors of DV themselves. In fact, it is their personal experience of DV that often drives them to take a professional position of employment to address DV more systematically.

This study was well-informed by those experiencing DV and housing instability in Alaska.

1.a. Unaffordable Housing and Rising Living Costs in Alaska

This section, and those following, outline the major issues facing Alaska Native people with regard to housing, cost of living, rates of DV, and safely housing those who experience DV. Simply put, those who experience DV are even more vulnerable than the general population due to the challenge of resources in Alaska.

The state of Alaska spans 586,412 square miles, making it larger than Texas, California, and Montana combined. The vast majority of rural Alaska is only accessible by airplane, and there are NO roads connecting the majority of rural communities. The most common form of transportation in Alaska is airplanes, followed by all-terrain vehicles (snowmachines and four-wheelers), cars, ferries, and small boats (e.g., skiffs) in warmer months.

Two highway systems exist in Alaska – one by water and one by road. The Alaska Marine Highway serves more than 30 Alaska coastal communities along a 3,500-mile route.[2] Nearly all larger cities and boroughs across the state operate local bus systems, including Anchorage, Fairbanks, Juneau, Sitka, Ketchikan, and Bethel.[3] There is no public bus system (e.g., Greyhound) to connect communities in Alaska. Most of the 229 federally recognized Tribes that are villages are not connected to the road system. It is expensive and time consuming to travel between communities in Alaska. For example, despite being 519 miles apart, it takes approximately 19.5 hours, two plane rides, and over $600 for one person to travel one-way from the village of Kiana, Alaska to the city of Anchorage, Alaska.

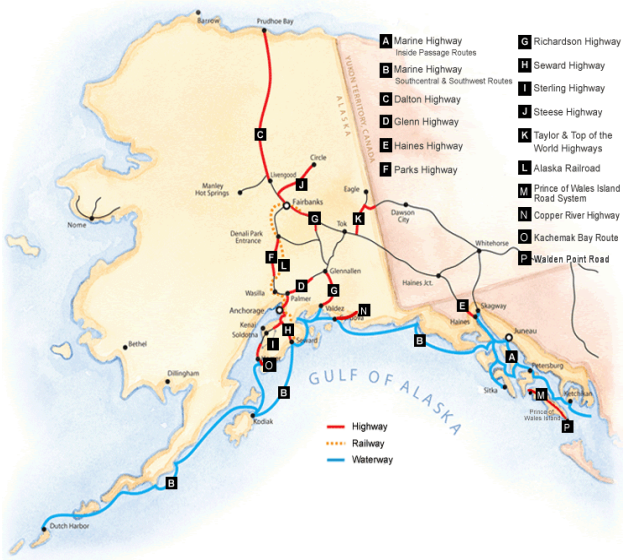

Image: All major highways of Alaska (road, water, rail)

[2] https://dot.alaska.gov/stwdplng/scenic/

[3] *"Transit: Grants - Transportation & Public Facilities, State of Alaska". Archived from the original on August 6, 2009.*

[4]

Image: Map of federally-recognized Native communities in Alaska. Note the number of communities in the western region that are not connected to a road system (refer to highway map).

Alaska is home to a broad range of communities. This report references villages, hub communities, and cities across Alaska. The following are how these communities are commonly defined:

Villages: A "village" is colloquial term used to reference the rural, small, and remote communities that are either populated by mostly Alaska Native residents or are areas with federally recognized Tribal sovereignty.[5] More information about villages is included toward the end of this section.

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[4] Map by Bureau of Indian Affairs accessed online September 20, 2024 at: http://www.emersonkent.com/images/us_indian_tribes_2016.jpg

[5] University of Alaska Fairbanks. Modern tribal governments in Alaska. Retrieved from: https://www.uaf.edu/tribal/academics/112/unit-4/moderntribalgovernmentsinalaska.php

Hub Communities: Regional centers where village residents can access advanced services, such as medical care, education, training and other resources.[6] Hub communities, such as Bethel, are typically more populous than villages and have easier access to supplies through boat or plane.[7] Note that the only hub communities that are connected to a road system are Fairbanks and Anchorage.

Image: Map of hub communities across Alaska

Cities: From coastal towns to urban cities, these communities are similar to a typical mid-size "city" in the lower 48 state of the United States. These cities, such as Anchorage, Juneau, and Fairbanks, are some of the most populated communities in Alaska. They offer a broad range of services and opportunities to residents in villages and hub communities.[8]

Cost of Housing

Alaska is experiencing a housing crisis. Currently, housing is unaffordable, unavailable, or unsafe for a large number of Alaskans. Although every region and locality has its own unique struggles, the entire state is experiencing housing challenges. It is impossible to divorce the larger housing crisis in Alaska from the struggles faced by those who are experiencing DV. In fact, housing challenges are exponentially more challenging for those who are seeking safety from DV.

A 2023 report by the Housing Alaskans public-private partnership summarized the housing need in Alaska as "we need to **build more housing** that's affordable to everyday Alaskans across the

[6] https://www.rural.gov/community-networks/ak#:~:text=The%20vast%20landscape%20of%20mountain,%2C%20services%2C%20and%20economic%20opportunity.
[7] https://www.rural.gov/community-networks/ak#:~:text=The%20vast%20landscape%20of%20mountain,%2C%20services%2C%20and%20economic%20opportunity.
[8] https://www.travelalaska.com/destinations/cities-towns

state, and we need to **rehab and modernize what we have**."[9] They project that Alaska needs an estimated 27,500 housing units by 2033, 13,500 of which could be renovated structures and 14,000 that could be new construction.

Photo: A home in the village of Akiachak, Alaska

Costs for renovating and building housing units in Alaska are higher than most other places in the U.S. The Housing Alaskans report estimates that a 4-plex in Bethel, a mid-size hub community for the western region of Alaska (approximately 6,200 residents) would cost upwards of $850 per square foot to build – including shared onsite sewer and water. This is more than three times as expensive as the cost to build a similar size unit in the continental U.S./lower 48 ($270 per square foot.[10])

The western region of Alaska has one of the highest rates of overcrowding in the nation, according to a report published by the Association of Village Council Presidents (AVCP).[11] In the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta region located in western Alaska, 38%[12] of homes are considered overcrowded, compared to the national average of 3.4%.[13] This report also found that this region has an immediate need for at least 2,000 new homes for families and underscored the reality that the regions of the U.S. with the highest level of overcrowding are predominantly AN/AI, with 7 of those areas located in Alaska.

Photo: Most houses and utilities in rural Alaska are built above ground to avoid digging into permafrost

Alaska experiences 4 times the rate of overcrowding compared to the rest of the U.S.[14] Nearly 44% of the occupied housing units in the AVCP region, or roughly 1,750 households, meet the definition of overcrowded.[15] It is not uncommon to see a single family home inhabited by up to 15 people. Although multigenerational living is a common practice in indigenous communities and is a strength of Alaska Native culture, housing structures are not built with this

[9] Housing Alaskans 2023 Housing Data presentation (October 2023).

[10] TogalAI. Accessed online September 7, 2024 at https://www.togal.ai/blog/how-much-does-it-cost-to-build-a-4-plex#:~:text=A%20fourplex%20is%20a%20building,%2490%20%2D%20%24430%20per%20square%20foot.

[11] AVCP Regional Housing Authority Strategic Plan 2024-2027.

[12] Note that current statistics vary for this region, as it is under study by multiple entities utilizing different methods.

[13] U.S. Census Bureau. (2019). American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates.

[14] AVCP Regional Housing Authority Strategic Plan & Housing Need Forecast 2024-2027.

[15] The U.S. Census defines an overcrowded unit as one occupied by 1.01 persons or more per room (excluding bathrooms and kitchens). Units with more than 1.5 persons per room are considered severely overcrowded.

in mind and are not meant to accommodate this many people in one building. The quality of housing is also often poor, with limited energy efficiency and high maintenance costs due to harsh weather conditions.[16]

Housing challenges are compounded by the fact that Tribal HUD funding hasn't kept pace with inflation, while non-Native HUD funding is 25% better than inflation.[17]

Cost of Living

Alaska is one of the most expensive states in which to live. In comparison to the national average, the cost of living in rural Alaska is exponentially higher than most of the United States. Many factors contribute to this, including remote locations, limited infrastructure, and the need to import essential goods. Compounding the high cost of living is the fact that most Alaskans do not earn a livable wage that can afford the average cost of housing.[18] Many housing units are multi-generational and/or shared by multiple families. In Alaskan villages, the challenges of affordable living are exponentially harder than in urban areas.

Photo: A weekly delivery of food that just arrived on a small airplane from the nearest "hub" community and is waiting to be taken to the local village store.

Food Costs: In rural Alaska, food prices can be exorbitant. A study found that in the village of Nunam Iqua, a gallon of milk cost $12.99, compared to the national average of $3.58.[19] In Nome, Alaska, a loaf of bread can cost $5.49, nearly double the national average of $2.84.[20] Subsistence activities like hunting, fishing, and gathering—including caribou, moose, reindeer, beluga whale, seal, salmon, halibut, berries, and greens—are an important part of daily life in the villages, and have historically helped lower food costs in rural communities. However, in recent years, subsistence fishing and hunting rights have been increasingly threatened due to pollution from extractive industries, intense competition from non-

Photo: A home with wood for heating stacked outside, and a snow machine ready for winter parked out front.

[16] Alaska Housing Finance Corporation. (2018). 2018 Alaska Housing Assessment.
[17] AVCP Regional Housing Authority Strategic Plan & Housing Need Forecast 2024-2027.
[18] Housing Alaskans 2023 Housing Data presentation (October 2023).
[19] Feeding America. (2019). Map the Meal Gap 2019: A Report on County and Congressional District Food Insecurity and County Food Cost in the United States in 2017.
[20] U.S. Department of Agriculture. (2021). Quarterly Food-at-Home Price Database.

Native sport and commercial operations,[21] and State and Federal regulations that now limit subsistence fishing due to non-Native commercial overfishing and climate change. The reduction in availability of subsistence has resulted in rural communities relying more heavily on food that is exorbitantly priced due to it being flown or barged in from hundreds of miles away.

Photo: ATVs of shoppers outside of the only place to buy food in Akiachak, Alaska.

Fuel Costs: Winter weather in Alaska can get as a low –30° F.[22] To stay warm during the cold months, high energy costs for residential heating and electricity and a lack of infrastructure severely limit rural residents' cash income.[23] Heating and transportation fuel costs are exponentiallyhigher in rural Alaska. In 2022, heating fuel prices in the remote village of Arctic Village were $14.00 per gallon, compared to the national average of $3.60.[24] Gasoline prices in rural Alaska are also much higher compared to the national average of $3.80, reaching $8.35 per gallon in some villages like Atka.[25]

Electricity Costs: Rural Alaskan communities often rely on diesel generators for electricity, leading to high energy costs. In 2019, the average residential electricity rate in Alaska was 22.54 cents per kilowatt-hour, compared to the national average of 13.01 cents.[26] In some remote villages like Lime Village, electricity can cost up to $1 per kilowatt-hour.[27]

Healthcare Costs: Access to healthcare in rural Alaska is limited, and costs are high. Many villages lack medical facilities, requiring expensive air travel to reach hospitals. In 2017, the average cost of a medevac flight in Alaska was $96,000, compared to the national average of $30,000.[28]

Shipping Costs: The remote nature of rural Alaska leads to expensive shipping costs for essential goods. In the village of Noatak, shipping a 20-foot container from Anchorage can cost $8,000 to $10,000, compared to the national average of $1,500 to $3,000 for similar distances.[29]

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[21] Alaska Federation of Natives: https://nativefederation.org/alaska-native-peoples/
[22] Alaska Tours: https://alaskatours.com/alaska-first-time-visitors/weather-in-alaska/
[23] Alaska Federation of Natives: https://nativefederation.org/alaska-native-peoples/
[24] Alaska Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development. (2022). Alaska fuel price report: Winter 2022. Retrieved from: https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/26c954dc65a54ed8b5468be2eaf449bb
[25] KYUK. (2022). In some Y-K Delta villages, gas prices top $10 per gallon.
[26] U.S. Energy Information Administration. (2020). Electric Power Monthly with Data for December 2019.
[27] Alaska Village Electric Cooperative. (2021). 2021 Annual Report.
[28] Anchorage Daily News. (2017). The cost of air ambulances in rural Alaska is astronomical.
[29] Arctic Slope Regional Corporation. (2019). ASRC 2019 Annual Report.

The high costs of living in rural Alaska contributes to poverty, food insecurity, and other socioeconomic challenges faced by Alaska Native communities. Addressing these disparities requires investments in infrastructure, sustainable energy solutions, and economic development initiatives that prioritize the needs and resilience of Alaska Native populations.

In Depth: What Is a "Village?"

An Alaskan village typically refers to a small, remote community in rural Alaska, often inhabited predominantly by Alaska Native people. These villages usually have populations ranging from about 100 to 1,000 residents, though some may be smaller or larger.[30] There are approximately 200 Alaska Native villages recognized by the federal government, with the vast majority (about 80%) not connected to the main road system.[31,32] These communities are accessible only by air or water. Transportation within the village relies on ATVs, snowmobiles, or walking, depending on the season. You cannot "rent" a car in rural Alaska. To travel outside the village, residents use small planes, boats, or in winter, snow machines on frozen rivers.[33]

Photo: ATVs parked outside of the Community Center in the village of Emmonak, Alaska. On this occasion, people were getting eye exams from an optometrist who had flown in for a few days.

Daily life in villages revolves around a mix of traditional subsistence activities and basic modern amenities. Typical village facilities include a small general store, a K-12 school, a health clinic, a post office, a community center, and a small airstrip.[34] Larger villages might also have a library, fuel station, and a few small businesses. The cost of living tends to be very high due to the expense of transporting goods to these remote locations, with everyday items like a gallon of milk potentially costing $10 or more.[35] Despite the challenges of harsh climate and isolation, these communities often maintain strong cultural ties and a deep connection to the land, balancing traditional subsistence lifestyles with modern jobs and technology.[36]

[30] Alaska Native Knowledge Network, University of Alaska Fairbanks
[31] Alaska Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development
[32] U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey
[33] Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities
[34] Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium
[35] University of Alaska Anchorage, Institute of Social and Economic Research
[36] Alaska Federation of Natives: https://nativefederation.org/alaska-native-peoples/

Photo: ATVs and walking are the most common ways to get around a village

Photos: Skiffs are a common form of transportation between villages in the warmer months

1.b. Finding Safety in Alaska

The rates of DV in Alaska are some of the highest in the nation. Almost 50% of women in Alaska have experienced DV in their lifetime.[37] Research estimates that 58 out of every 100 Alaskan women have experienced DV, sexual violence (SV), or both within their lifetime. For Alaska Native women, these rates of violence far exceed any other population in the U.S.

- One in every six Alaska Native women experience DV in their lifetime.
- American Indian or Alaska Native (AI/AN) women are over-represented among DV survivors in Alaska by 250 percent.[38]
- Over 6% of Alaska Native mothers reported experiencing prenatal DV, a 2019 report found. [39]
- Between 2016-2019, homicide was one of the leading causes of death for Alaska Native females.[40]

In some Alaskan communities, rates of violence can be even more extreme than others. For instance, a 2011 analysis found that over 12% of women in Bristol Bay experienced violence within the last year when the statewide average was about 9%.[41] AI/AN survivors of violence are also more likely to miss work, need medical care, and access housing and legal services than other populations.[42]

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[37] Johnson, I. (2024). Service receipt among Alaskan women who experienced intimate partner violence, sexual assault, or stalking. University of Alaska Anchorage. Retrieved from: https://scholarworks.alaska.edu/bitstream/handle/11122/15292/Alaskan_Women_Who_Experienced_Intimate_Partner_Violence_Report.pdf?sequence=4&isAllowed=y

[38] Indian Law and Order Commission. (2013). A Roadmap for Making Native America Safer. *Indian Law and Order Commission*. Retrieved from: https://www.aisc.ucla.edu/iloc/report/files/A_Roadmap_For_Making_Native_America_Safer-Full.pdf

[39] Alaska Native Epidemiology Center. (2021). Alaska Native health status report: Third edition. Anchorage, AK: Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium. Retrieved from: http://anthctoday.org/epicenter/publications/HealthStatusReport/Alaska-Native-Health-Status-Report-3rd-Edition.pdf

[40] Alaska Native Epidemiology Center. (2021). Alaska Native health status report: Third edition. Anchorage, AK: Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium. Retrieved from: http://anthctoday.org/epicenter/publications/HealthStatusReport/Alaska-Native-Health-Status-Report-3rd-Edition.pdf

[41] Alaska Victimization Survey. (n.d.). Regional results from the AVS. University of Alaska Anchorage. Retrieved from: https://www.uaa.alaska.edu/academics/college-of-health/departments/justice-center/avs/avs-results/regional-results.cshtml

[42] Rosay, A. (2016). Violence against American Indian and Alaska Native women and men. *National Institute of Justice*. Retrieved from: https://www.ojp.gov/pdffiles1/nij/249822.pdf

Alaska's geographic remoteness and challenges, isolation, and limited access to law enforcement and emergency services exacerbate the issue and contribute to higher lethality. One in three Alaskan villages has no local police.[43] There are no Alaska State Troopers assigned to the North Slope borough. In the Matanuska-Susitna Valley region (B Detachment), there is one trooper for every 2,403 people.[44] The C Detachment patrols a region larger than the entire state of California (216,077 square miles) with 57 patrol officers. Each Trooper Post within a Detachment covers significant land mass. For example, the Kotzebue Post area (including the Selawik Post) covers an area roughly the size of the state of Ohio. The Yukon Kuskokwim Delta Post (including Posts in the communities of Bethel, Hooper Bay, Emmonak, St. Mary's, and Aniak) serves an area larger than the state of Alabama. Troopers travel to calls for service by boat, snow machine, four-wheeler, patrol vehicle and aircraft. On occasion in certain areas, troopers respond by patrol vehicle to communities by way of ice road.[45]

Photo: A Tribal Police vehicle in the village of Akiachak, Alaska.

To help meet the demand of covering such a large area of land, the State of Alaska created Village Public Safety Officers (VPSOs). These public safety officers, trained and regulated by the State, often cover vast geographic areas. They provide not only law enforcement, but also emergency medical assistance, search and rescue, fire protection, community policing, and crime prevention.[46] Since its inception in 1979, VPSOs have faced limited access to resources and budget cuts.[47] When a village has no State-funded public safety officer, the local city government or Tribe hires Village Police Officers or Tribal police officers. These positions are the lowest paid

[43] Hopkins, K. (2019). Lawless: One in three Alaska villages have no local police. *Anchorage Daily News.* Retrieved from: https://www.adn.com/alaska-news/lawless/2019/05/16/lawless-one-in-three-alaska-villages-have-no-local-police/

[44] Alaska State Troopers (n.d.). B Detachment. Alaska Department of Public Safety. Retrieved from: https://dps.alaska.gov/AST/BDetachment/Home

[45] Alaska State Troopers (n.d.). C Detachment. Alaska Department of Public Safety. Retrieved from: https://dps.alaska.gov/AST/CDetachment/Home

[46] Alaska State Troopers (n.d.). About the VPSO Division. Alaska Department of Public Safety. Retrieved from: https://dps.alaska.gov/AST/VPSO/About

[47] Hopkins, K. (2019). Lawless: One in three Alaska villages have no local police. *Anchorage Daily News.* Retrieved from: https://www.adn.com/alaska-news/lawless/2019/05/16/lawless-one-in-three-alaska-villages-have-no-local-police/

form of law enforcement in the state.[48] The limited infrastructure and presence of law enforcement means that help finding safety is often hours or even days away.

Responding to DV is a complex jurisdictional issue in Alaska. State-sponsored law enforcement is not seen as a suitable response to DV in Alaskan villages. Tribal leaders have long said that responding to DV should be locally controlled, and it is a significant barrier to have State-controlled law enforcement be seen (and funded) as the main response to DV for Tribal villages.[49] While this report does not focus on law enforcement response to DV, it is important to recognize that limitations to locally-controlled response and Tribal sovereignty is a significant barrier to survivors finding safety. There is an ongoing effort to balance safety with justice in Alaska Native communities. The Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) has made first steps in addressing these challenges by reaffirming Tribal sovereignty and enabling Tribes to exercise criminal jurisdiction over non-Native offenders in DV cases.[50] This has supported the protection of Native women, but survivors still face hurdles due to complex legal frameworks involving federal and state laws.[51] Compounding the issue of public safety response is the underreporting and lack of accurate data available on violence against Alaska Native women.[52] In some communities, there is also a cultural silence that further discourages reporting.[53]

Geographic Challenges

For those seeking safety, reaching out for help is also challenged by a lack of internet infrastructure, with absent or slow broadband access for over a quarter of Alaskans.[54] In some remote communities, cellular service may not work, Wi-Fi is slow or nonexistent, radio reception can be unreliable. This impacts rural survivors' ability to reach out for help and access online resources to determine where to get help.

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[48] Hopkins, K. (2019). Lawless: One in three Alaska villages have no local police. *Anchorage Daily News.* Retrieved from: https://www.adn.com/alaska-news/lawless/2019/05/16/lawless-one-in-three-alaska-villages-have-no-local-police/

[49] Agtuca, J. Demmert, M., Truett Jerue, T., O'Gara, Debra (2023). Chapter 7: Legal & Policy Barriers to the Safety of Alaska Native Women. In *Alaska Native Women: Ending the Violence, Reclaiming a Sacred Status*. Published by the Alaska Native Women's Resource Center, 2023: page 79.

[50] Violence Against Women Act. (2013). VAWA 2013 Pilot Project. *U.S. Department of Justice*. Retrieved from: https://www.justice.gov/Tribal/vawa-2013-pilot-project

[51] Hartman, J. L. (2021). Seeking Justice: How VAWA Reduced the Stronghold Over American Indian and Alaska Native Women. Violence Against Women, 27(1), 52-68. https://doi.org/10.1177/1077801220949695

[52] Futures Without Violence (n.d.). The facts on violence against American Indian/Alaska Native women. Retrieved from: https://www.futureswithoutviolence.org/userfiles/file/Violence%20Against%20AI%20AN%20Women%20Fact%20Sheet.pdf

[53] Flay, R. (2017). A silent epidemic: Revisiting the 2013 reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act to better protect American Indian Native Women. *American Indian Law Journal.* Vol. 5: Iss. 1, Article 5. Retrieved from: https://digitalcommons.law.seattleu.edu/ailj/vol5/iss1/5

[54] Alaska Broadband Basics

Many communities lack shelters and DV victim services programs. Only 20 communities across the state have a DV service organization.[55] For those unable to get to a shelter during crisis, friends and family or hotels are their other options. However, there are also limited or no hotels in the vast majority of Alaskan communities, with just over 250 hotels statewide.[56] Chain hotels, such as Marriott brand hotels, only exist in the urban areas, including Fairbanks, Anchorage, and Juneau. The hub communities that serve all of rural Alaska, such as Bethel, Kotzebue, and Ketchikan, do not have major hotel chains and have limited beds available for rent. During Alaska's tourist season, these beds are not available or financially prohibitive when a modest one-bed hotel room can cost upwards of $500 per night.

Image: DV survivors who live in rural Alaska have to pay thousands of dollars to travel from their village to a hub community and then often to a larger city to find physical safety. This is a monumental logistical feat when faced with the threat of danger. Returning home is an expensive and unknown option.

[55] Council on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault: Victim Services
[56] American Hotel and Lodging Association

1.c. The Connection Between Housing and Domestic Violence

There is a strong connection between DV and housing instability, and it has been said that one cannot be addressed without addressing the other.[57] DV is a leading cause of homelessness for families, with one study finding 80% of homeless mothers had suffered DV.[58] Fear of homelessness leads many survivors to stay with or return to live with the person who is abusing them.[59] Lack of safe and affordable housing options is a major barrier to leaving abusive relationships. Survivors and their children often resort to being homeless and going to DV shelters to escape from abuse. The opposite is also true: lack of safe housing keeps survivors at risk and is often a reason that survivors return to the abuse.[60]

Harm doers commonly sabotage survivors' economic stability and housing as a control tactic. This can include preventing the survivor from working, damaging their credit, not paying rent/mortgage, or causing property damage that leads to eviction.[61,62]

Suffering DV increases the risk of future housing instability. Survivors are 4 times more likely to face housing instability and homelessness compared to the general population.[63] Effects like PTSD, depression, and physical disability from abuse all contribute to difficulty maintaining stable housing.[64] A recent study found that 20% of Alaskan women, including Native and non-Native, who experienced DV or sexual assault or stalking needed shelter or safe housing. Of those women, approximately 80% received housing.[65]

The Housing First model, which provides immediate housing without preconditions, has been successful in stabilizing survivors in some communities.[66] However, research shows that housing

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[57] California Partnership to End Domestic Violence & Blue Shield of California Foundation. Infographic titled "The Intersection of Housing Instability and Domestic Violence."
[58] Homes for the Homeless (1998). Ten Cities: A Snapshot of Family Homelessness Across America. New York.
[59] Pavao, J., Alvarez, J., Baumrind, N., Induni, M., & Kimerling, R. (2007). Intimate partner violence and housing instability. American Journal of Preventive Medicine, 32(2), 143-146.
[60] Pavao, J., Alvarez, J., Baumrind, N., Induni, M., & Kimerling, R. (2007). Intimate partner violence and housing instability. American Journal of Preventive Medicine, 32(2), 143-146.
[61] Adams, A. E., Sullivan, C. M., Bybee, D., & Greeson, M. R. (2008). Development of the scale of economic abuse. Violence Against Women, 14(5), 563-588.
[62] Pavao, J., Alvarez, J., Baumrind, N., Induni, M., & Kimerling, R. (2007). Intimate partner violence and housing instability. American Journal of Preventive Medicine, 32(2), 143-146.
[63] Burnet Institute (2017). Housing security, homelessness and domestic and family violence: Research synthesis.
[64] Pavao, J., Alvarez, J., Baumrind, N., Induni, M., & Kimerling, R. (2007). Intimate partner violence and housing instability. American Journal of Preventive Medicine, 32(2), 143-146.
[65] Johnson, I (2024). Service receipt among Alaskan women who experienced intimate partner violence, sexual assault, or stalking. *University of Alaska Anchorage: Alaska Justice Information Center*. Retrieved https://scholarworks.alaska.edu/bitstream/handle/11122/15292/Alaskan_Women_Who_Experienced_Intimate_Partner_Violence_Report.pdf?sequence=4&isAllowed=y
[66] Sullivan CM, Simmons C, Guerrero M, et al. (2023). Domestic violence housing first model and association with survivors' housing stability, safety, and well-being over 2 Years. *JAMA Network Open*, 6(6):e2320213. doi:10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2023.20213

alone is not enough.[67] Programs that combine housing with trauma-informed care are more effective in helping survivors regain power in their lives without having to leave their homes unnecessarily. Housing programs that include supportive actions like safety planning, building support networks, and collaborating with landlords are important to survivors' success.[68]

Housing instability worsens the impact of DV on survivors and children. It disrupts access to support systems, jobs, schools, and healthcare. DV survivors who are homeless report more severe abuse and higher levels of mental illness than housed survivors.[69]

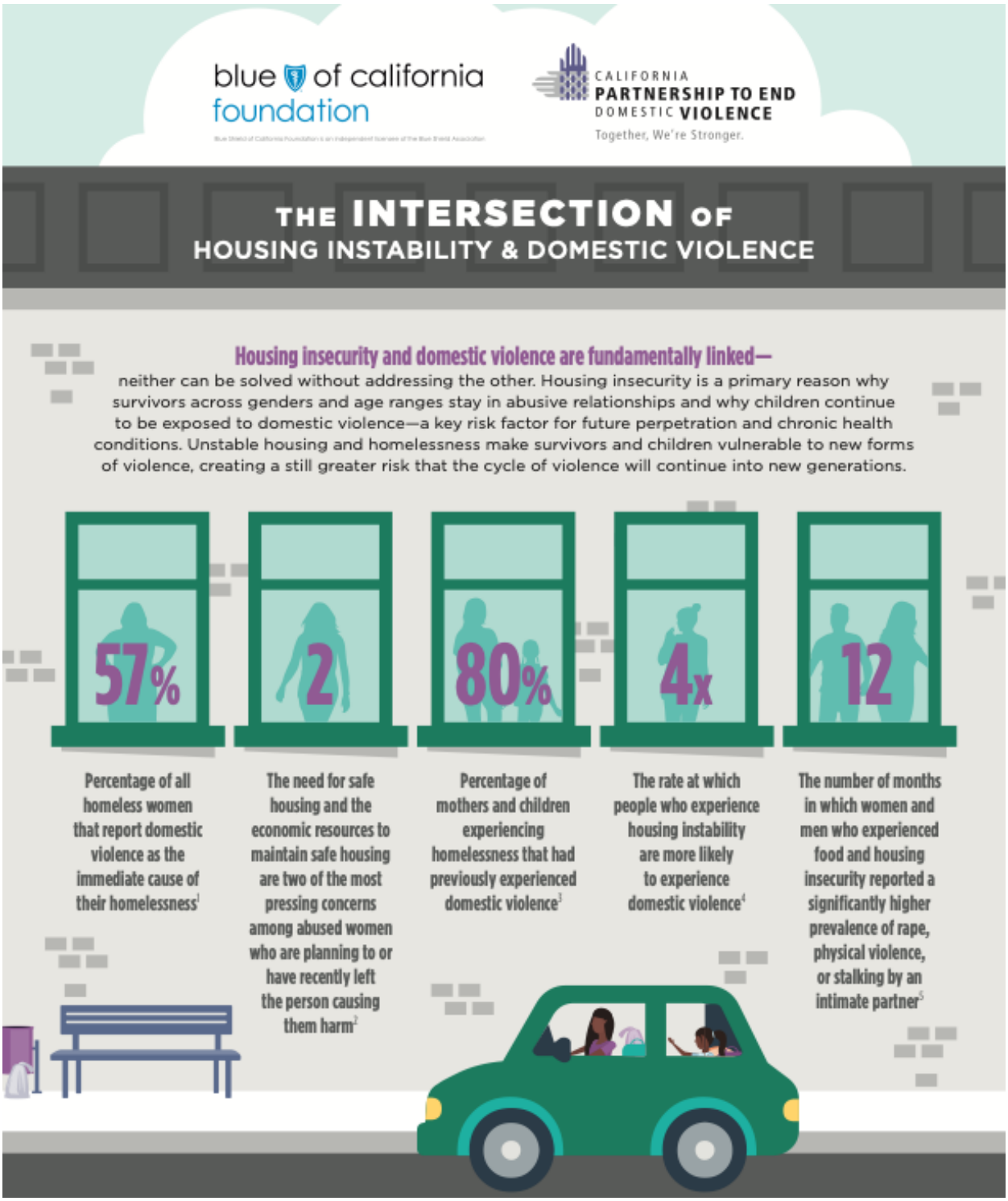
Simply put, DV is both a leading cause and consequence of housing instability, trapping survivors in a vicious cycle. The following infographics display the interrelatedness of DV and housing instability.[70]

[67] Thomas, K. A., Ward-Lasher, A., Kappas, A., & Messing, J. T. (2020). "It Actually Isn't Just about Housing": Supporting survivor success in a domestic violence Housing First program. *Journal of Social Service Research*, 47(2), 232–244. https://doi.org/10.1080/01488376.2020.1745349

[68] Thomas, K. A., Ward-Lasher, A., Kappas, A., & Messing, J. T. (2020). "It Actually Isn't Just about Housing": Supporting survivor success in a domestic violence Housing First program. *Journal of Social Service Research*, 47(2), 232–244. https://doi.org/10.1080/01488376.2020.1745349

[69] Gilroy, H., Symes, L., & McFarlane, J. (2015). Economic solvency in the context of violence against women: A concept analysis. *Health & Social Care in the Community*, 23(2), 97-106.

[70] The first infographic was published by the California Partnership to End Domestic Violence in partnership with the Blue Shield of California Foundation. The second infographic was published by the Safe Housing Partnerships Consortium, a Domestic Violence and Housing Technical Assistance Consortium funded and supported by a partnership between the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Department of Justice, and Department of Housing and Urban Development.


blue of california foundation
CALIFORNIA PARTNERSHIP TO END DOMESTIC VIOLENCE
Together, We're Stronger.
THE INTERSECTION OF HOUSING INSTABILITY & DOMESTIC VIOLENCE
Housing insecurity and domestic violence are fundamentally linked—
neither can be solved without addressing the other. Housing insecurity is a primary reason why survivors across genders and age ranges stay in abusive relationships and why children continue to be exposed to domestic violence—a key risk factor for future perpetration and chronic health conditions. Unstable housing and homelessness make survivors and children vulnerable to new forms of violence, creating a still greater risk that the cycle of violence will continue into new generations.
57%
Percentage of all homeless women that report domestic violence as the immediate cause of their homelessness[1]
2
The need for safe housing and the economic resources to maintain safe housing are two of the most pressing concerns among abused women who are planning to or have recently left the person causing them harm[2]
80%
Percentage of mothers and children experiencing homelessness that had previously experienced domestic violence[3]
4x
The rate at which people who experience housing instability are more likely to experience domestic violence[4]
12
The number of months in which women and men who experienced food and housing insecurity reported a significantly higher prevalence of rape, physical violence, or stalking by an intimate partner[5]

The Intersection of Domestic Violence and Homelessness

The two most pressing concerns for survivors of abuse are the need for safe housing and the need for economic resources to maintain safety.[1]

80% Experienced DV

A study of homeless women with children found that 80% had previously experienced domestic violence.[2]

57% Homelessness was caused by DV

Studies show that as many as 57% of all homeless women report domestic violence as the immediate cause of their homelessness.[3]

Barriers to Safety: Understanding the Intersection

As a direct result of the power and control dynamics related to their abuse, survivors often face unique barriers to accessing shelter and affordable housing.

Poor Credit & Ruined Rental Histories

Often caused by abusers running up credit card bills or lying about paying rent, utilities, childcare and other bills. This affects a survivors' ability to pass a landlord background check.

Lack of Steady Employment

Caused when victims are forced to miss work as a result of violence, or are fired as a result of stalking and harassment that occurs at the workplace.

Housing Discrimination

The most common cases of this occur when landlords evict victims from housing due to repeated calls to the police or property damage caused by the abuser.

Loss of Subsidized or Other Affordable Housing

Caused by lease or voucher policy violations committed by the abuser.

This is particularly true for survivors most marginalized in our society and with the least access to resources, including many survivors of color, Native Americans, immigrants, those living in poverty and who are geographically isolated, those with disabilities, and others.

In just **1 Day** In 2016[4]

OVER **41,000**

adults and children fled domestic violence and found refuge in an emergency shelter or transitional housing program.

7,914

requests by domestic violence survivors for housing were unmet due to a lack of funding, staffing, or other resources. Emergency shelter and transitional housing were the most urgent unmet need for survivors.

For more information, visit www.safehousingpartnerships.org

1. Clough, A., Draughon, J. E., Njie-Carr, V., Rollins, C., & Glass, N. (2014). "Having housing made everything else possible": Affordable, safe and stable housing for women survivors of violence. Qualitative Social Work, 13(5), 671-688.
2. Aratani, Y. (2009). Homeless Children and Youth, Causes and Consequences. New York, NY: National Center for Children in Poverty.
3. Women and Children in Chicago Shelters, 3; Nat'l Center for Homelessness & Health Care for the Homeless Clinicians' Network (2003). Social Supports for Homeless Mothers, 14, 26; Inst. for Children & Poverty (2004). The Hidden Migration: Why New York City Shelters are Overflowing with Families; Homes for the Homeless and Inst. for Children & Poverty (1998). Ten Cities 1997-1998: A Snapshot of Family Homelessness Across America, 3.
4. National Network to End Domestic Violence (2017). 11th Annual Domestic Violence Counts Report: 24-Hour Census of Domestic Violence Shelters and Services. Washington, DC.

SAFE HOUSING PARTNERSHIPS

Housing Instability is Compounded for Alaska Native People Experiencing DV

This report outlines major findings pertaining to housing instability and Alaska Native populations. In this section, however, we provide a brief overview of key issues that are already known. Our study found support for most of the issues listed below, in addition to many more challenges that are described in more detail later in this report.

Housing instability and DV disproportionately impact Alaska Native people. Alaska Native women experience DV at significantly higher rates than any other population in the U.S. Fifty percent of Alaska Native women report experiencing DV, and 1 in 3 report having experienced it in the past year.[71]

Geographic isolation and limited resources in rural Alaska Native villages make it harder for survivors to access housing and support services. Many communities lack shelters, transitional housing, or affordable housing options.[72] Survivors often must relocate far from their support networks to be safe.

Overcrowded housing conditions, which are more prevalent in Alaska Native households, can increase the risk and severity of DV. It is harder for survivors to find safe spaces away from the person causing them harm.[73]

Historical trauma, discrimination, and socioeconomic disparities faced by Alaska Native people can compound the effects of housing instability and DV.[74] Intergenerational trauma is linked to increased vulnerability to victimization and homelessness.

Alaska Native survivors face unique barriers to seeking help, such as fear of losing custody of children to non-Native families, concerns about confidentiality in tight-knit communities, and distrust of government agencies based on historical oppression.[75] DV and housing instability can have severe consequences for Alaska Native children. Exposure to violence and homelessness is

[71] Rosay, A. B. (2016). Violence against American Indian and Alaska Native women and men: 2010 findings from the National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey. *National Institute of Justice*.
[72] Onders, R., Spillane, J., & Donovan, D. (2021). Addressing housing insecurity and intimate partner violence in Alaska Native villages. *Journal of Northern Studies*, 15(1), 7-30.
[73] Shoemaker, J. (2017). No refuge: The criminalization of homelessness in US cities. *National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty*.
[74] Oetzel, J., & Duran, B. (2004). Intimate partner violence in American Indian and/or Alaska Native communities: A social-ecological framework of determinants and interventions. *American Indian and Alaska Native Mental Health Research,* 11(3), 49-68.
[75] Deer, S., & Tatum, M. L. (2003). Tribal efforts to comply with VAWA's full faith and credit requirements: A response to Sandra Schmieder. *Tulsa Law Review,* 39, 403.

linked to increased risk of mental health issues, substance abuse, and future victimization or perpetration of violence.[76]

The intersection of DV and housing instability threatens the preservation of Alaska Native cultures and communities. It can lead to displacement from ancestral lands, breakup of families, and loss of cultural connections.[77]

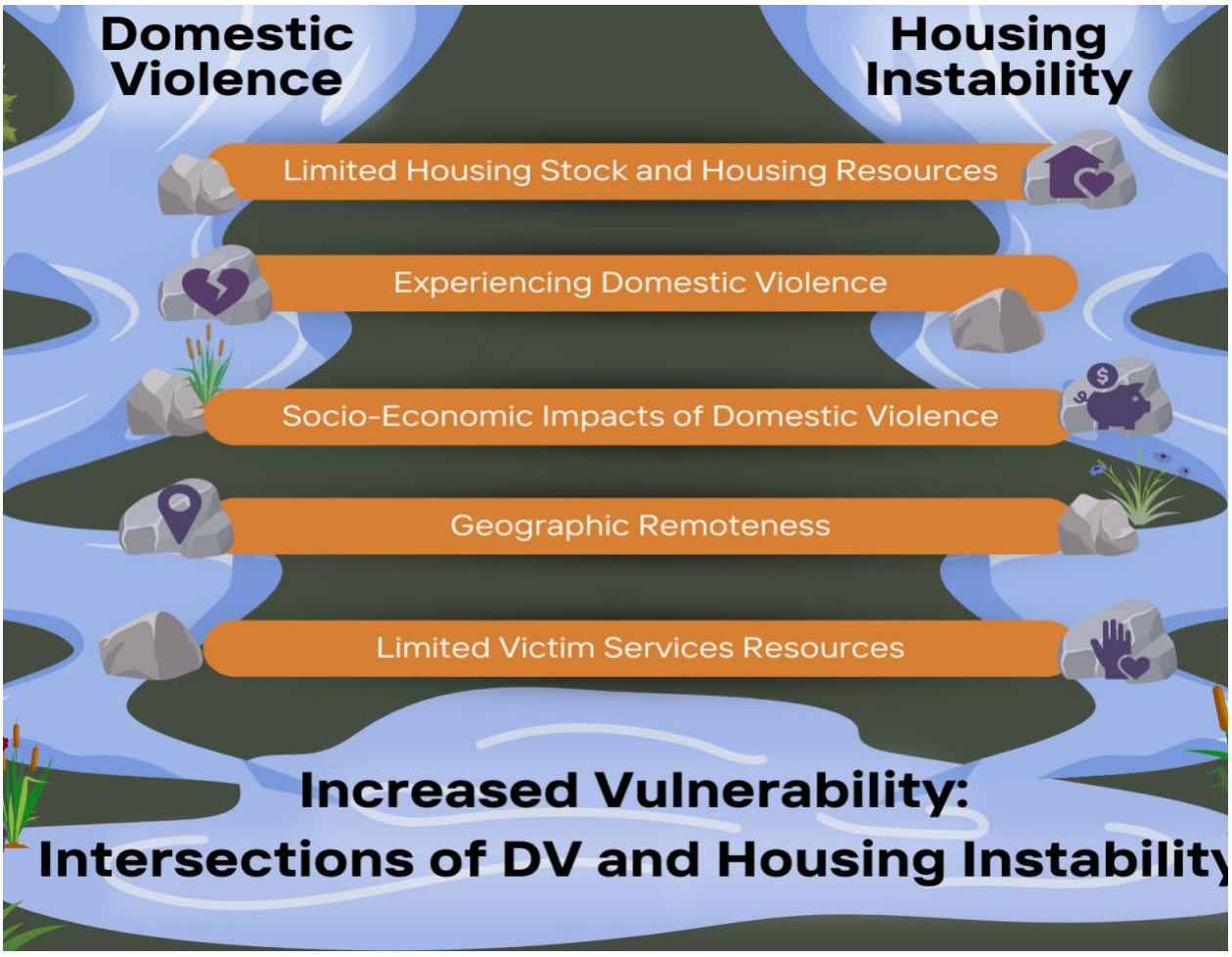


Figure: Housing instability and domestic violence work together to re-enforce each other. Both issues are compounded for Alaska Native people.

[76] Wood, D. S., & Magen, R. H. (2009). Intimate partner violence against Athabaskan women residing in interior Alaska: Results of a victimization survey. *Violence Against Women*, 15(4), 497-507.
[77] Office for Victims of Crime (2018). Helping victims of domestic violence in rural Alaska. *U.S. Department of Justice*.

Housing Types

The housing crisis affects victims of DV closely, as they lack a safe alternative to housing, leaving them with the difficult choice of enduring unsafe environments or facing homelessness. There are three types of housing that survivors look to when seeking safety:

Emergency Housing: A facility, such as a shelter, whose primary purpose is to provide temporary housing and supportive services, usually for no more than sixty days.[78] These facilities are often the first place people turn to during or after experiencing an economic or DV crisis. Emergency housing also includes volunteer safe homes and hotels.

Transitional and Supportive Housing: Housing program where it's purpose is facilitating the movement of individuals and families to permanent housing within 24 months.[79] Supportive housing includes housing primarily designed to serve individuals with mental or physical disabilities, substance abuse, and families with children by also providing supportive services, in addition to housing.[80]

Long-term Housing: Housing that is sustainable, accessible, affordable, and safe for the foreseeable future. Long-term housing is usually leased for a year or more.[81] However, depending on the landlord, leases can be shorter than one year. In some cases, individuals and families receive rental assistance through voucher programs. This includes houses, apartments, duplexes, and other forms of housing structures.

Housing Continuum

The housing continuum[82] (below) represents the full spectrum of housing in a given area. Many of the housing types listed in the graphic are not available in rural Alaskan communities. The continuum spans from emergency to privately owned homes at the other. Between these two

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[78] Emergency Solutions Grant Program. (n.d.). FAQs. *U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development*. Retrieved from: https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/comm_planning/esg/faqs#:~:text=ESG%20funds%20can%20be%20used,shelter%20under%20a%20Fiscal.

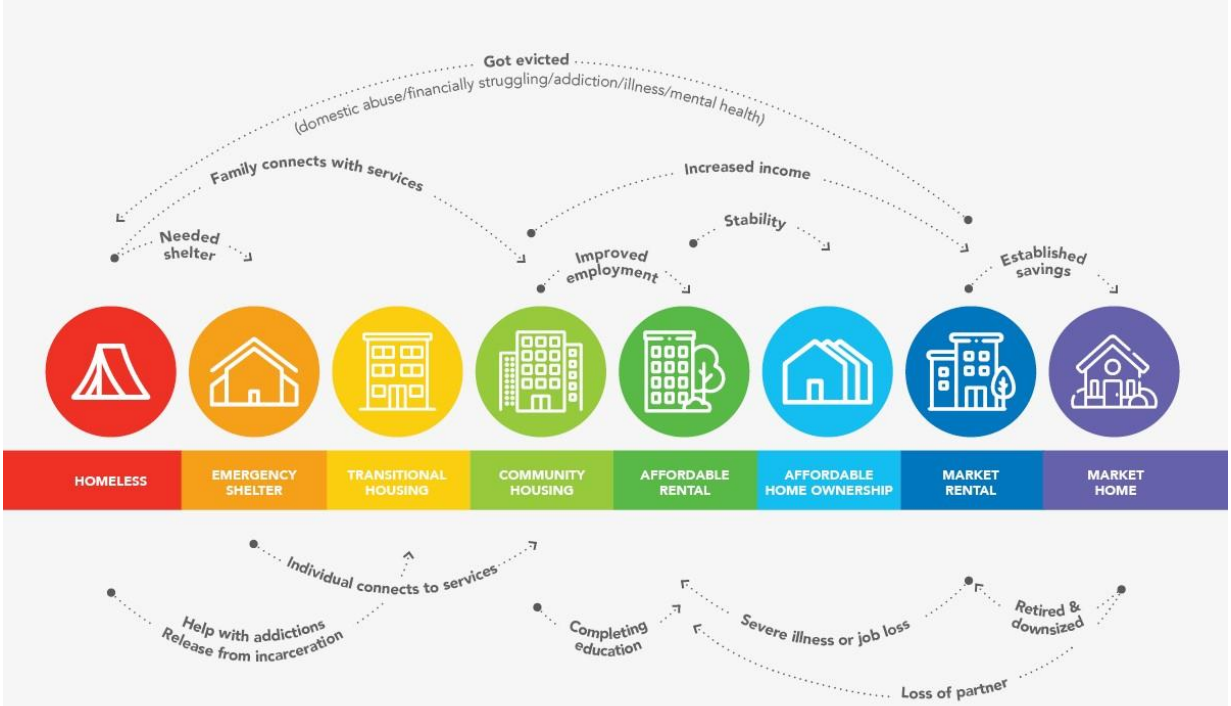
[79] Alaska Housing Finance Corporation. (2021). Homeless assistance program definitions. Retrieved from: https://www.ahfc.us/application/files/8616/5938/8833/R.1_Alaska_Housing_Finance_Corporation_HAP_Program_Definitions.pdf

[80] HUDUser Glossary Archieves.. (n.d.). Resources. *U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development*. Retrieved from: https://archives.huduser.gov/portal/glossary/glossary_s.html

[81] HUD Chicago Field Office (n.d.). Permanent housing: Continuum of Care. *U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development*. Retrieved from: https://www.hud.gov/sites/dfiles/State/documents/Combined_PH-PSH-RRH_Component.pdf

[82] Graphic developed by the United Way Halifax, Nova Scotia.

points, there is a diverse array of housing options. Each type of housing along this spectrum plays a vital role in meeting the varied needs of survivors and families as their circumstances change over time. To successfully secure safety from violence, survivors need to move to the right on the housing continuum. There are a variety of factors that facilitate and pose barriers to their ability to do so.



These are a few examples of how people might move within the housing continuum.

Tribally-Centered National Resources

The past ten years has seen an increase in organizing to address the intersection of housing and DV, including state-specific Housing First efforts and the expansion of transitional housing as an intermediary step between emergency shelter and permanent housing. Notably, in 2022, the National Indigenous Women's Resource Center (NIWRC) formed a resource center specifically to address DV and housing among indigenous populations in the U.S., called the STTARS Indigenous Safe Housing Center.

In 2022, STTARS partnered with the Cardozo Law Institute to form the Tribal Housing Code Clearinghouse. The goal of this Clearinghouse is to better understand how Tribal and federal law and policy affect the ability of Indigenous survivors of gender-based violence to access, maintain, and sustain safe housing and shelter.[83]

STTARS continues to host its bi-annual meeting of the National Workgroup on Safe Housing for American Indian and Alaska Native Survivors of Gender-Based Violence. The Workgroup was originally brought together by the NIWRC, the Alaska Native Women's Resource Center, and the National Resource Center on Domestic Violence in January 2019. The goal of the Workgroup has been to bring together experts from Indigenous communities who work in the fields of DV and housing instability/homelessness to develop policy and concrete recommendations for technical assistance, resources, and other supports to increase the availability of safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable housing for Indigenous survivors of gender-based violence.[84]

[83] Restoration Magazine (June 2022, Volume 19, Issue 2).
[84] STTARS newsletter: June 2022. Accessed online on September 7, 2024 at https://mailchi.mp/007629d4fcf6/lodestar-newsletter-june-2022?e=dd567b2254.

1.d. Key Challenges to Address in Alaska

The challenges listed below are findings from this project. More detail about each of the challenges can be found in the remaining sections of this report.

a. Many DV survivors return to unsafe situations to keep their housing secure.

b. Widespread short-term and long-term housing shortages, coupled with housing assistance barriers, impact survivors' ability to keep safe housing.

c. Existing funding streams for housing are underutilized due to complex restrictions and requirements.

d. Licensed safe homes are often unavailable in rural Alaskan communities. The licensing process is perceived as a major barrier.

e. DV survivors' safety is at risk when funding for service provision is limited to DV agencies. Multiple service providers assist survivors in their search for safe housing.

f. There is a lack of public safety in rural communities tied to the centralized nature of Alaska's Department of Public Safety, competitive nature of federal grant programs, and Alaska's mandatory designation as a Public Law 83-280. The lack of resources in some communities makes it difficult to keep shelters and residents safe.

g. There is not enough staff at Tribal and other agencies to support DV survivors. This leads to inconsistency in the availability of services and a lack of trust by the community in that service.

h. Many services lack culturally relevant services or housing options.

i. The bureaucracy of state systems impedes more swiftly providing funding or housing options to survivors.

j. The influx of tourism in Alaska reduces housing and transportation options is most regions of the state. During the summer, seasonal workers and vacation rentals occupy many of the housing options, which leaves little to no rental options for local survivors and their families.

k. Voucher programs, such as the Empowering Choice Housing Program and Section 8, are too restrictive for DV survivors. There is a need to reduce restrictions on location to reach more communities outside of cities and hub communities, allow flexibility on timelines to account for varied housing availability, reassess free market rent rates to reflect regional costs, reevaluate housing quality standards to reflect Alaska specific homes, and incentivize landlords to accept vouchers.

l. Many communities have unused and/or older structures that could be renovated. Federal funding is too restrictive and needs to allow for new construction, along with incentivizing the use of vacant homes for shelters and safe homes.

m. One of the most noted challenges was the lack of coordination and planning among various stakeholders, which was noted to currently hinder effective resource allocation. There's often no cohesive strategy between state, Tribal, and non-profit entities regarding where and how to expand services. New programs sometimes start up without proper coordination, leading to competition for already limited resources and potential duplication of efforts. This fragmented approach results in inefficiencies, limited resources, and gaps in service provision.

n. Building new facilities is particularly expensive in remote areas due to high construction and shipping costs. Ongoing operational expenses such as heating, staffing, and maintenance create substantial long-term burdens. Many organizations struggle to find sustainable funding sources to support their existing efforts, therefore, these operations over time are harder to maintain and expand services.

o. Community resistance often poses a significant barrier to establishing new facilities. "Not in my backyard" attitudes and stigma can make it difficult to create shelters or housing for survivors.

p. One-size-fits-all solutions were noted to have failed to address the unique needs of different communities, particularly when it comes to transitioning Alaska Native people from rural villages to urban centers. Participants shared that housing programs must be place-based, culturally competent, and responsive to local needs to be truly effective.

q. Balancing short-term interventions with long-term solutions is an ongoing challenge. Many existing programs only offer short-term housing support, such as one to three-month interventions, which are often insufficient for creating sustainable change in survivors' lives. There's a pressing need for longer-term housing options, ideally lasting two to three years, to provide the stability necessary for true recovery and self-sufficiency.

r. Some organizations that provide emergency housing and support services (such as DV agencies) struggle to balance their dual roles as support agencies and landlords. Enforcing housing-related rules and regulations while providing trauma-informed care can create tension and ethical dilemmas with survivors, and ultimately prevent a survivor from being able to access or stay in emergency housing.

2. Methods

"If they go somewhere else they have even fewer supports than they have here. This is where they grew up and this is where their family and friends are. Starting over in a new location is no guarantee that you're going to find much more there than you have here." – Interview Participant, DV Shelter Staff

Native Village of Eek, Photo credit: Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium

2. Methods

This was a statewide assessment, and the study team used a regional breakdown of Alaska to recruit interview participants and analyze secondary data. There are multiple ways that "regions" of Alaska are defined. The study team chose to use the regional breakdown listed below, as defined by the State of Alaska Department of Behavioral Health. This regional breakdown allows for the separation of urban and rural locations, while allowing for enough overlap with other regional breakdowns to adequately summarize data across state systems and regional organization. The 11 regions used for this project are:

- Anchorage Municipality
- Fairbanks North Star Borough
- City & Borough of Juneau
- Kenai Peninsula Borough
- Matanuska-Susitna Borough
- Northwest Region (Nome, Northwest Arctic Borough, Kotzebue, Utqiagvik)
- Interior Region (Delta Junction, Glenallen, Tanana)
- Southcentral (Prince William Sound Coast, Cordova, Valdez)
- Southeast (Ketchikan, Sitka)
- Yukon-Kuskokwim (YK) Delta Region
- Southwest (Aleutian Islands, Kodiak, Bristol Bay)

Multiple data collection methods were utilized in this study, including:

- Review of Regional Secondary Data
- Two Waves of Key Informant Phone Interviews
- Brief Survey of Alaska Federation of Natives (AFN) 2023 attendees
- Statewide Listening Session in June 2024

Review of Regional Secondary Data

As an initial step to understanding the extent and availability of safe housing resources within 11 regions in Alaska, the study team collected and analyzed a multitude of available secondary data. Data utilized included:

- Alaska Census data
- Department of Labor Research and Analysis in Alaska
- Alaska's Council on Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault
- Regional Results from the Alaska Victimization Survey, Justice Center, University of Alaska Anchorage
- Alaska Department of Public Safety

- Indian Health Service
- Organization-specific annual reports

A summary of secondary data organized by region is available in the Appendix of this report.

Key Informant Interviews

A cornerstone of this project was directly hearing from people across Alaska who have lived experience of navigating safe housing while experiencing DV or working to assist survivors of violence with establishing safe housing. The following categories of respondents were interviewed:

- Survivors of DV
- Local victim advocate(s) and DV shelter staff
- Regional housing authorities and other housing entities in Alaska
- Tribal governments, including Tribal courts, Tribal law enforcement, and Tribal housing authorities
- Regional Tribal health corporations
- State law enforcement agencies, including the Alaska State Troopers and Village Police Safety Officers
- State government entities and nonprofit organizations working in the field of DV
- Federal housing experts

Data Collection Waves

Interviews were conducted in two waves between February 2023-March 2024. The first wave included only survivors of DV and those with direct experience working with Alaska Natives who experienced DV (i.e., DV advocates). Data from these "Wave 1" interviews were coded and the findings were used to inform the selection and interview protocol used in the subsequent "Wave 2" interviews of system-level personnel. Wave 2 interview respondents consisted of those who largely oversee the delivery of services related to housing and/or DV in Alaska. We intentionally centered survivor voices and their lived experience so that our study team posed the most poignant questions of system personnel in the second wave of interviews.

Data Collection Locations

The majority of interviews were conducted virtually by telephone or Zoom. All interviews were audio recorded and professionally transcribed. Due to the high expense and logistics of travel in Alaska, in person interviews were conducted only at events that already brought study participants together from across the state, including the Advocacy Pilot Project meeting (Anchorage, February 6-10, 2023) and the Alaska Federation of Natives (AFN) (Anchorage, October 19-21, 2023).

Participant Recruitment

A total of 50 people participated in the interviews. Please see the report Appendix for a complete listing of interview respondents. The study team recruited participants in each of the above categories across all regions of Alaska. A snowball sampling technique was used to leverage professional networks and improve response rate. For example, at the end of every interview, the interviewer asked the interviewee if there was anyone else that they believed should be contacted to participate in the interviews. If so, contact information was obtained and the person who was recommended for an interview was added to a subsequent round of potential participants.

Recruitment also occurred during regional events during event registration and/or a brief presentation during an event session. Recruitment materials shared the purpose, goals, eligibility, compensation, and a QR code that directed interested individuals to sign up for an interview slot via the research intern's Calendly (see Appendix for recruitment materials).

To determine eligibility of participants, Calendly's screening feature was utilized to ask respondents six brief questions. The questions assessed individuals' connection to housing, experience with DV, and geographical location to ensure equitable representation across regions and roles. Respondents answered close-ended questions such as, "Are you a volunteer or paid staff member working on issues of safe housing and domestic violence/sexual assault?" and "Which hub region are you representing on safe housing?" One open-ended question, "Please share a few thoughts about housing and safety in your community," was also included. The study team reviewed the responses, and after determining their eligibility, either sent a confirmation email and an appointment reminder, or notified them if they did not qualify for the study. AKNWRC staff also identified potential participants that had connections to the issues of interest to the project.

Compensation

The AKNWRC and SPS study team financially compensated only those participants who were community members, volunteers, or otherwise unpaid for the role in which they were asked to participate. For example, community DV advocates and survivors were given a gift card, whereas State employees were not. This resulted in almost all respondents in the first wave of data collection being financially compensated, while those in the second wave of interviews were largely not financially compensated. The financial compensation for an hour of an interviewee's time was a $25 Visa gift card that was mailed by the interviewer along with a thank you note.

Procedure

The conversations were recorded using the interview platform (i.e., Zoom) to ensure the study team had a full record of the conversation that could be professionally transcribed. All transcripts and audio/video files were stored in an online encrypted server. For confidentiality purposes, only a summary of aggregated findings is presented in this report.

Brief Survey of Alaska Federation of Natives (AFN) 2023 attendees

In October 2023, the SPS study team attended the AFN Convention at the Dena'ina Civic & Convention Center in Anchorage, Alaska. As tabling exhibitors, the SPS study team hosted a brief survey to collect the thoughts from attendees on one question: "If someone in your community was experiencing DV or abuse, what are some of the ways they could remain safely housed?" Surveys responses were collected using a paper comment card. All participants had the opportunity to enter a raffle to win one of three $100 visa gift cards. A total of 84 comment cards were submitted. Responses were then organized and thematically coded to highlight themes. Findings informed the project of the places survivors go to seek safety, who survivors should contact for support, and the perceptions on what actions a survivor should take to secure safety.

Statewide Listening Session

In June 2024, AKNWRC and the SPS study team hosted an in-person statewide Listening Session for selected interview participants and others who have a vested interest and role in safe housing in Alaska. A total of 31 people attended, in addition to 9 staff from AKNWRC and SPS.[85] The one-day meeting was held at the Lakefront Hotel in Anchorage, Alaska, and was facilitated by SPS. Participants heard an overview of initial project findings, in addition to an update from the National Indigenous Women's Resource Center's STTARS Indigenous Safe Housing Center about their latest legislative advocacy, educational initiatives, and the new Tribal Housing Code Clearinghouse. Participants then broke into smaller round tables to discuss each of the "next steps" that were identified in both Wave 1 and Wave 2 interviews. A large group discussion ended the day, where participants shared their insights, experience, and recommendations for addressing safe housing for Alaska Native people experiencing DV.

A major take-away from this gathering was how important it is for service providers to be given opportunities to share across their silos of funding and fields of expertise. Attendees expressed how much they enjoyed being able to learn from one another and work toward common solutions. For example, a representative from a statewide housing non-profit organization told the group about a specific federal building code that Tribes can use to re-purpose buildings without going through the usual time-consuming approval process required (105 (L) Facility Lease Program under the Indian Self-Determination Education and Assistance Act (ISDEAA), 25 U.S.C. § 53249(l)). None of the Tribal representatives in the room had heard of this strategy and expressed gratitude for hearing about it. One Tribal representative expressed how important it is for Tribes to exercise their sovereignty and "take back" buildings in their community that are deemed unsafe or have a negative impact on the community. He suggested that Tribes could

[85] See appendix for a list of attendees.

pass a resolution condemning a property that is abandoned or unsafe, and re-model the building to use as a safe home for DV survivors. This sentiment was visibly encouraging to other attendees and underscored the benefit of hosting a gathering that is attended by multiple types of service providers.

Positionality Statement

For this project we offer a positionality statement. This approach was first coined by legal and feminist scholar of Color, Kimberlé Crenshaw. Positionality refers to the recognition that a person's social and political identity, including their race, gender, class, sexuality, and other factors, shape their experiences and perspectives. This concept acknowledges that individuals do not experience the world in the same way and that their experiences are shaped by their position in society. Even those that share some of these identities may still hold a different lens that is formed by other social positions. This open acknowledgement of how our individual lived experiences influence our work on this project is essential when doing research with indigenous populations.

The SPS study team leading this project each have distinct backgrounds that we hope to make transparent. The AKNWRC team that reviewed this report and informed this project have their own personal identities that contributed to this report.

Wendi Siebold, M.A., M.P.H., the lead researcher on this project, is European-American and has lived in both urban and rural settings over her lifetime. She was raised in California by fifth generation immigrants and is a cis-gendered queer woman. She has worked in Alaska since 2005 and lived in Alaska since 2015. Prior to living in Alaska, she lived on the Blackfeet reservation and is an adopted member of the Crazy Dog Society of the Blackfeet. She carries the indigenous name "Mystoopiitaki" which loosely translates to "Raven Woman" in the Blackfoot language. She has been working to prevent all forms of gender-based violence since 1998. She has also worked as a DV advocate, a rape crisis counselor, and is a survivor of both domestic and sexual violence herself. Her contributions to this project included being the project lead and overall project oversight, advising on all aspects of data collection, facilitating a focus group with Executive Directors of DVSA agencies, data analysis, and reporting.

Tiana Teter, M.S.W. (Koyukon Athabascan), worked on this project from January 2023-August 2024. She is Koyukon Athabascan and resides in Fairbanks, Alaska, with her two children. Her maternal family is from Huslia, Alaska, and her paternal family is from Rampart, Tanana, and Manley Hotsprings. Tiana has spent her career working with children and youth who have experienced trauma, with victims/survivors of DV and/or sexual assault, and assisting Tribal communities in building resiliency through culture. Her contributions to this project included conducting interviews, analyzing interview data, and informing all aspects of the project design and approach.

Emily Singerhouse, M.P.H. (expected 2025), worked on this project from July 2023-September 2024. She is a European-American cis-gendered straight woman. Emily was born and raised in a small rural community Wisconsin and has lived in rural, urban, and suburban settings over her lifetime. Emily now resides in Florida with her partner and her dog. As a first-generation college student, she earned her bachelor's degree in political science and global studies. At the time of this report, she was pursuing her master's degree in public health. She has worked in the research and evaluation of gender-based violence, and its interconnected issues, since 2017. As a non-Native, non-Alaska, she brings her personal experiences as a survivor, her values of community-based and survivor-centered work, and dedication to community-led solutions to help guide her learning throughout this process. Her contributions to this project included conducting system provider interviews, analyzing interview data, writing findings summaries, and final deliverable preparation.

Karen L. Alexander, Ph.D., LMSW (Ojibwe), worked on this project from December 2023-April 2024. Her spirit name is Waabishkaa Mukwa Kwe or White Bear Woman. Karen is from the Upper Peninsula of Michigan and identifies as a two-spirit female. She has lived most of her life in Michigan and feels very connected to the land and to her people. Karen has overcome many challenges in life including DV, sexual and physical abuse, and addiction to alcohol and drugs. She is on a healing journey and has been clean and sober for over 30 years and has spent the majority of her career helping others to heal as an addictions counselor and a mental health therapist. Karen received her PhD in Evaluation from Western Michigan University in 2023 with a focus on Indigenous evaluation methods (talking circles, storytelling, values-based approach) and is currently employed full-time as a Program Evaluator in Public Health at National Indian Health Board. Her contributions to this project included advising on qualitative coding protocol and participating in inter-rater reliability testing and coding.

Hannah Laird, M.S.W., worked on this project from June 2022-May 2023. She is a lifelong Alaskan of European-American heritage. Her career spans public, private, and nonprofit sectors in Alaska, where she has directly witnessed the impacts of policy, both good and bad, on diverse communities. Hannah was mentored by Deborah Vo (Yupik) of St. Mary's, Alaska, while working for Senator Lisa Murkowski. During her time in the Senate, she gained profound insights into the challenges faced by rural and indigenous communities. Hannah was an MSW student intern with SPS at the beginning of this project. Her contributions to this project included determining what regional breakdown was most appropriate for this study, gathering and organizing local secondary data, as well as organizing interview recruitment and tracking.

Ruby Hernandez, Ph.D., worked on this project from November 2022-June 2023. She identifies ethnically, and not racially, as a Mexican American cis gendered straight woman who was born and raised in California by Mexican immigrant parents. She grew up in a working poor and working-class rural farming community where her parents were farm workers. She is brown-skinned and considers herself bicultural and bilingual, having maintained some traditions and Spanish language. She also has experiences of witnessing DV situations in her home. As the first

in her family to pursue higher education, she earned a doctorate degree in social psychology and was trained in community-based and relational approaches to research. Both her personal experiences and education have shaped her approach to communities. As a non-Alaskan and non-Native, she brings cultural humility and a learning mindset to this project. She also shared her training in research with the team and her experience working in partnership with marginalized communities.

3. Data Analysis

"We're talking about a much higher occurrence of dealing with generational traumas. I've sat down with individuals who not only have been the victim of DV and sexual assault at a very early age, but they're disclosing that every one of their siblings has been, and their parents have been, and the community that they came to and from, like everyone they know has been [a victim]. So there's a level of trauma there that isn't necessarily as common in other subpopulations that we're dealing with." – Interview Participant, DV Shelter Staff

3. Data Analysis

"The analytical framework is the structure, form, or frame arising from the data to focus the findings, and it will help in reporting recommendations. Analytical framing in qualitative research moves with a "to and fro" spiraling energy rather than a linear trajectory." – Margaret Kovach (2021)

Analytical Approach

The study team took an intentional and reflexive approach to working with data on this project.[86] The approach did not explicitly start with a formal indigenous theory,[87] yet over time, the SPS study team identified that project values and assumptions could be considered an informal indigenous theory.

The project theory was the following:

DV happens among people who are known to one another and among Alaska Natives. The impact of this violence is specific to the location and interrelationships of the Alaska Native population in Alaska. Specifically:

- For Alaska Native people who reside in rural and remote villages, those impacted by violence are not just the immediate "victim and harm-doer," but also the community members and extended family who live in close proximity to those directly experiencing DV. Therefore, resources and responses are more complicated and may be better supported by local resources and the "in-sourcing"[88] of local services and support.
- The lack of housing (much less affordable housing) in rural Alaska is compounding the ability of survivors to be safe from violence.
- There are differences and similarities among Alaska Native people living in urban, hub, and village communities. Alaska Native people are not monolithic and housing stability widely varies by the kind of community in which the person is living.

[86] Reflexivity in a qualitative analysis process is not only an approach, but also a way of thinking and being. The SPS study team drew upon Kovach (2021) to position the approach to value self-reflection, give space to their knowledge and varied lived experiences.

[87] There are very few indigenous-specific "theories" from which to choose, and even fewer that would relate to the specific topic of this study.

[88] "In-sourcing" is a term we are using to describe the reliance on known family and friends and local community supports to provide safety and support to people who experience domestic violence; as opposed to "out-sourcing" services to a DV shelter in a community hundreds of miles away, or to law enforcement.

- The State of Alaska's reliance on carceral responses to provide "safety" for survivors, combined with a severe lack of housing, is creating untenable, unsafe circumstances for survivors of DV.

This study's methodological approach is aligned with indigenous research, but more specifically utilized indigenous ***methodology***. The study team incorporated the following principles of indigenous methodology into the collection, analysis, and presentation of data:

- Respect relationality and practice reciprocity – this project is for the communities and we have a responsibility to them
    - Example: Gift cards were used to monetarily incentivize interview participants, and our study team recognizes that gift cards are a westernized approach to reciprocity.
- Use reflexivity and value abductive reasoning
    - The study team utilized "reflexivity journaling" throughout the course of data collection and analysis. The lead interviewer was indigenous and resided in a mid-size community in Alaska. She kept a journal throughout the entire data collection period (i.e., while interviewing and coding), into which she recorded her reflections, her dreams, and any moments of clarity that she gained during this period of the project. Other coders also maintained journals into which they recorded their thoughts and reflections during the coding process.
    - The study team met weekly to participate in an analytical exercise by maintaining an "ahas" document to keep track of potential emergent themes, observations, and ideas while they were analyzing the data.
- Determine the study theory and analytical framing before starting the analysis
    - This project started with intentionality and we have stayed intentional throughout.
- Use metaphor whenever possible
- The study team has intentionally incorporated stories and examples throughout the summary of data. We have also intentionally included metaphors whenever possible. Metaphor is a common practice in indigenous storytelling, in which the learner is encouraged to see the world in a way that is aligned, but may be different than what they currently understand.

As a whole, this project also uplifted indigenous oral tradition by using verbal interviews and focus groups as the major data collection approach.

Conceptual Model

We utilized the four foundations of an indigenous conceptual model (Kovach, 2021) to frame our approach to this project, specifically:

Figure 1: Foundations of an Indigenous Conceptual Framework

Coding Approach

This project was funded to examine a problem that is already known to many Alaskans, and especially those working with Alaska Native people who have experienced a lack of housing due to DV. The study team already knew some of the questions to ask from our understanding of the issue prior to engaging in data collection. For example, in the initial project kick-off meetings with AKNWRC staff, the SPS study team was informed of the severity of the lack of affordable housing and its observed relationship to survivors returning to violent situations. Our research team's personal experience of working with people located in rural areas of Alaska corroborated this reflection by AKNWRC staff. Therefore, we knew to further explore questions related to accessible safe housing in rural areas of Alaska as part of this project.

It would have been disingenuous to the lived experiences of the AKNWRC staff and the communities they serve to use a completely open coding methodology. The study team had pre-determined areas of questioning, while also knowing that there was room for better understanding of the issues. We also wanted to leave space for the re-imagining of resources to keep survivors of violence safe and housed. Therefore, we decided to use a combined inductive and deductive coding approach,[89] as shown in the figure below.

This approach is in line with indigenous methodological practices in which the researcher selects the knowledge to "call upon" based on the context and purpose of the problem in question.[90]

[89] This online resource offers a great explanation of the various types and approaches to coding qualitative data: https://delvetool.com/guide

[90] Kovach, Margaret. (2021) Indigenous Methodologies. Second Edition. Page 217.

"It is not that one type of knowledge is more valuable than the other; it is more about what type of knowledge is most helpful at a given time." – Margaret Kovach, Indigenous Methodologies

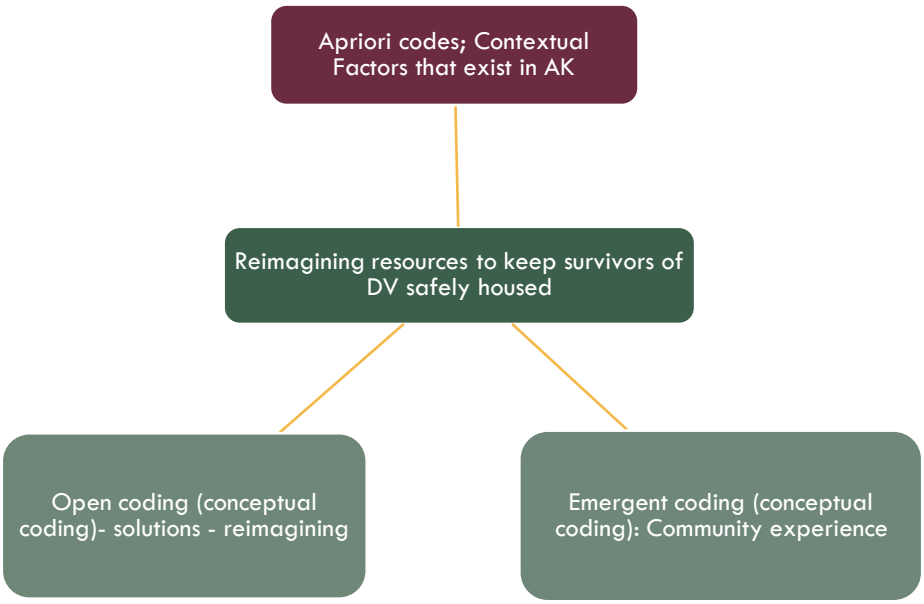


Figure 2: Combined Deductive and Inductive Coding Protocol

The study team used the following coding strategies to arrive at a final set of codes:

1. A priori coding (i.e., deductive coding): A-priori coding (also sometimes called structural coding) was first utilized to find and understand the contextual factors that the study team knew already existed in Alaska. Specifically, we started with a set of codes that were drawn from our interview protocols, and found content to support the "answers" to those questions.
2. Open coding (i.e., inductive coding): Second, to help provide data to "re-imagine" creative solutions/next steps to this issue in Alaska, the study team utilized open coding to reimagine how resources could be used to keep survivors safe.
3. Emergent coding (i.e., inductive coding): Finally, emergent coding was used to better understand how each of the creative solutions/next steps would play under local community conditions. We chose to utilize emergent coding to best learn from communities.

This study followed the thematic analysis strategy put forward by Margaret Kovach in her most recent (2nd Edition) book, *Indigenous Methodologies*.

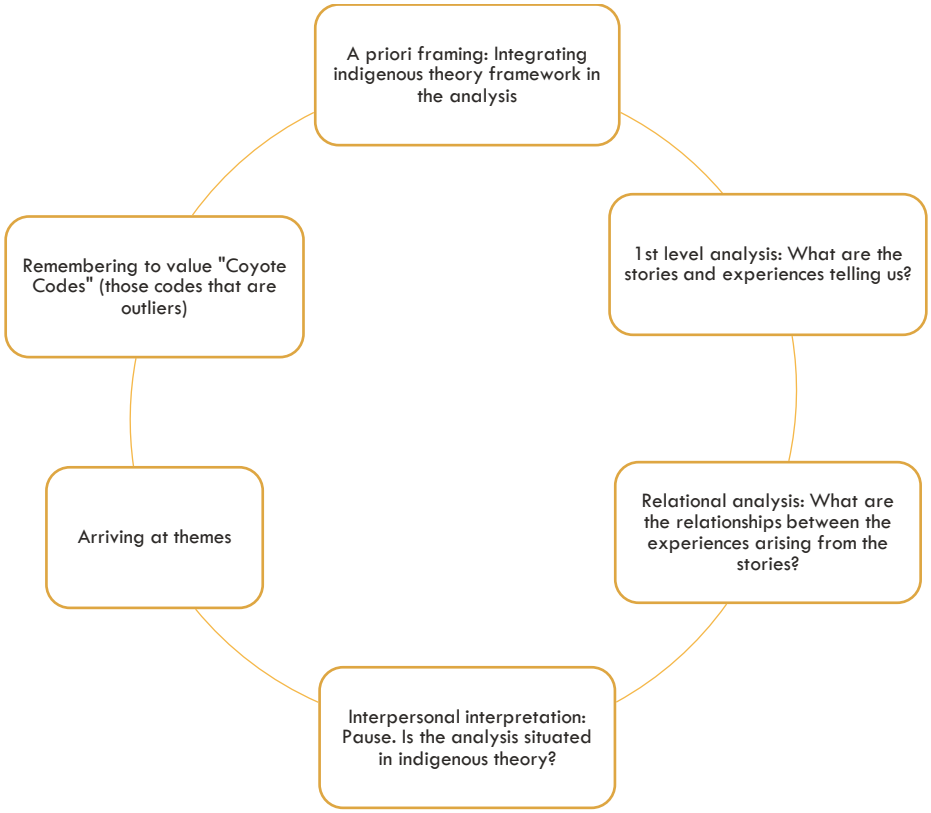


Figure 3: Thematic Analysis Strategy for Indigenous Methodologies

Coding Protocol

To facilitate the analysis of interview data, a comprehensive coding protocol was established and implemented using the qualitative coding software, Dedoose. The protocol was crafted to ensure consistency and reliability throughout the coding process.

The initial step involved appointing a Lead Coder to develop the code book for each data collection phase based on the evaluation questions (a priori or deductive codes). Following a thorough team review of the codebook, the broad coding scheme was entered into Dedoose and key descriptors (e.g., participant region, category) were included with each transcript. The Lead Coder labeled and cleaned transcripts and then uploaded them to Dedoose. They then reviewed and coded excerpts in Dedoose, including any new emergent (inductive) codes. After initial coding the Lead Coder revised and clarified codes into more cohesive themes and updated the codebook. Afterwards, another team member familiarized themselves with the codebook and

reviewed the Lead Coder's codes. The reviewing coder noted any discrepancies or additional codes they observed.

The coding team conducted "validity check" discussions after coding interviews. This is more of a subjective process than an interrater process and is a triangulation check of "Did you hear what I heard?" Following this process, the Lead and reviewing coders met to discuss discrepancies and additions, come to a consensus, and finalize codes. Any remaining concerns about codes were reviewed by the final team member after familiarizing themselves with the codebook and then finalizing the coding.

Inter-rater reliability was reached across the three coders by using Dedoose's inter-rater reliability training program. Dedoose's code-specific inter-rater reliability results are reported using Cohen's kappa statistic.[91] Cohen's kappa is a widely used and respected measure to evaluate inter-rater agreement based on the actual coding behavior of each rater, as compared to the rate of agreement expected by chance. Further, rather than a simple average of kappa to report overall results, we have adopted a pooled kappa to summarize rater agreement across multiple codes.[92]

Being a non-parametric statistic, there are a variety of proposed standards for evaluating the 'significance' of Cohen's kappa value. The coding team decided to use Fleiss (1971[93]) as guidelines for the significance of kappa values being: < .40 = poor agreement, .40-.59 = fair agreement, .60-.74 = good agreement, and .75-1.0 = excellent agreement. The coding team reached a kappa value of .90 before proceeding with analyses.

The primary reason for examining indicators of agreement is to help the coding team establish consistency in the use of a code system within the context of a project's real data. Accordingly, along with kappa results, a test's result also includes a report on 'Code Applications' which allowed the team to examine the actual coding decisions on an excerpt-by-excerpt basis to assist in identifying where and why agreement, or lack of agreement, was occurring.

[91] Cohen (1960), 'A coefficient of agreement for nominal scales.' Educational and Psychological Measurement, 20(1):37-46.
[92] de Vries, Elliott, Kanouse, & Teleki, 2008, Field Methods, 20:272-282.
[93] 'Measuring nominal scale agreement among many raters.' Psychological Bulletin, 76(5):378-382

4. Limitations of This Study

"When they get kicked out, I feel like that's a big thing that we see along with abuse. The mom and the kids are getting kicked out as sort of another way to have power and control over somebody or harm somebody." – Interview Participant, DV Shelter Staff

Vivian Faith Prescott: Red huckleberries and blueberries in Wrangell at Mickey's Fishcamp, Photo credit: Juneau Empire

4. Limitations of This Study

The few limitations of this study are noted here and should be taken into consideration when reviewing the findings of this study.

Secondary Data Limitations

This study started with the intention of providing comprehensive regional profiles of existing safe housing options for survivors of DV, in addition to the comprehensive interview findings in this report. However, after nine months of intense outreach and secondary data collection by our study team that was only moderately fruitful, the team decided to forego full regional profiles and prioritize remaining project resources on collecting first-hand feedback from people directly experiencing DV and housing instability, and the service providers trying to help them. This decision is an important reflection on the reality that survivors of DV and the service providers trying to help them face when trying to identify and obtain resources for safe housing.

Simply put, if our paid study team struggled to obtain helpful information about each region, how much time do service providers end up spending to determine what resources exist in a community so they can make an informed decision about what they can contribute? The lack of coordinated and accessible information about available services and resources for all communities is a significant concern that may be impeding efficient delivery and distribution of services and resources. Examples of challenges to obtaining accurate secondary data from systems and State and Tribal databases include:

- A significant lack of publicly available information about the availability of shelter beds and locations. The most common metric used to track DV-specific housing resources is the number of "bed nights" – in other words, how many nights did the DV shelter house a survivor? While this information may be useful for the State of Alaska to track their expenditure of funding, it does not help the public or housing service providers to know the availability of beds in a community. Information about the number of available shelter beds is only available by personally calling each individual agency or submitting a public information request.
- There is a confusing and seemingly incomplete database of the locations of VPSOs and State Trooper presence in Alaska. As with shelter beds, this information is only obtained by personal outreach or making a public information request that may or may not be fulfilled in a timely manner. After multiple attempts and two public information requests, the study team was able to obtain a simple summary of VPSO posts and vacancies. Information about Trooper locations was obtained from the AST website, yet current availability (e.g., filled posts/positions) was only obtained through significant outreach and a personal interview with a State Trooper who was willing to help track down this information from Alaska's Department of Public Safety.
- Resources for mental health emergencies or support are very difficult to obtain across regions. While some regional health corporations and Tribal entities offer mental health

support services, the availability of these services and qualifications to obtain these services is very difficult to find.

Recruitment Challenges

The other notable study limitation was the underrepresentation of people from the Northern reaches of the state in interviews. Despite extensive outreach and personal networking, the study team was only able to interview one person from this region. Please refer to the appendix for a list of interview participants.

5. Findings

"There's not enough housing in the village that [survivors] can go to. Most of the people in this community know about [DV organization]. That's the only place they know to go when they really, really need housing." – Interview Participant, Tribal Government

Port of Valdez, Valdez, Alaska, Photo credit: Emily Singerhouse

5. Findings

This study uncovered a multitude of challenges and provides an enormous amount of data to support both previously known and newly discovered issues. Findings are organized by major theme, and details to support the theme are provided below the description of the theme.

Findings include perceptions, experiences, and opinions about the issues relating to safe housing from interview participants. These findings may not fully represent survivors' experiences, as each survivor's journey is unique. However, there are themes that underscore their challenges and abilities to achieving safe housing in Alaska.

5.a. Widespread Short-Term and Long-Term Housing Shortages, Coupled with Housing Assistance Barriers, Keep Survivors in Unsafe Housing

Challenges to Housing Support

Housing Availability

Aligning with our hypothesis, almost all participants shared that there is a lack of housing available across Alaska. On a community level, a persistent shortage of housing leaves many families in cramped living conditions and sharing small or medium-sized homes with multiple relatives. Even when new housing units are constructed, they quickly fill up and result in long waiting lists that can span years.

This issue is exacerbated in rural areas, where limited housing availability and overcrowding in homes within villages make it hard to find a separate place to stay or permanent housing, especially away from a harm do-er. One participant reflected:

> *"In rural Alaska, if there is a structure and it can be utilized, I think they're already being utilized. We don't have very many abandoned structures that are in a condition to be utilized. Typically the ones that are not being utilized are not being utilized for a reason. Out there, homes and buildings are at a premium, and if they can utilize them, they're already being utilized."– Interview Participant, VPSO*

In rural Alaska, housing development is slow and building costs are extremely high. For example, one participant shared that an organization spent $100,000 just in transportation costs to transport materials to construct an office in a rural community.

"It's so hard to get infrastructure out in the smaller, rural communities. I mean, take Arctic Village and Allakaket, for instance. Everything that we send out to those communities has to be flown in, and it's not cheap. I just spent $100,000.00 to get some materials out to Allakaket to build the office that we need out there, so it's pretty spendy."– Interview Participant, VPSO

There is also a stark contrast between rural and urban areas in terms of resource allocation and availability of housing. Rural communities often have fewer housing options, exacerbating the existing statewide housing crisis. This limits the availability of housing for all members of the community, including law enforcement, medical, and educational staff. Some workers, including law enforcement, share small spaces and sometimes even engage in "hot-cotting," where they rotate the use of the same bed every two weeks.

The housing crisis affects victims of DV closely, as they lack safe alternatives to housing. This leaves survivors with the difficult choice of enduring unsafe environments or facing homelessness. One participant shared that they have funding available to assist clients in getting into housing, however, they are facing a shortage of available properties:

"We've got funding…like today we have funding to place 33 people into housing and I've got at least that many people that I know would qualify that have done intake interviews with us. The only thing stopping them is they can't find anywhere to rent. There's just nowhere to go." – Interview Participant, DV Shelter Staff

"…a lot of people sort of lose hope over being able to get a home or whatever and it's hard for everybody, like everybody's struggling to find housing." – Interview Participant, DV Shelter Staff

There is also the challenge of survivors losing their place on a list to obtain housing due to their experience of DV.

"People have been waiting on [the housing] list for three or four years or longer and then just be shot out from underneath that waiting list because of the domestic violence issue. Domestic violence is not always long-term. It's oftentimes gonna be very short-term. It's a matter of getting people separated or on the right track. It shouldn't be something that changes people's lives and throws them to the bottom of the housing list. [This is about] fairness." – Interview Participant, Tribal Housing

Both short-term and long-term housing options are affected by this shortage. The assistance offered by DV organizations/service providers sometimes makes securing short-term housing easier than permanent/long-term housing. For instance, depending on funding, service providers can secure beds in hotels for survivors.

> *"…Usually we get them into a hotel, which isn't always the best option, but that's the quickest option that we can get." – Interview Participant, Victim Advocate*

The lack of long-term housing solutions was a common theme, with many suggestions centered on creating transitional apartments or shelters that could serve as stop-gap measures while survivors find more permanent homes. For example, some participants mentioned using vacant buildings or developing small-scale housing projects (e.g., trailers) in villages as temporary shelters for survivors. Both a Regional Housing Authority participant and a Behavioral Health Aide reflected on the difficulty they face when trying to address the availability of long-term housing solutions:

> *"In housing, we're all trying to serve this really important need by developing housing, and every community is in a desperate situation..." – Interview Participant, Regional Housing Authority*

> *"They tried to get this safe house off the ground. Two things were actual problems. There's no houses available. There's a lot of empty houses, but [they're] owned by five people at a time. [One owner] wants to sell, [the other owner] wants to rent, so nothing happens."– Interview Participant, Behavioral Health Aide*

Housing Availability: Tourism and Short-Term Rentals

Tourism, seasonal workers, and short-term rentals impact the availability of housing and affordability of rent and mortgages. This reality, while an essential part of Alaska's economy, makes it difficult for local survivors, service providers, and other community members to find housing.

This has further strained housing availability, specifically hotels, with an increase in properties being converted to short-term rentals for tourists, rather than serving local communities year-round. This phenomenon is particularly noticeable in coastal towns. It was noted that the influx of travelers has increased rents and reduced the availability of long-term rentals.

"We've seen an increase in rent. We've seen an increase in homes being used for seasonal workers only. We've seen an increase in Airbnb and the VRBO rentals only, where they are no longer on the rental market as a local rental year-round but just for time tourism. So we've seen a huge, huge influx from tourism." – Interview Participant, Tribal Government

Participants noted that they are witnessing corporate entities compound the housing shortage by purchasing properties and turning them into short-term vacation rentals. This was seen to reduce the availability of housing for local residents. Despite discussions at the state level to address these issues, such as potential regulations on short-term rentals, participants noted hesitation to enact statewide legislation. This hesitation leaves the problem of corporate ownership of housing largely unresolved.

Cost of Living

The high cost of living in Alaska exacerbates housing challenges. In Southeast Alaska, for example, the rise of tourism has increased rent prices and reduced the availability of year-round rentals as properties are increasingly used for seasonal workers and short-term vacation rentals (such as Airbnb). This shift makes it even harder for local families, especially those experiencing DV, to find affordable housing. The cost of housing and essential goods continues to rise due to the state's dependency on transported goods. This makes it challenging for all residents to maintain a sustainable lifestyle. Families are increasingly feeling the pressure, with some participants noting that survivors even try to relocate themselves and their children out of the state because they can no longer afford to live in Alaska.

"…whatever there is out there is just astronomically expensive. This program automatically approves up to $1100 a month, and anything above that we have to ask for permission on a case-by-case basis. We've had no trouble getting up to $1400 approved, but studios here are going for $1100. Bedroom units are $1315-1700. So even if we assist somebody for 12 months and they find work, the likelihood of them being able to afford a rent that high on single income is pretty low."– Interview Participant, DV Shelter Staff

Housing Program Limitations

Transitional housing programs, such as Housing First, Empowering Choice Housing Voucher Program (ECHP), or Rapid Rehousing, have long waitlists, inaccessible application processes, and specific eligibility requirements that make them challenging for survivors to qualify. In some areas, the available properties are unaffordable for survivors under these programs. The availability of housing vouchers, like those from the ECHP, are limited not only by the number of vouchers but also by the scarcity of affordable rental units that accept them. This issue underlines the reality that **providing financial support alone is insufficient if housing availability is limited, particularly**

for low-income individuals. Many participants shared that they have funding available to assist clients in getting into housing, however, they are facing a shortage of available properties.

A survivor's ability to keep safe housing is impacted by their ability to transition off voucher programs, including securing employment and the ability to pay for rent (especially if the housing is costly). One participant noted that some families are facing eviction due to these stipulations. The cost and availability of childcare and lack of work experience were noted as challenges that affect survivors' ability to have adequate income to afford housing.

This finding suggests that **the challenges of housing are enabling the cycle of violence to continue**. For instance, if an individual is unable to secure childcare, they are unable to work. However, the cost of childcare is often unaffordable on a single income, resulting in inadequate income levels to keep housing. Employment, childcare and financial stability, were noted by participants as key reasons that survivors return to unsafety.

Other challenges noted were:

- The housing voucher waitlist is longer than rental assistance services
- Families are more likely to get housing quicker than a single person
- Housing program eligibility requirements are too restrictive or not tailored to the reality of Alaska's housing market (e.g., re-applying for assistance lowers the length of time support is available).

Overall, the lack of sufficient low-income housing and limitations on housing programs complicates survivors' ability to transition out of emergency shelters, leaving them with the decision to either be homeless or return to unsafe situations.

Funding Sustainability

Sustainability was a recurring concern, especially in terms of long-term funding. Programs often depend on short-term and/or federal grants, such as Emergency Voucher programs. How to sustain funding housing and support services was noted with uncertainty when funding cycles end. One participant emphasized the temporary nature of federal funds, like the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) and Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) grants, and the expectation that the State may need to backfill funding once federal sources dry up. There is also concern about potential State budget cuts that could severely impact critical services, like DV shelters. This suggests a need for long-term sustainable funding strategies. Participants also stressed the importance of having exit strategies for housing projects to ensure that if financial support diminishes, the facilities can still operate without service reduction.

Lack of Emergency Housing Options

Emergency Housing Option 1: Shelters

Many villages simply have few or no shelters. Existing shelters often have limited beds, can be frequently full, or have eligibility requirements preventing survivors from finding safety there.

"It's just widely known that it takes somebody seven times. They're going to leave seven times before they leave for the last time. I would say in [community] people really are not leaving because they know that there's nowhere for them to go, so they're staying put. They're not even making it to seven times. They might try one time and they just know it doesn't work, so they stay… I feel like if we were able to have at least that first shelter, it would dramatically change things in the way that we're able to provide services and get those people help." – Interview Participant, Tribal Government

Emergency Housing Option 2: Safe Homes

There is a lack of dedicated safe houses in most villages. This forces survivors to either stay with friends/family or rely on ad hoc arrangements like staying at the clinic or school, or leaving the community entirely. As stated, participants shared that there is overcrowding in many homes in villages, making volunteer-safe home options few and far between. A couple of participants shared how the lack of availability of houses impacts emergency safe home options:

"I've spent time in the villages and we have 1200 square foot three-bedroom houses with 15 people living in them because there's just a lack of housing resources for the communities. Asking a family that already has grandma and grandpa living in the house with them plus mom and dad plus maybe four or five kids in a three-bedroom house. It's pretty compact and tight and now we're asking them to be a safe home. While they would probably love to do that, adding two or three or four more bodies into their home can become very challenging, and most of them do it anyways." – Interview Participant, State Government

"People's personal homes end up being the "safe home" in a community, whether or not they are an actual "safe home." – Interview Participant, DV Organization

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Emergency Housing Option 3: Hotels

The availability of hotels to be used as emergency accommodations is another barrier for many housing programs. Some participants mentioned that there are no hotels available for them to utilize in their region, nightly rates of hotels are costly, and sometimes relationships between service providers and hotels fluctuate.

Lack of Transitional and Supportive Services

Many survivors need supportive services (e.g., counseling, childcare, employment assistance) in addition to housing, but these services are often limited or unavailable in rural communities. There also was a noted lack of culturally specific support available to Alaska Native survivors. These culturally specific supports are necessary for Alaska Native survivors for long-term health and wellbeing.[94]

Addressing the housing needs of survivors is oftentimes complicated by secondary issues, such as substance misuse and mental health concerns. Mental health issues, including depression and the increasing rates of suicide, exacerbate challenges with housing by making it difficult for people to maintain employment.

Participants shared that some survivors are also living with a substance use disorder. Although there have been recent improvements in supportive services, such as the expansion of withdrawal management programs, challenges remain in accommodating survivors who are in recovery.

> *"…opioids is a confounding factor. Makes it harder to keep housing when you're struggling with addiction in some form." – Interview Participant, State Government*

The interconnected nature of substance misuse and DV often creates barriers for survivors, who require more than just financial support to maintain housing. This finding suggests that tailored, ongoing support is essential and the need for a nuanced approach to housing—one that includes both physical shelter and appropriate support services—is needed to adequately address these needs.

> *"We need to get better at recognizing those supports that are needed…We also have to make sure that every week we stop by… The reality of it is that nothing should be conditioned upon you getting a job and you're getting sober. We should just help find you housing and then plug in the right supports to help you keep that housing… It's not just about building a house, it's about building the supports that go along with that house, whatever that might look like." – Interview Participant, State Government*

[94] McKinley, C. E., Figley, C. R., Woodward, S. M., Liddell, J. L., Billiot, S., Comby, N., & Sanders, S. (2019). Community-engaged and culturally relevant research to develop behavioral health interventions with American Indians and Alaska Natives. *American Indian and Alaska native mental health research*, 26(3), 79–103. https://doi.org/10.5820/aian.2603.2019.79

DV-Related Factors

Similarly to finding safety, survivors often struggle to obtain and maintain long-term housing due to the cycle of DV and common factors associated with being in a DV situation. Participants noted that housing is affected by issues such as lack of income, absent/poor rental history, childcare availability, previous criminal history, ongoing safety concerns, and behavioral health concerns. Harm doers commonly sabotage survivors' economic stability and housing as a control tactic. This can include preventing the survivor from working, damaging their credit, not paying rent/mortgage, or causing property damage that leads to eviction.[95,96]

Community Norms and Beliefs

Community resistance often poses a significant barrier to establishing new facilities due to "not in my backyard attitudes." Some rural communities were noted to oppose building new shelters or housing for survivors due to stigma and misconceptions about DV and homelessness. Some participants shared that they have seen communities express concerns about the potential impact

[95] Adams, A. E., Sullivan, C. M., Bybee, D., & Greeson, M. R. (2008). Development of the scale of economic abuse. Violence Against Women, 14(5), 563-588.

[96] Pavao, J., Alvarez, J., Baumrind, N., Induni, M., & Kimerling, R. (2007). Intimate partner violence and housing instability. American Journal of Preventive Medicine, 32(2), 143-146.

on their neighborhoods, leading to political and social obstacles that can delay or derail their housing projects. Participants highlighted that overcoming this social resistance requires extensive community engagement and education.

"There are these cultural norms that we talk about; of values, practices, and gender roles that we have in with us for generations. But the reality is that those have changed a lot in the last several decades. From my perspective, as prevention services, it's always a challenge because of what we're trying to achieve- healthy communities and healthy people. But what is the definition of that? Is it a Western definition? Is an Indigenous definition? Is it a combination of both? And, more importantly, has it changed over time?" – Interview Participant, Behavioral Health Aides

"Nobody in town would help this woman who had moved to the village with a local guy who was now abusing her. He was a dangerous guy and everyone knew it – but I was willing to go up against him. She had family that was willing to go to Anchorage to pick her up. I was the ICWA worker so I brought her to my house for the night and convinced the Tribal council to pay for her plane ticket to get her on the airplane to Anchorage. We have people going into communities who may not be from there and nobody is helping them – or the person is afraid to ask because they're not from there. – Interview Participant, DV Victim Advocate

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Housing Support Services

There are various housing support services available to survivors, depending on the location. These services facilitate a survivor's ability to be safely housed.

Application Assistance: Some service providers, such as DV advocates, assist with identifying programs to apply for housing, filling out applications, filing paperwork, and following-up on housing requests.

Financial Assistance: Many entities offer financial assistance, such as covering the costs of rent and/or security deposits. For instance, one participant mentioned using funding from the Housing Stabilization and Recovery funding. Their organization can cover 12 months of rental assistance for an individual who is escaping DV.

Basic Needs Support: Some entities can provide basic needs for survivors to support them in their housing journey, including providing furniture, food, toiletries, and clothing.

Employment Assistance: Some Tribal entities and DV organizations provide jobs, job skills training, professional development classes, resume assistance, child care, and financial assistance to improve survivors employment conditions.

Housing Vouchers: The Alaska Housing Finance Corporation's housing assistance program[97] is designed to meet the housing needs of survivors by supplying rental assistance or preferred placement on public housing wait lists. Housing Choice Vouchers are available in 12 Alaska communities and guarantee on-time rental payments to landlords while helping eligible Alaskans lease rentals in the private rental market.[98] One participant shared how helpful the voucher program was for their clients:

> *"The choice (housing) voucher is so helpful because you start out with a high level of assistance and then transition…they have supports to get you … employment, and so you become gradually more responsible for your rent, the portion that you are responsible for, so that you can phase out of needing that assistance, and if you experience major setbacks … you can go back a step. That works nicely 'cause it's over several years."– Interview Participant, DV Shelter Staff*

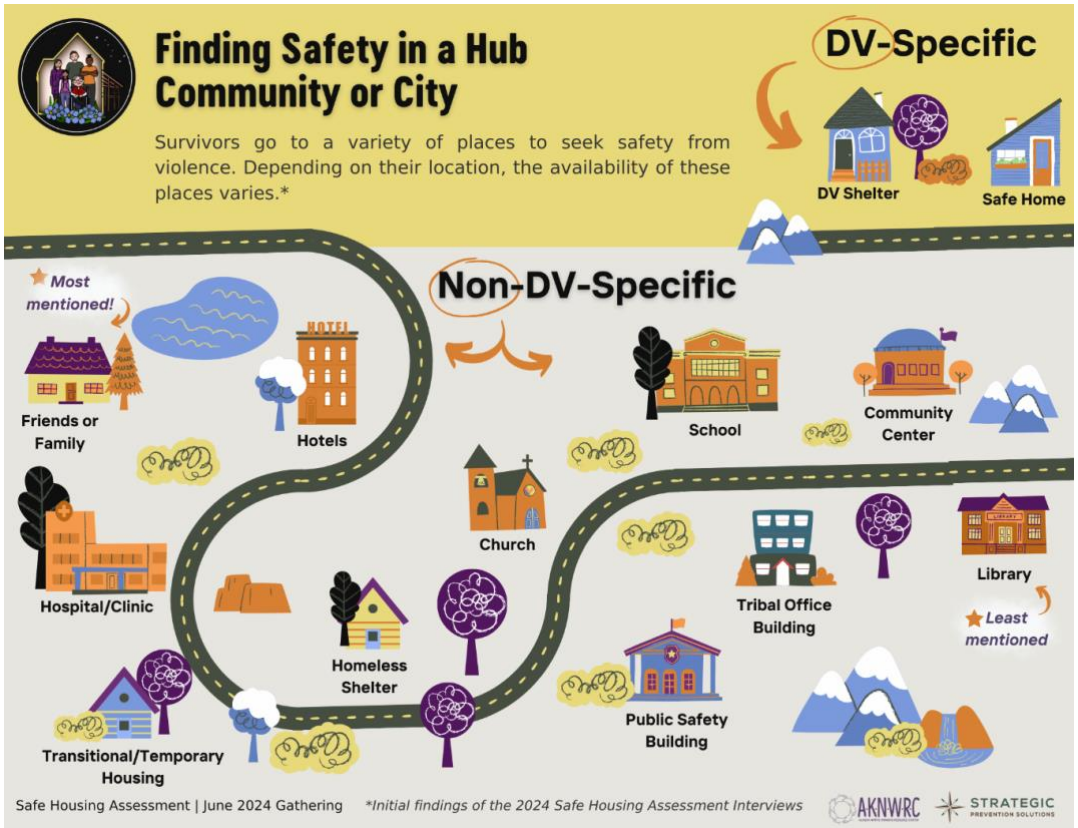
[97] https://www.ahfc.us/pros/landlords/housing-choice-voucher-program
[98] Alaska Housing Finance Corporation. Accessed online September 25, 2024 at: https://www.ahfc.us/pros/landlords/housing-choice-voucher-program

5.b. Safety Looks Different in Villages

Survivors go to a variety of places to seek safety from violence. Depending on their location, accessibility varies. Most of the places where survivors seek safety in a city or hub community are not specific to DV. In a city or hub community, survivors seek safety in the following places:

Friends and family	Hotels	Hospital and clinic	Transitional and temporary housing	Shelter
Churches	Public safety building	School	Tribal office building	Community center
Library	Public spaces	Tribal office building	Law Enforcement building	Safe house

Churches, libraries, and grocery stores offer food resources, warming spaces, and job/skill training for survivors. This suggests a potential role for non-DV-specific community organizations to leverage common resources and support offerings to create safer and more successful environments for DV survivors.



Places to Stay in a Village

Survivors who live in a village have even fewer resources available to seek safety. Many participants simply said, *"there is just nowhere to go here."* However, the following resources were noted by participants:

Friends and family	School	Community hall	Health clinic	Elders	VPSO Building	Tribal office building

One DV service provider shared that they sometimes serve Alaska Native survivors whose village is on the other side of the state. This suggests that not all survivors are seeking safety in their nearest hub or city, but sometimes extremely far away from their systems of support and communities.

Methods of Getting to Safety

Transportation plays a significant role in survivors finding safety. Survivors take ferries, boats, snowmachines, and planes to reach safety. The method of transportation depends on their location due to the varied availability of resources and climate in Alaska.

It can cost upwards of $3,000 to transport a survivor and two children one-way from a village to an urban community to receive housing and supportive services. The cost of returning to their village is a significant problem that has no agreed upon solution among DV service providers. Many survivors never make it back home.

Naming "Domestic Violence" Is a Barrier to Receiving Services

Survivors reach out for safety using both virtual and in-person methods:

- Virtual: Social media, calling/texting, searching online
- In-person: System referrals, showing up at a shelter

There is not one method of contact survivors use to reach out for help, and survivors use multiple word choices to disclose their need for help. Some survivors will openly disclose their experiences with violence, while others may not. For example, one participant shared a story about a survivor who called a DV shelter stating they had been kicked out of their home but did not disclose that violence had occurred. Interview participants shared that they have had to screen people out from receiving shelter services because the survivor didn't fit the requirement of experiencing violence, but instead identified as homeless. These instances, where full disclosure isn't readily offered by a survivor, pose challenges for service providers because they need to navigate the reality of their overcrowded shelter capacity while also meeting survivors where they are in their journey to sharing their experiences with violence. This suggests that the shelter screening process is missing individuals who do not disclose the presence of violence during initial contact with the shelter.

> *"Every woman you've met has been raped. All of us. I know they won't believe that in the lower 48, and the State will deny it, but it's true. We all know each other, and we live here. We know what's happened."* [99]

[99] Indian Law and Order Commission, *A Roadmap for Making Native America Safer*, at 34. Tribal Citizen (name withheld) statement provided during a commission site visit to Galena, AK. October 18, 2012.

5.c. Service Providers Are Unique in Their Role in Keeping Survivors Safe and/or Housed; Each Provide Support At Different Points In A Survivor's Journey

This section summarizes how system service providers view their role in providing safe housing for those who experience DV. Please note that these perspectives may not reflect the lived experiences of survivors who interact with the systems, as described below.

Service providers operate in specific roles that intersect with survivors seeking safety and obtaining housing. Service providers are unique in their role, and most are non-DV related. Each provider is involved at different times during a survivor's journey to safety - from immediately after a crisis to multiple years after seeking safety. Factors impacting the scope and breadth of each role include:

It is clear that getting a survivor and their family to safe housing is a complex, time-consuming, and expensive process that frequently rests on the sheer determination and personal fortitude of individual service providers who go above and beyond to ensure safety. The story below is an example of how even when a survivor has access to trained advocates who secure financial resources and temporary housing, the system still often fails the survivor and perpetuates the cycle of abuse:

"There was a woman and her three children in a village – this was a long-term abusive situation – he was beating the living daylights out of her for years – she even stayed overnight in the woods to escape him and tried to get to someone to hide her. Her mother called me and said what can we do. She was a tribal member living in another community. We called the DV shelter in the nearest city and they said they would take her if we got her to the city. We were able to access family violence funds, got her on a plane with her 3 kids – we had to sneak her out to the airport and coordinate it so no one knew she would be there and we got her on the plane. We paid for 3 nights at a hotel in the city while she was waiting to get into the DV shelter. The survivor called every day to get into the shelter because the shelter had told her to call when she got to town. The shelter finally told her that they did not believe she was in immediate danger anymore because she was now at a hotel in the city and her abuser was in the village. So I convinced the Tribal council to pay for 10 days in this hotel –

because it was Christmas – and we organized people to collect food and gifts to give her and her kids over the holidays. We contacted the regional Tribal Corporation and they wouldn't help. She had a sister in the city, but her sister's house was packed - there were like 15 people in a 3-bedroom house. She had a car stored at her sister's house so she and her kids stayed in her sister's garage in the wintertime waiting to get into the DV shelter. She continued to call the shelter and they would not let her in, even thought there was supposedly room available. She eventually returned to the village and the abuse. We finally got her out at another time – but it was six months later and after another beating."
– Interview Participant, DV Organization

DV Service Organizations

DV service organizations are the primary providers of services and support to survivors and their families. Many participants shared that community members are aware if there are shelter and DV services available in their communities. DV organizations are also the only entity within the state that also provide services to harm-doers. The most noted services available to survivors include:

Advocacy and Case Management: DV organizations typically provide a "wraparound" style of service provision that is tailored to the individual needs of the survivors and their families. They provide referrals or in-house services for support such as mental health, substance misuse, support groups, and safety planning. These organizations also help provide legal advocacy to survivors, such as help with obtaining protective orders, navigating the court system, and filing police reports. They also provide emergency assistance, such as child care, groceries, medical expenses, workforce development, and basic needs.

Housing Support: DV organizations help provide emergency housing support through their shelter (if they have one), volunteer safe homes, or hotels. They help identify longer-term housing solutions after survivors leave emergency shelters. DV organizations also provide financial assistance, such as covering rent, utilities, security deposits, and basic housing needs.

Getting to Safety: Most DV organizations have funding available to provide transportation. They arrange transportation for survivors in emergency situations, appointments, and more. Depending on availability, some DV organizations have relationships with specific transportation companies that they use because the companies are more trauma-informed and sensitive to survivors needs. Some providers in rural communities even know which private airplane pilot to contact for transport, because they are trusted, and they will reliably show up. A complicating factor is that transportation is also needed to return a survivor back home to her home community, and funding for these arrangements is often not available or considered. A survivor's return to their home community is significant to their access to cultural resources, sense of belonging, and well-being, and must be included in safety planning as much as possible.

Coordination and Collaboration: DV organizations work closely with various partners, including law enforcement, Tribal councils, housing authorities, and other entities to ensure that survivors receive the necessary support and resources to secure safe housing. They work to establish long-

term relationships with their community service providers, which is key to providing effective support and referrals. DV organizations often work as part of multidisciplinary teams, such as sexual assault response teams or child advocacy centers, to provide comprehensive support to survivors.

Law Enforcement

The Alaska Department of Public Safety is primarily responsible for providing public safety and law enforcement response to all of Alaska. The roles of law enforcement professionals to support survivors overlap, specifically between Alaska State Troopers (AST) and Village Public Safety Officers (VPSOs)- a uniquely Alaskan community public safety and law enforcement program administered by the AST and funded by the Alaska legislature. Both have similar responsibilities and often work synergistically together. Their roles are most similar in response and investigation, arrest and separation, getting to safety, education and resource sharing, and coordination and collaboration. The unique aspects of the role of ASTs and VPSOs will be discussed below. These findings are from the perspective of law enforcement and service providers and may not fully depict the reality of survivors' experiences with law enforcement.

Response and Investigation: Law enforcement is tasked with responding when called for an emergency. In some cases, ASTs are the primary responders to DV incidents. However, in many rural villages, ASTs are the secondary responders to DV incidents, typically after VPSOs have immediately responded to the incident. AST response time can vary significantly, from minutes to days or even weeks, depending on factors like weather or staffing. Law enforcement also supports the continued protection of safety, by responding to enforce restraining or protective orders. Multiple participants shared the importance of law enforcement officers building trust and being honest, consistent, and trauma-informed with survivors during response and investigation.

Arrest and Separate: When involved, Alaska's laws mandate that Troopers must arrest within 12 to 24 hours if probable cause exists for an arrest. Law enforcement typically arrests the suspect and removes them from the home, which often allows the victim to remain in their home (albeit often temporarily). In the villages, the suspect is typically removed from the community. This was noted as problematic in some communities as the harm-doer may hold other roles in the community, making this removal straining on the community as a whole. AST participants mentioned that effective intervention *"requires an adequate investigation and an adequate victim involvement without recanting and without backing up"* to successfully separate the harm-doer from the victim. One law enforcement participant reflected how they believed that arresting harm-doers also helps build a culture of safety within the community:

"When you're proactive…It builds a new generation of non-offenders…If you see that you have a good [proactive] police force to respond by placing these individuals in jail, allowing the victims to have some resources to get some help, and the offenders to get forced to get some help, maybe to realize what they're doing is wrong. You have a chance to break that cycle. Once you do that, and you start building a proactive pathway where you have a community that is a

much quieter than it was in the past, much less offenders than there were in the past." – Interview Participant, VPSO

Getting to Safety: Troopers are required by law to provide transportation to a safe location if the survivor is in immediate danger and there is no other safe place in the community. They often collaborate with local DV organizations and may use State resources, like planes, to transport survivors to safety.

Education and Resource Sharing: Law enforcement officers are required to read information from a pamphlet, titled "Information for Victims of Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault, and Stalking" to educate survivors about their rights and the services available to them throughout the state. While some Troopers also participate in education, VPSOs are often seen to be involved in educating their community on DV and healthy relationships. A couple of participants mentioned going to the community and schools to provide presentations to build awareness and educate on prevention.

Coordination and Collaboration: Law enforcement works closely with various partners, including DV organizations, Tribal councils, housing authorities, and other entities to ensure that survivors receive the necessary support and resources. Law enforcement also coordinates with sexual assault response teams, as needed. Participants highlighted the importance of trust between survivors, service providers, and collaboration among various entities (e.g., police, Coast Guard, clinics) to ensure the wellbeing of the survivors. For instance, one law enforcement participant shared that when they collaborate with their local behavioral health program in the villages, it helps survivors recognize the DV, which helps their investigation. Sometimes DV goes on for so long that survivors hide it or do not name it as DV. It is important for law enforcement to not only do a thorough investigation, but also collaborate with local organizations when possible to best understand the local community context and norms that may be influencing a survivor's participation in the investigation.

Alaska State Troopers (AST)

Many Alaska State Trooper actions are required by law, such as arresting, information sharing, and transportation of harm doers. This suggests a potential area for future legislation in the requirements of law enforcement for their role in securing safety for survivors. AST faces challenges due to the broad scope of their responsibilities. Interview participants shared that AST is often seen as the *"glue"* holding together community safety, despite being overwhelmed by the expectations placed on them. Their role includes not only law enforcement but also facilitating connections to resources and supporting victims through complex situations.

"Our job is to go in to investigate, find the facts, document. The facts arrest people who need to be arrested, separate people who need to be separated, and then taking people who need resources and connecting them to the right people." – Interview Participant, State Government

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Village Public Safety Officers (VPSOs)

The VPSO role functions similarly to AST. VPSOs are often the first point of contact for survivors. However, they are also the first point of contact for all emergency issues in their community, including medical and fire response. One participant reflected on their role as a VPSO,

> *"It isn't just the law enforcement side. We do the emergency, medical search and rescue, fire prevention and suppression. We provide education in the schools, so we have a chance to build positive relationships, Even though the law enforcement side is positive. People don't necessarily always see it that way, but we're able to form relationships with people in the community." – Interview Participant, VPSO*

Participants shared that VPSOs respond to emergency calls and investigate to assess the situation. VPSOs can remove a harm-doer or relocate the survivor to a safe location. VPSOs also enforce restraining orders and other legal protections that help keep survivors safe. VPSOs serve as a vital link in the safety and support network for survivors in rural Alaska, providing immediate response, legal protection, safe housing coordination, and community-based support. Their role is particularly critical in areas where other law enforcement and support services are limited or absent. In situations where resources are unavailable, such as due to weather or staffing, VPSOs often must be resourceful and flexible. Interview participants shared stories of VPSOs personally housing a survivor if no other options are available.

> *"One of my officers who was [on an island] went 45 days without a plane. Right at the beginning of that stint of no aircraft, he had a minor victim attempt suicide, and she had been sexually assaulted by family members for period of time. The family that was there didn't want to be involved in that. This VPSO and his wife housed this child. She was [age] at the time, at their home for 40 plus days, took care of her, got her to school and brought her home, and made sure she was housed and fed…It's different… Sometimes you're put in a situation that by far is not normal, and really should never happen, but for the safety of the victim and the situation that's going on you have no choice. It's the right thing to do." – Interview Participant, VPSO*

Challenges to Law Enforcement Role

Law enforcement faces significant challenges in supporting survivors of violence, primarily due to the broad expectations placed upon them and their limited resources. Law enforcement often serves as first responders not only for criminal activities but also for various social issues, including mental health crises and juvenile problems. This expanded role, coupled with large caseloads, stretches their capacity and limits their ability to consistently support survivors. The challenge is

compounded by gaps in social services, which sometimes force law enforcement to step in and identify temporary housing for survivors using state resources. Officers frequently express feeling ill-equipped to handle all aspects of survivor care, particularly in areas such as psychological counseling and long-term housing solutions.

Recent improvements have been made to address these challenges, notably the introduction of Victim Navigators. This new paralegal role, created by the Alaska Department of Public Safety, assists with follow-up calls to survivors and case management, helping to bridge some of the existing gaps. However, there is still a pressing need for better coordination between law enforcement and social services. These challenges underscore the importance of specialized roles, like victim navigators, and call for more robust involvement with social services to ensure comprehensive support for survivors.

Housing Authority

While regional and Tribal housing authorities may house DV survivors, findings suggest that they do not appear to have a specific, formalized role in keeping survivors safe. Their primary focus is to provide long-term, affordable housing solutions for eligible individuals and families, with policies and priorities varying by region and organization. However, some housing authorities do prioritize providing housing for people experiencing DV.

Prioritization: The prioritization of applicants differs between regional housing authorities. Policies regarding the prioritization of DV survivors are determined by the board of each housing authority. A couple of participants shared that there is no specific DV prioritization, with one participant reflecting,

> *"We certainly get domestic violence survivors or those escaping domestic violence in our units, but all of our tenants have to be income certified before they can move in. So it's not a fast housing solution." – Interview Participant, Regional Housing Authority*

> *"Funding really could depend based on the housing authority, the underlying factor is the board through their communities appointments to the Regional Housing Authority Board, that's how it's decided how the funding is allocated. So, are they going to do new development? Are they going to do rehab? Are they going to support vouchers and rental assistance?" – Interview Participant, Regional Housing Authority*

It was noted that some housing authorities do give priority to individuals experiencing homelessness, which may indirectly benefit DV survivors.

Building Housing: Housing authorities primarily focus on providing long-term housing solutions rather than emergency shelters or transitional housing. Some housing authorities are involved in

exploring shelter options and collaborating with local DV agencies to build these structures. However, due to their funding structure, housing authorities often require long-term leases, which aren't compatible with emergency or short-term transitional housing needs. Thus, findings suggest that housing authorities need to rely on other agencies to address the need for emergency and transitional housing .

Advocating for Housing Priorities for Survivors: The Association of Alaska Housing Authorities (AHA) does play an advocacy role in prioritization of resources and policies. They work with the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to discuss housing programs and how they can be improved. AHA was noted to be involved in responding to legislative advocacy for funding, which can in turn support housing for survivors. The AHA also provides a platform for housing authorities to share best practices and discuss issues.

Trauma-Informed Staff: It was briefly mentioned that some housing authorities have a value of ensuring their staff are trauma-informed. This approach was noted to help staff understand that applicants might be going through difficult times and give them tools to respond if they are experiencing a crisis. One participant mentioned that housing authorities have worked with DV agencies and other organizations to train their staff.

Behavioral Health Aides and Community Health Workers

Behavioral health aides (BHAs) and community health workers (CHWs) play an important role in providing immediate support to respond and connect survivors to resources and helping them navigate complex systems to ensure their safety and wellbeing. One CHW reflected on their role in supporting survivors,

> *"Just helping people access care because they're not familiar with it. If they have access to transportation and they have access to housing, usually it's just about helping them navigate the healthcare system to get them connected."– Interview Participant, Behavioral Health Aide*

Referral and Resource Coordination: BHA/CHWs offer resources and referrals to mental health providers, primary care providers, substance abuse treatment, detox facilities, and more. They help connect survivors to local shelters and can sometimes facilitate the screening process to support their eligibility for shelter services.

Crisis Response: Health clinics, often staffed by BHAs/CHWs in the villages, were described as safe places for survivors to go during a crisis. Some BHAs/CHWs shared that they will accompany first responders to DV incidents, where they will provide crisis response to the survivor.

Intensive Case Management: They provide ongoing support to survivors based on their needs, including helping navigate the healthcare system. They work to address the root causes of issues and connect survivors to appropriate services.

Getting to Safety and Services: They arrange transportation for survivors to appointments. Depending on availability, some BHAs/CHWs have relationships with specific transportation companies that they use because the companies are more trauma-informed and sensitive to survivors needs.

Collaboration and Relationship Building: They work to establish long-term relationships with community members, which is key to providing effective support and referrals. BHAs/CHWs often work as part of multidisciplinary teams to provide comprehensive support to community members, including survivors.

Housing Support: BHAs/CHWs have some role in helping survivors with housing. Comments mentioned helping enroll survivors in housing stabilization programs. They can arrange temporary housing in hotels when funds are available. Participants noted that they have helped survivors access programs that provide rent relief and funds for furnishing homes.

Tribal Government and Tribal Organizations

Comprehensive Support Services: Many Tribes and Tribal organizations operate programs that offer a wide range of services to support survivors, including providing case management, supplying basic needs, workforce development, childcare, mental health support, financial assistance, transportation and culture-related opportunities. They also offer services specific to victims of violence, including crisis centers, child advocacy centers, and sexual assault response teams. One participant who worked for a Tribal organization shared,

> *"Our program is a transitional program...We have direct financial assistance. So, we can help with utilities, groceries, prepaid cell phones, locks, whatever things they need, up to a certain point, we have transportation assistance... We help with referrals and connect with resources. Then we do general advocacy and support services." – Interview Participant, Behavioral Health Aide*

Advocacy and Prevention: Alongside providing direct services, there is a strong emphasis on advocacy and prevention. This includes efforts to break the cycle of violence through public education, community engagement, and social norms messaging to help survivors feel safe and supported enough to come forward.

Collaboration: Tribes and Tribal organizations collaborate internally within their own departments, and externally with local organizations. For example, one participant who worked in Tribal family services shared that they have collaborated with their tribe's behavioral health department to temporarily house survivors in a hotel. They were also noted to collaborate with local coalitions and community teams. Many Tribes and Tribal organizations have long-standing relationships with their nearest DV organization. However, this relationship is often not without intentional time and effort to collectively serve survivors. For instance, one participant at a Tribal

government shared that they try to have weekly in-person meetings with their local DV organization to talk about shared cases, services, and goals.

Housing Support: Housing, generally, is identified as a significant priority for many Tribes and Tribal organizations. These entities strive to be creative in providing housing solutions, especially in DV situations. This includes offering emergency housing, transitional housing, financial assistance long-term housing, such as for rent, utilities, and other necessities. One participant shared that they use Indian Housing Block Grant funds to pay for temporary housing for someone who is one their way to a treatment program, and these same funds could be used for temporarily housing survivors or harm doers.

Eligibility for Tribal Services

Eligibility for Tribal services varies depending on the type of service and the individual's status as a Tribal citizen. Housing assistance is primarily available to Tribal citizens who are experiencing hardship or emergencies, particularly if they cannot use other shelter services. Victim advocacy and response services, on the other hand, are often open to the entire community, including survivors of DV. While in many communities anyone can access these services, Tribal citizens might receive faster access to additional funding and resources due to established Tribal programs. Elder services are limited to Tribal citizens, but citizenship is not restricted to individuals from a specific Native village. Many Tribes allow dual enrollment, enabling individuals from other areas to become citizens and access these services. Overall, while Tribal citizens often receive priority or quicker access to services, some programs are available to the broader community.

Challenges to Tribes and Tribal Organizations Roles

Findings highlighted system barriers, such as administrative and legal systems, that survivors face in seeking housing, which was noted to impact Tribal staff in their role. For instance, participants shared that there are issues with accessing necessary services such as food stamps, financial assistance, and legal aid, all of which are critical for securing stable housing and addressing the broader impacts of violence on a survivor's life.

There are challenges related to staffing, particularly in rural areas, which can impact the consistency and availability of Tribal services. One participant noted that cultural barriers and stigma affect their ability to support survivors. They shared that efforts to change attitudes towards DV and encourage reporting are ongoing, but survivors often still face a culture of silence, which hinders their ability to seek help. This cultural barrier is intertwined with the challenges of inconsistent support services because the inconsistency dampers a survivor's ability to feel safe and trusting to come forward.

State Government and Statewide Agency Roles

The Alaska State government and statewide agencies play various roles in ensuring survivors of DV are safe and housed, including funding and coordination, collaboration with Tribes, training and technical assistance support, and specific housing programs.

Funding and Coordination: The State government is seen as a key role for both the coordination of resources and funding of efforts. Housing is described as a complex and expensive issue that requires substantial State support, such as providing housing vouchers, connecting with regional housing authorities, and advocating for additional funding. Housing also requires coordination across programs and initiatives that the State provides. One participant shared what coordination looks like for their role in the state:

> *"It's just it's having those relationships…and making sure that we have all those people at the table so that everybody can play their role. " – Interview Participant, State Government*

Collaboration with Tribes: There's recognition that the State government can support Tribes in housing efforts, though it's also important to respect the autonomy and sovereignty of Tribes. Collaboration between State and Tribal entities was noted by participants as generally effective and continuously improving, especially in situations where survivors need to be relocated for safety. However, there is still a lot of work to be done, such as increasing Tribal land ownership, increasing non-Westernized practices of support, supporting Tribal movements, providing more accessibility, and recognizing the rurality of many villages to better understand the strengths and challenges of their communities.

Training and Technical Assistance Support: Statewide agencies, like the Alaska Network on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault (ANDVSA), offer training and technical assistance support to programs. ANDVSA also offers legal assistance to its member programs across the state, helping them address issues like housing discrimination. However, participants noted that there is a need for more education on housing protections to better support survivors.

Specific Housing Programs: State initiatives, like the Housing Choice and Section 8 Vouchers, allow for rapid access to housing through regional programs. The State also supports programs to navigate permanent supportive housing options, with increasing funding available from federal sources like HUD.

Challenges of State Support

The State bureaucracy is described as slow, making it difficult to address urgent needs quickly. The challenge is compounded by factors like rising costs and underutilized buildings. This suggests a need for better understanding and strategic action from the State. Participants also shared that there are many priorities to address the needs of all citizens in Alaska, making DV-specific programs a competing priority. One participant shared:

> *"We're dealing with climate change and places eroding. There's so many different places that are in need for so many reasons. Whether it's the cost of*

housing going up, the cost of food going up. [The State] is like trying to choose between them and it's a mess."– Interview Participant, State Government

5.d. DV Service Providers & Non-DV Service Providers Must Coordinate Better to Leverage Resources and Roles

Supporting survivors in seeking safe housing requires multi-agency partnerships to provide comprehensive support. These partnerships span different sectors, including Tribal organizations, State government agencies, law enforcement, social services, and housing authorities. For example, law enforcement needs to collaborate with local DV shelters to get survivors to safety. Tribal housing authorities described needing to work with Tribal courts and police departments to improve service delivery. Multiple participants discussed the importance of coordinated case management, where different agencies work together to support an individual survivor by sharing information and resources. These multi-agency partnerships aim to create a network of support that can address the complex and varied needs of survivors, from emergency crises to long-term housing stability, as each agency brings its unique expertise and resources to the table. One DV organization participant reflected on their engagement with law enforcement when they have a victim staying at their shelter space in a village:

> *"It's not a very safe place, but we do keep police in here. When we have victims, we make sure there's police with them the whole time they're here." – Interview Participant, DV Shelter Staff*

Moreover, many participants highlighted the importance of building relationships within the community, including with individual landlords, schools, churches, and local businesses, like hotels. These connections were noted as crucial for providing immediate support and resources to survivors locally. Participants emphasized the need to build relationships with landlords to increase housing options for survivors. This included educating landlords about housing programs and maintaining communication to address issues with housing as they arise. One participant shared the success the experienced when they collaborated with landlords:

> *"We were able to successfully house people this summer, and it was because we had landlord relationships. We had landlords that those rentals wouldn't hit the market. They would send us a message [first]. It wasn't for lack of work on our part. We had to continue. So if there were issues, we're the liaison between the landlord and the tenant. [Survivors] still have the same rights. We still would refer people to legal services if needed. But trying to teach people that you have responsibility… So we tried to offer classes…It's not just what your rights are as a tenant, but also what your responsibilities are. Did you know that there's a quiet time from this to this time? Did you know that these are your responsibilities? I think when we're talking with landlords that helps because*

we're not just throwing somebody in their housing…they know that we'll kind of help if there are issues along the way." – Interview Participant, Tribal Housing

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However, there was also a recognized need among participants to increase this coordination between different sectors, such as housing, mental health, law enforcement, and social services. Participants highlighted that maintaining these partnerships requires ongoing effort, clear communication, trust, and a shared commitment, as well as navigating challenges such as staff turnover, competing resources, and differing organizational policies. One Tribal housing authority participant shared their opinion on their collaboration with other roles:

"There's only so much you can have one entity do in society. We're trying to help the troopers understand case law, legal liability, officer safety, and victims' rights. They can't now be a full-on psychiatrist as well. So we need social services to be involved and have like an onus in some of this. Otherwise, I don't think it's a law enforcement problem and I don't think that law enforcement is equipped to take on that problem without help from other services."– Interview Participant, Tribal Housing

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State and Tribal Relationships

A recurring theme is the need for stronger, more cohesive partnerships between State and Tribal entities to better serve Alaska Native populations, especially in rural areas. While Tribes have access to federal funds, the State brings administrative capacity and influence, and both must work together to avoid duplicating efforts or creating conflicts. Participants shared that the success of these collaborations hinges on building trust, upholding Tribal sovereignty, communication, and clearly defined roles.

Build Trust: Building trust between Tribes and state agencies is crucial, given the historical and ongoing experiences of harm and injustice that many Alaska Native communities have faced.

"The broken Western judicial system that is in application today is perpetuating the trauma and the harm and causing even indirectly more issues with domestic violence and housing issues. You can see that when looking at statistics and seeing that we're overrepresented in the justice system, or you can see it when victims don't want to report the violence. And that is more often than not, because we have a generalized collective distrust of a system that does not work for us, a system that harms us by its very nature." – Interview Participant, Tribal Government

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Repairing these relationships requires the State to genuinely listen, follow through, and consistently collaborate on Tribal needs.

> *"…the Tribes need to build a trust for the State and the State needs to start respecting the Tribes. Once both of those things happen… I think you can start building a strong partnership for all of Alaska." – Interview Participant, State Government*

Uphold Tribal Sovereignty & Culture: The current State systems can perpetuate harm, rather than help Native communities thrive. It is essential that the State of Alaska respect Tribal sovereignty and traditional knowledge, while also uplifting cultural healing in housing services, and valuing culture as a protective factor against violence.

> *"The state can take traditional knowledge into account. The state is founded on a system of extraction, and until the foundational issues are addressed, whatever steps they take are not going to be sufficient to correct the problems that the extractive colonizer mentality has created. There are ways that we can fix this, but it is a daunting task to think of all of the entire state government that would have to be dismantled and restructured to create a way that is sustainable and is healing for the harm that has been caused by both federal and state governments." – Interview Participant, Tribal Government*

Increase Collaboration & Communication: The State and Tribes can increase intentional collaboration on projects, support Tribal entities with obtaining funding, clearly define roles, and increase partnership between states and Tribes at the federal level. One State government participant shared that they see their role in federal-level advocacy to collaborate with Tribes and Tribal organizations on housing:

> *"We can give [Tribes] our support and we can tell people why this would be a good thing and why giving [Tribes] money to build a house or renovate a house would be positive for the community. I think we can be that partner and help in that way more than being asked to actually physically do stuff or physically buy housing because it's outside of what we're able to do." – Interview Participant, State Government*

Another theme was the need for collaborative efforts between Tribal governments, State entities, and non-Native organizations to ensure that Alaska Native survivors receive adequate services.

Tribes, which were noted to have access to specific funding streams, could be critical partners in supporting DV organizations' shelter programs, particularly those serving the Alaska Native population. However, participants noted a perceived resistance from the State to collaborate with Tribal entities, and State government process can lead to inefficiencies. For example, State or Tribal entities may apply for grants to create programs, like shelters, without consulting with the other entity which leads to overlapping or redundant services and competition for resources. This suggests the need for better alignment and collaboration to ensure that both Tribal and State resources are used effectively and efficiently. The State must be open to working with and granting resources to Tribes so Tribes can exercise their sovereignty and drive local solutions.

Findings also highlight the need to enhance communication on current housing initiatives, rather than working in silos. One participant mentioned:

"Communicating. They need to work together. Sometimes we're working towards the same goal in a different race. Why don't we work together and kind of get together and try to achieve that goal as partners rather than, you know, people trying to do it in their own silos?"– Interview Participant, State Government

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In some cases, participants noted the challenge of balancing multiple stakeholders' voices in collaborative projects. Participants pointed out that when roles and responsibilities are clearly defined, and when decision-making power is shared, it can lead to more effective and equitable outcomes.

Targeted Funding Resources: Increasing housing-specific funding from the State to Tribal entities, especially in rural areas, can address the financial challenges of having emergency and transitional housing options. Technical assistance resources and budget flexibility for Tribal entities was noted as key for survivor housing resources. Participants emphasized the need for community involvement and sustainable funding through partnerships between Tribes and State agencies to ensure that services continue even after federal funding decreases.

"We can do those large scale connections where … I could partner with a local shelter and with AHFC, for example, or Tlingit and Haida Regional Housing Authority… we know who those other people are to be able to collaborate on projects." – Interview Participant, Tribal Government

"That's the role of our legislative branch of our government. They're going to allocate resources to state agencies to administer the work. And the heart of their legislative intent, to me, is oftentimes determined by the executive branch delivering those services. But it all starts with the top, in my opinion, and that's

the legislative branch and their allocation of resources." – Interview Participant, Regional Housing Authority

5.e. Challenges to Seeking Safety and Returning to Unsafety Are Intrinsically Linked

There are overlapping challenges that survivors face when they are seeking safety, which are also their reasons for returning to unsafety. This suggests that if housing support were to address the challenges identified throughout this section, there could be success at both points in a survivor's journey.

Personal Challenges

Discomfort

Many participants expressed victims don't always feel comfortable going to a shelter, living in congregate settings, and being around other people. Some survivors also experience embarrassment and fear of retribution from their community.

Leaving behind belongings

Multiple participants shared that survivors struggle with seeking safety because they are emotionally attached to their personal belongings, home, and pets. One participant shared,

> *"We have barriers like, people are afraid to leave their pets behind and we can't have pets in our shelter. That's been something that I know from many discussions that the directors attempted to find a solution to. One of the big barriers is insurance is prohibiting housing animals in the shelter."– Interview Participant, DV Shelter Staff*

Co-occurring Issues

It was noted that there are co-occurring issues that take place at the same time as they seek safety, including mental health concerns and substance misuse. These co-occurring issues present challenges in qualifying for shelter services. A participant reflected,

> *"We're working with a group of people that are also in poverty, often with substance abuse issues and all of that combined." – Interview Participant, DV Shelter Staff*

The presence of co-occurring issues suggests the need for housing and support options to holistically address individuals and meeting them where they are at.

> *"Addressing the trauma, the intergenerational trauma, the mental health challenges. I think all of those things are interconnected, and you can't just*

separate housing as one thing to look at. You have to look at the whole web of factors." Interview Participant, Tribal Government

Relationship Challenges

Domestic Violence-Related Factors

The cycle of DV was noted as an underpinning to the survivor's ability to seek and retain safety. Participants shared that they lack an opportunity to leave safely, along with the presence of common factors, such as lack of financial resources, rental history, work history, and poor credit. Some survivors also have issues with child custody with their harm-doer. One participant shared:

> *"A lot of times … the abuser will isolate someone and not allow them to work or, you know, encourage them not to, and so they'll be long periods of time without any kind of work history and so it's really hard to find a job that will support you. And the lack of rental history is an issue. If you don't have anyone to vouch for you, how are people going to be able to get you in that place."– Interview Participant, Victim Advocate*

Support System Dynamics

A few participants shared that there are complicated friend and familial dynamics that impact survivors' ability to seek and retain safety. In a few cases, participants shared that they don't want to leave their support system in the villages, or they want to return to their communities to be with their family and friends.

One participant also mentioned that survivors face challenges seeking safety because they have exhausted their support system (i.e., friends and family) with repeated returns to their DV relationship. This was noted to make it *"exhausting"* for their support system to provide safety *"again."*

Shelter Challenges

Lack of safe homes

Participants shared that safe homes are offered by a range of entities, from DV organizations, public buildings, to private homes. About half of the interview participants shared that there is an absence of safe homes in their community, particularly in the villages. Only a couple of participants noted that there are safe homes either in their community or in neighboring communities. This finding suggests that inadequate shelter options, including DV shelter and safe homes, present barriers to survivors who are seeking emergency shelter.

Domestic Violence Shelter Capacity & Screening Restrictions

In Alaska, it is common to have one shelter serve more than one community or more than one region, with one shelter staff participant noting they serve up to 56 communities. Factors such as

weather and transportation limit their staffs' capacity to provide shelter to survivors located in regions far away from the shelter. Expanding on their extensive service areas—often surpassing the shelter's capacity—participants highlighted the widespread challenges of overcrowded shelters, which were seen to overburden DV organizations and prevent survivors from obtaining shelter.

To address the high demand and capacity challenges, shelters implement a screening process that varies between agencies. Participants noted that households are overcrowded, leading to clients seeking shelter when they are asked to leave or face eviction. In these cases, DV shelters screen these individuals out of their services. Interestingly, one participant highlighted that one shelter has a policy that screens out potential clients if the violence has not yet occurred. For example, this participant recollected a time when a client reached out because their partner started abusing substances, pre-empting their need for shelter because they anticipated experiencing violence when their partner is under the influence. Unfortunately, since the violence had not occurred yet, the shelter *screened out* this individual. Another participant shared that their shelter has the requirement that the survivor must be in active danger and the harm-doer must be currently located in their community. This participant shared,

> *"Oftentimes their harm-doer is in the village and they have the opportunity to hop on a plane and can be there within an hour or two, but they don't count that as active danger. And so that's really been a struggle that we've been going through. And I talked to them a couple times about that and they're just like-I think they're just so overloaded that's how they had to do it."– Interview Participant, Victim Advocate*

These findings suggest that survivors are reaching out for help, yet they are facing barriers to seeking safety due to overcapacity and the screen-out process. Participants shared that they are often faced with the question of: should we prevent violence from happening (because of overcrowding or substance misuse), or should we just screen people who have already *'been beaten up'?*

Requirements Preventing Help-seeking

In some instances of seeking safety, survivors choose not to go to their local DV shelters because they do not fit the criteria or requirements to get into housing. Shelter services vary widely. Some offer short stays and others accommodate survivors for longer periods. However, the lack of uniformity and limitations on crisis stabilization periods can leave survivors with no stable options. This often forces them back into abusive situations. One participant shared:

> *"If individuals could stay long enough that they could find housing, they normally would continue on their progress. If by the time they got to what was the end of their stay in emergency shelter and they hadn't lined anything up,*

we saw that they would start looking backwards."– Interview Participant, State Government

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Service Support Challenges

There are many challenges associated with DV service support in every region of the state. Some communities experience more challenges than others due to factors such as proximity to help, delays in response time, and lacking law enforcement and/or victim service programs that support survivors. The COVID-19 pandemic was noted to have exacerbated challenges, such as reducing staffing support systems that provided safe housing and other forms of assistance. Travel restrictions and social distancing further isolated survivors and that limited their ability to seek safety. There also was an overall lack of support services available for males and elders seeking safety.

Lack of Protection

Safety concerns came up frequently among participants. Most shelters throughout the state do not have a system of protection in place against harm-doers. Participants shared that many communities lack law enforcement. In some communities, shelters are also considered unsafe due to violence perpetration within the shelter and people choose not to go to them for that reason alone.

Serving Alaska Native Survivors

A few participants shared that a survivor's culture is often impacted by the shelter service provider's capacity. For instance, language barriers and traditional subsistence diets were noted as challenges for shelters to accommodate. One participant reflected:

"A lot of our village clients … grew up on a traditional subsistence diet. I've had clients who wouldn't even eat chicken 'cause they won't eat gussuk (white people) food." – Interview Participant, DV Shelter Staff

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Most shelter options are offered in hub communities and cities, removing Alaska Native survivors away from their homes, traditions, and ways of being. It was noted to be difficult for some survivors to have to adapt to a Westernized way of being, especially when they needed to heal. In many instances, shelters did not have culturally-specific services available to Alaska Native survivors. One participant mentioned an improvement and approach to offering culturally specific services:

"I think a lot of the Tribes, at least in our area, are pushing that reconnection with culture. We have culture nights that are open to the whole community and I think it's not just telling our victims that these services are there, these events are there, but really just walking alongside of them and having the capability

and staff capacity ourselves to be able to go with them to know that, 'hey, we're going to go do this and once we've gone a few times and you've made some friends and you're building a support system here, then you'll be able to carry on your own,' because really the key is resiliency, right? We can't just throw them out there and expect that they're going to gain that overnight." – Interview Participant, Tribal Government

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Finally, service providers' biases against Alaska Native survivors were also briefly noted by one participant to have been a challenge. These considerations highlight a need for programs to incorporate regionally-specific and Alaska Native-specific values and traditions into their support.

The following story illustrates how difficult it is for a survivor – and even trained advocates – to navigate multiple systems and still be turned away.

"There was a woman and her three children – this was a long-term abusive situation – he was beating the living daylights out of her for years – she even stayed overnight in the woods to escape him and tried to get to someone who would hide her. Her mother called me and said what can we do. She was a tribal member living in another community. We were able to access family violence funds, got her on a plane with the 3 kids – we had to sneak her out to the airport and coordinate it so no one knew she would be there – it was right around Christmas and we talked to the shelter in the city – they said no problem we'll take her, just get her on the plane. We paid for 3 nights at a hotel in the city while she was waiting to get into the shelter. The survivor called every day to get into the shelter because the shelter had told her to call when she got to town. The shelter finally told her that they did not believe she was in immediate danger anymore because she was now at a hotel in the city and her abuser was in the village. So I convinced the Tribal council to pay for 10 days in this hotel – because it was Christmas – and we organized people to collect food and gifts to give her and her kids over the holidays. We contacted the regional Tribal Corporation and they wouldn't help. She had a car stored at her sisters in the city – her sister's house was packed, there were like 15 people in a 3-bedroom house. Her and her kids stayed in her sister's garage in the wintertime waiting to get into the shelter. She continued to call the city shelter and they would not let her in, even though there was room available. She eventually returned to the village and the abuse. We finally got her out another time – but it was 6 months later and another beating." – DV Victim Advocate

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6. Next Steps to Safe Housing

"Trying to build a house in rural Alaska costs a significant amount of money. I talked to some members with the housing authorities, and they talk about $700,000 to $800,000 a house. That is just astronomical. I mean, nobody's gonna be able to afford that. There's just not an economy of scale, or the economy in general to be able to afford that. So, cost of housing, very high." – Interview Participant, VPSO

Village of St. Paul, John Ryan, Photo credit: KUCB

6. Next Steps to Safe Housing

This section provides a summary of suggested ways to ensure safe housing for Alaska Native people who have experienced DV. These ideas were shared by study participants across the state, including survivors, DV advocates, Tribal housing authorities, regional housing authorities, Tribal government, and State and local law enforcement. These ideas were also discussed in depth and validated during an in-person listening session hosted in Anchorage, Alaska in June 2024.

Ideas are presented in the following topical groupings:

Leverage Funding & Collaboration Across Service Providers

Expand Safe Homes Beyond DVSA Providers

Limit the Use of Local Housing To Accommodate Seasonal Workers and Tourists

Increase Community Education and Protective Factors

Expand Voucher Programs

Renovate Older & Vacant Homes Into Shelters

Remove the Harm Doer from the Home

6.a. Leverage Funding & Collaboration Across Service Providers

Participants frequently mentioned the importance of securing and wisely managing diverse funding streams. Many communities face severe budget limitations for their housing and service programs. This issue is compounded by complex restrictions and requirements, which have led to the underutilization of existing housing funding streams. The problem is evident at both individual and systemic levels. Survivors struggle with applications and eligibility requirements, while service providers face challenges navigating funding specifications and unallowable costs.

To address housing challenges, participants emphasized the need for innovative approaches to secure and use funding for housing. Creative leveraging of resources, such as combining federal, state, Tribal, and private donations, has been successful in some regions. Participants agreed that the Bay Haven Shelter in Hooper Bay was a promising model that used Tribal corporation money, state funding, and private donations to establish a safe housing facility. June Gathering participants suggested that Tribes utilize the 105(L) Lease Program to increase Tribal sovereignty and reduce facility costs. This approach of diversifying highlights the potential of leveraging local resources and donations to address housing needs in rural Alaska.

Some proposed using Section 8 vouchers creatively to support permanent housing projects, while others suggested leveraging Tribal funding to supplement non-Native programs that also serve Alaska Native survivors. One participant shared an example of using old shelters as collateral to purchase new apartment buildings, illustrating how blending grants with creative financial strategies can expand housing availability. Additionally, applying for climate resiliency grants to address challenges like erosion and land scarcity demonstrates how housing needs can be framed within broader contexts to secure additional funding.

Participants stressed the importance of fostering creative partnerships. Interview participants suggested that Tribes, Tribal organizations, and other agencies were also encouraged to explore nontraditional funding sources. These include streams for mental health, rural community development, cultural tourism, and foster care. DV and non-DV entities were suggested to work together to leverage existing housing resources. This cooperation could help combine funding across various programs, such as 105(L), VAWA, and FMAP. One person reflected on the strength of having multiple entities involved in a housing project:

Examples of Solutions:

Apply for non-traditional funding streams, such as federal grants that are available for the justice system or mental health programs, by using selective wording within the application to tailor requests for funding to be considered under these non-traditional streams.

"How can the Tribes and the state work together to keep people housed? You could reroute some of that funding for their workers to the Tribes, like they're doing at CITC for the TANF program. Invest more within the ICWA workers, because right now the ICWA programs only get BIA federal funding and that's all like based on your numbers. If you're like us with a tiny tribe, with like under 400 people, you don't get a lot of money. So, the formulas need to be changed to fully take care of the folks that need help." – Interview Participant, Regional Housing Authority

Leverage existing housing funding structures, such as Section 8, to pay the renter and not the landlords.

"So, what I did was, it was kind of creative…We owned our old shelter outright because we had it for so long, it was paid off. We converted that to our first eight units of permanent supportive housing and got a grant from [Alaska Housing Finance Corporation] to do that…We [also] had an old apartment building we'd had for a long time. We got somebody to do some [remodeling] in there and then I was able to use that apartment as collateral to buy another apartment building. Then I used some cash…as collateral to get a loan to buy another apartment building that we used the Section Eight housing vouchers in for the rent. We could pay the payment because Section Eight housing vouchers could be used. The money that comes from that can be used to make payments, where grants can't be used to make payments." – Interview Participant, State Government

Combine grant funding across programs and/or have different communities and Tribal organizations pool funding to increase community resources. Substance misuse or mental health programs should coordinate with entities providing DVSA services to improve resources for supportive housing.

"[VPSOs] have learned to really sit down and talk about the hard stuff. Everyone wants their money; VPSOs want to spend their money. The reality is if we don't grow the program like we tell the legislature we're going to grow the program, [the legislature is] not going to fund the program…[VPSO programs] basically share our money. Initially everyone has the same opportunity, but as the year progresses…if we weren't sharing this information…next thing you know, we're turning back one million dollars. If you don't catch that early on in the year, there's no way to responsibly spend one million dollars… We realized that we

need to start looking at this stuff early. I look at my budget every week, so I know where I'm at, but other folks don't…That's why it's important for us as a group to hold everybody accountable at some point and we all sit together, we all talk about it, and we know where we're at [financially]…If you had something like this related to domestic violence … I think building in something like this is an important tool to make it work, because you'll have folks that aren't able to spend their money that they're given and you'll have folks that can spend more money because, say, they have more survivors in the region that need safety or whatever the case may be, a larger population to start with, however it works." – Interview Participant, VPSO

Create funding streams modeled off previous civic initiatives to create housing support for survivors within communities. For instance, one participant brought up the Molly Hooch Act, where a school was built in every village.

"More communities should involve their for-profit Native corporations because they're the ones who own the land, they're the ones who can lease land. You can't build anything or renovate anything if you don't have the land, and so people are just stuck." – Interview Participant, DV Shelter Staff

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Look for outside funding sources and combine grants to create spaces that serve multiple purposes and communities, including serving as a safe house.

"I would like to put a building in community that would serve as a public safety building. It would serve as TFYS, OVC, and it would have apartments in there, not only for the personnel that are going to be working out of that area, but also to have safe housing. It will have all the amenities it would need to operate. It's just money, right? So, I have to go outside and look for funding sources outside, and I was looking at USDA grants, looking at CTAS grants, so I'll be combining those two to make the project work." – Interview Participant, VPSO

Working with grant writers to establish funding to put a trailer in communities to serve as a safe home

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"I would like to work in partnership with Tribes to determine the best solutions or funds to help fund a trailer being put in each village that's a safe house for somebody for the night or two nights while they wait to come to town or, um,

just to get a night away from their partner if they need. So, um, I think that that's a possibility with our capacity as a Native association, with our grant writers, and our grant support team, and working in collaboration with Tribes. I think that's a possibility in the future for us to kind of work towards." – Interview Participant, Behavioral Health Aides

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Create more transitional housing options in the state by jointly applying for and utilizing housing resources across service providers.

"So, I would like to see some sort of collaboration between housing authorities and or the shelter to kind of create a transitional apartment situation for survivors because the shelter is, like, not a long-term solution." – Interview Participant, Behavioral Health Aides

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6.b. Expand the Use of Safe Homes Beyond DV Providers

Overall, participants regarded safe homes as helpful solutions to emergency situations for survivors. A few participants shared what has worked well in their experience using the safe home model:

- Creating and maintaining a list of individuals who volunteer to offer a safe home.
- Identifying leaders within the community to step in and build support for the survivor during the first 24 hours after an incident (e.g., behavioral health aides).
- Supporting local entities who have apartments to rent to utilize vacant spaces as safe homes, as needed.

However, the availability of safe homes was noted as variable across communities and regions. Licensed safe homes are often unavailable in rural Alaskan communities. Some participants also described challenges to the safe house model, such as expenses to pay for utilities, maintenance, security, and staffing. Multiple participants suggested increasing the availability of safe homes in their communities. June Gathering suggested partnering with hospital systems and Tribal universities to create safe homes.

Examples of Solutions:

Use the existing networks of foster homes in youth court to expand the list of safe homes available. This also helps address the issue of not needing a background check on a volunteer safe home because they are approved by a Tribal Court system.

> *"We don't have an actual safe house…We just have a list of homes that people volunteer for safe homes and it's not only domestic violence, it's for the Tribal court too. You know when kids need a safe home, [the court] just calls them up and asks if … we could use their home for the night… it's confidential and the parents or the spouse won't have access to that home. I think we have a list of six to ten safe homes. It was actually started through the Tribal Court… They're like foster homes, but they don't have to be foster homes, they just have to be approved by the Tribal court." – Interview Participant, Victim Advocate*

Villages should create a building that could be used as a short-term immediate shelter to serve as a safe space to wait for law enforcement to arrive in the village, get connected with resources, and/or identify the next steps in their journey.

"…You'll get this phone call and it will be a woman in the village who's called number to get to trooper dispatch and she's screaming and crying over the phone to me. Her feet are braced against the toilet and she's holding the door shut with her back in the bathroom and the man in her life is beating down this door screaming that he's going to kill her and hurt her. And you're 300 miles away at night in the winter with a storm between you and no one's flying.

So how do you solve this problem? Well, I need to stay on the phone with her, but I also need to get a different phone so I can start trying to call people in the village. So you open up the phone book and you start trying to call people in the village. Like, 'can you go over there and help? Can you give her a place to stay? Somebody please stop this from happening until we can get there.' Depending on the village, you'll have people that are very brave, courageous people that will go and help…Then you just stay up all night waiting for the opportunity to get on a plane to go, hoping that she can survive the hours that she's got to get through. You coach her through, 'Wait for him to leave, jump out a window, run away. Where do I go? I don't know, like somewhere, you know what I mean?' Like what do you-what do you say?

So all of that to illustrate that if there's a safe house that that village has, it's a public access area that maybe the council, or the city, or tribe controls it.. it's a place that they could go just for at least that temporary safety." – Interview Participant, State Government

Leveraging existing buildings, such as disaster shelters or community centers, to house survivors.

"…It can start small. A small building donated building that houses not only victims of domestic violence, but maybe even displaced families or families that have suffered other catastrophic events. There's all kinds of things that are in place. We often think of disaster shelters. Think of that on a smaller scale, because what's not viewed as a disaster to some is a disaster for that five-year-old or six-year-old that lives in that house. Our winter storms can tear up a house, but man, I know from personal experience that humans can do much more damage than that."– Interview Participant, VPSO

Create career pathways to train youth in rural areas to support housing and public safety programs to alleviate staffing and security challenges.

"Revisions in training and the way that certification is a career pathway for youth in rural Alaska…If you look at the makeup of most village police officers and Tribal police officers, they are high school graduates just trying to find some kind of a career path that they can be sustained within their own communities. And right now you have to be 21 to be a VPSO and that's not going to change. But I'm thinking a little outside the box on how to create positions that support VPSOs because now we have money for other positions, but also have them have a career path that segues into being a VPSO. So that's one aspect creating, implementing the old statute, the regional public safety officer to support VPSOs, not only in supervision, but in work and everything else is another aspect… I think we need to build up the program, get to where we feel like it's naturally going to be sustained at that level. And then once we realize that we get to that number, then we start thinking about how can we keep these people here. And one of the biggest challenges I see is that number of VPSOs shot up when Governor Parnell was elected in 2009 and he did the Choose Respect initiative. And bumping numbers for VPSOs, but it didn't offer the support that was necessary to keep those numbers there. So if I could paint you kind of a picture of what I think happened with that is you have a foundation for a two-bedroom house. And you never change the foundation, but you build that house into a four-bedroom house. And you stack two stories on top of it. The weight of that for that foundation is just too much for that foundation. It crumbles under itself. So we did not build in the support mechanisms. We just built into positions."– Interview Participant, VPSO

6.c. Limit the Use of Local Housing for Seasonal Workers and Tourists

The influx of tourism in Alaska affects many regions in the state. During the summer, seasonal workers and vacation rentals occupy many of the housing options. This leaves little to no rental options for local survivors and their families. Suggestions included Tribes and governments putting a cap on the number of vacation rentals, such as Airbnb, the state adopting a transient tax in Alaska, and communities providing incentives to landlords to rent locally.

June Gathering participants believe limits on seasonal housing should be approached by partnering with housing owners. For instance, providing incentives to short-term rental owners, allowing a tax break if they build a home in rural Alaska, and partnering with Tribes to renovate bed and breakfasts for survivors to use.

Examples of Solutions:

Putting a cap on Airbnb rentals and adopting a transient tax in Alaska.

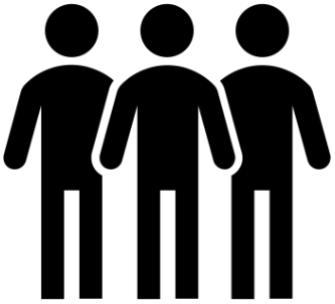
> *"I think they have to start looking at potentially a cap on Airbnb rentals. It came to a council before where we were able to put a transient tax, so if you're coming through, it doesn't change my mind if we go to Hawaii or Seattle because there's a transient tax on each night that I'm staying, I still go to that place and I still pay it. So we're a tourist destination. I think we should be charging that and it should be going back into the community in some way, whether its affordable housing or something [else]." – Interview Participant, Tribal Housing*

Adopting new Airbnb restrictions that require homeowners to live in the Airbnb at least six months out of the year before they can Airbnb or VRBO it.

> *"[City] passed a rule that you have to live in the place at least six months a year in order to Airbnb or VRBO it the rest of the other six months…There could be some limitations that we look at in Alaska."– Interview Participant, State Government*

6.d. Increase Community Education and Protective Factors

Some participants continually suggested addressing the root causes of violence as a solution to the housing issue. This included providing more educational opportunities for communities around DV prevention. Many participants believed increasing local protective factors could also decrease the rates of DV in their communities. For instance, if there were more adult-friendly alcohol-free events, it could decrease the likelihood of DV occurrences. One participant shared



> *"It's a complex issue, but I realize that a lot of my answers to the housing thing I'm drifting back to like what's really the source of our problems and what are we doing to try to fix the source, rather than all these knee-jerk reactions to the results of the problem? How are we educating and training and teaching and guiding and developing our kids and our young people and to help them."– Interview Participant, State Government*

Examples of Solutions:

Provide more education to communities about DV prevention and looking at each community as a whole and addressing unique disparities.

> *"I think the funding to maybe education by, you know, it starts before it starts. You know, you need to attack it before it occurs. You know, what are acceptable behaviors and what are viewed as unacceptable? Teach our children this. You know, let's look at communities as a whole. What are their disparities? And how can they be helped?" – Interview Participant, Behavioral Health Aide*

Provide communities with more education on the protections in the Violence Against Women's Act.

> *"I think part of that is it wouldn't be a bad idea to do more education on what is protected in, like VAWA and the protections they have for housing. I think that's one area that we could really step it up in our state to make sure people are aware of those protections."– June Gathering Participant*

Provide communities with more engaging activities that increase protective factors in adults.

"I think … having something for adults to do other than drink. They will have gym night here at the school, and adults go, and kids aren't allowed to play. It's just the adults. And I think that's a good thing. If there were more activities for people to engage in... It just brings them together…And you can just see them on the community Facebook page…it's something they look forward to."– Interview Participants, Behavioral Health Aide

"My thoughts on this are just prevention and providing things to prevent domestic violence from happening, whether it be education, cultural events and opportunities, and restoring traditional ways that can help prevent domestic violence." Interview Participant, Tribal Government

6.e. Expand Current Voucher Programs

Participants suggested increasing flexibility and expanding voucher programs, such as the ECHP. By reducing restrictions on location, voucher programs can reach more communities outside of cities and hub communities. Participants also shared that voucher programs need to allow flexibility on timelines to account for varied housing availability. June Gathering participants and interview participants suggested that programs reassess free market rent rates to reflect regional costs, reevaluate housing quality standards to reflect Alaska specific homes, and incentivize landlords to accept vouchers.

Examples of Solutions:

Expanding the ECHP Voucher program so that it can be accessible to more survivors.

"…Enhancing the ECHP housing voucher program. I think it would be a conversation for AHFC. I don't know how much you know about the ECHP program…Most certainly, that can always and should be, in my mind, expanded so that more victims have access to affordable housing once they leave shelter." – Interview Participant, State Government

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Changing the housing standards for the Section 8 voucher program to include dry cabins.

"I think the other thing that we have to start talking about and can be a role that we do at the statewide is there are waivers that have been given for VA to be able to live and dry cabins and still use vouchers. There's no reason why we can't get those same exceptions made to our Section 8 housing vouchers that we have for victims of DV, because some of them are very comfortable living in a dry cabin and they're fine with that, but right now they're being forced to meet these housing standards." – Interview Participant, State Government

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Expanding the Section 8 voucher programs to reach more communities.

"I think that we could keep working on improving the voucher system and that Section 8 voucher system and getting that voucher system out to more communities, because right now it's only in ten communities. There's

communities without it and building more public housing that has a preference for DV victims." – Interview Participant, State Government

6.f. Renovate Older or Vacant Structures to Turn into Housing Options

Some communities have unused or older structures, such as schools or commercial properties, that could be renovated. Some federal funding (e.g., VOCA) limits the use of funds to only renovations instead of new construction.

Participants suggested adjusting federal funding, such as the Department of Justice, to allow for renovations and new construction. They suggested that housing authorities and Tribes should be incentivized to repurpose older buildings. Some also share that owners of vacant building should be incentivized to use them for shelters and safe homes. These changes could expand housing options while utilizing existing resources.

Examples of Solutions:

Vacant buildings should be turned into shelters.

"I mean, you see empty buildings sitting all over the place. I think there's places that they could-if they really tried, there's places that they could turn into a shelter."– Interview Participant, Behavioral Health Aide

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Utilize surplus funds to buy building materials and work with local Tribes and Tribal organizations to build multi-use structures.

"I do know that whenever I have funds that are going to lapse, I'll utilize those funds to buy materials so that the community can put up an office. When I do that, I'll contact [Tribal organization person] and, if she has funding, she'll attach a safe house apartment to it."– Interview Participant, VPSO

Work with local builders, who could construct housing more affordably by utilizing existing plans and relationships with local suppliers.

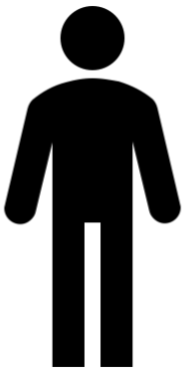
"[Local builder] is very cost-effective, plus he utilizes a lot of the plans that he had used previously in another community so he's not having to rebuild the wheel over and over. If it's a working model, he'll utilize it where he can. Then

he had relationships with all the vendors here in the [community] area, so he knows right where to go" – Interview Participant, VPSO

There must be community will to re-purpose older homes and buildings.

"It's this weird dynamic if someone builds a house 50 years ago and they may not live there for the last 49 years, but no one's going to touch that house because it's someone else's house. So, I think first of all there has to be the political will or the community will to reuse buildings within the community. If not quite sure if that exists in all of our villages."– Interview Participant, Behavioral Health Aide

6.g. Remove the Harm Doer from the Home



Historically, the most common response to DV has been to remove the survivor and her children from their home in an attempt to secure their safety from the person causing harm ("harm doer"). However, fleeing one's home and resources is one of the most risky and dangerous options for a family, and leads to multiple concomitant issues that cause additional harms to the survivor and their family, such as loss of employment, loss of education, and absence of cultural connections and resources.[100,101] Interview respondents expressed how challenges, such as the lack of housing options, make it much more difficult for a survivor to find safety outside of their home, and sometimes it is easier for the survivor to be at home whether the harm doer is there or not.

This begs the question of why solutions to safety have not focused more on removing the harm-doer from the home. There are communities in which this model has been tried. This model also follows a more restorative and holistic approach that is familiar to indigenous worldviews. Alaska's strong network of small rural Native villages have the potential to lean into their Tribal sovereignty to start having these difficult, yet necessary, conversations.

Thus, participants at the June 2024 Gathering in Anchorage were asked to discuss how it would look in their communities to have a harm doer leave the home rather than assuming the departure of the survivor. Of course, not in all situations is it feasible, and in some situations it is still far too dangerous to assume the survivor can stay in their home. Implementing many of the ideas proposed by participants in this section would require time and meticulous planning to prevent a harm-doer from causing further damage while outside the home. The SPS study team did not put any guidelines around the conversation except to challenge participants to keep an open mind and think outside of the current colonial penal system and the last 50 years of the DV advocacy movement in the U.S.

Participants were encouraged to think about how this action could work rather than why it wouldn't work. Some participants shared that the conversation was difficult for them because they are oftentimes in a position where they bear witness to the harm caused by a harm doer. Therefore, they struggled with envisioning any resources for responding to DV going toward the needs of a harm doer. It was very challenging for participants to stay on track with how it could work, and they often resorted back to why is wouldn't, or shouldn't, work. For instance, one person shared how they struggled with this discussion:

"I hated this topic of discussion. There's no part of me that wanted to have it…So I suspended the reality of my mind and tried to pretend I lived in this

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[100] Chimowitz, H., Ruege, A. (2023). The costs and harms of homelessness. *Community Solutions*. Retrieved from: https://community.solutions/research-posts/the-costs-and-harms-of-homelessness/

[101] Crenshaw, K. (1991). Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color. *Stanford Law Review*, 43(6), 1241–1299. https://doi.org/10.2307/1229039

other world where I could see giving services to somebody who had raped or beaten my sister or my niece as the priority; which is recognizing that in our communities, those folks are coming from three generations, four generations of people who were raised in residential school and did not know how to be parents, and have all of these things that have to be healed from."– June Gathering Participant, DV Shelter Staff

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Despite its challenges, the conversations went well, and the small groups shared some very innovative next steps to consider. One participant closed out the topic with this remark:

"If we take away anything from this workshop, it's before we judge another, let us look to ourselves to see how I would want to be treated if I had made the wrong choices. In my culture, there's no bad people, it's just bad choices that they have made."

Examples of Solutions:

Harm Doer Service Provision: Participants suggested expanding existing programs reach and adapting to be Tribally driven, such as Batters Intervention Programs and the Alaska Native Justice Center Reentry programs. Leverage unique funding sources, such as the Department of Corrections and state taxes, to fund these programs.

No matter the program, participants shared that consistent case management services are important to success. They need to have multiple options of how a harm doer could be removed and what a survivor does, so it is tailored to fit the specific situations at hand. It is important to find the balance between providing resources to support survivors and also the harm doer. In other words, if the harm doer is removed, the survivor should still be able to receive services, as needed.

Programs should not be a "one size fits all," but very specific to communities. For instance, participants suggested that it is important to lean into traditional values of the villages, such as talking about things together and addressing issues together, rather than calling out and having removal, which is a more Western way.

Alternative Spaces and Reintegration: Multiple participants shared that communities must acknowledge that the harm doer has to be reincorporated into their communities. Participants suggested various alternative spaces within the community for the harm doer to go, during crisis to cool down or even longer term, such as a military holding room, fish camp, trapping camp, churches, harm doers home village, tiny homes, and cannery bunkhouses.

Address Root Causes and Rehabilitation: Participants recommended addressing harm doers holistically by looking at the root causes of perpetration, such as substance misuse, mental health, lack of employment, and poverty. To do so, they suggested that harm doer support programs

should partner with vocational rehabilitation, workforce development, universities, and employers to ensure that if the harm doer is removed from the home, it does not impact their ability to be well. One group suggested a unique idea of paying harm doers to attend parenting classes and therapy (i.e., make it their job to get well). They shared that programs need to separate the idea of legal journeys and healing journeys happening in the same place, as these two journeys can happen in different places. Some shared that this type of action will need to recognize that the criminal justice system reinforces dysfunctional patterns of behavior and creates additional barriers to healing, such as people with felony records unable to obtain employment and education. Overall, many participants also remarked that it is important to acknowledge the historical trauma that Alaska Natives have experienced in order to relearn thoughts and behaviors.

> *"If you remove the alcohol and the drugs, these people are just like me and you. So they're good people with problems, and we all have them in one way or another."*

Focus on Community Involvement: Any programs for removing the harm doer must involve the community throughout the process, especially in decision-making and healing. In many communities, there could be economic and subsistence losses if harm doers are removed from certain homes where children and other relatives may be dependent on them to provide. The community must ultimately want to change in order for programming to be supported long-term.

Restorative Practices: Participants continuously suggested restorative practices as an approach to removing the harm doer. They suggested leveraging Tribal court processes, as they are rooted in more restorative justice practices, or creating a coalition of Tribes to build their own DV restorative justice system that pools funding together that the State could fund.

6.h. Other Mentions of Potential Actions

The suggestions below were briefly mentioned during interviews or during the June Listening Session.

- Modernizing traditional Alaska Native housing methods that are unique to each region, such as semi-subterranean homes. Integrating these homes could provide a culturally relevant and healing environment for survivors of violence.

> *"Traditional housing in a modern way could be healing for our people as in semi-subterranean homes that are modernized and you have what you need. But it would be a healing way and maybe a cheaper and more sustainable way to build because of traditional knowledge. I mean, our people still lived like that for thousands of years and survived in harsh environments thousands of years with those type of homes. And if we could modernize that it could be healing mentally, physically, emotionally, spiritually for us…We had semi-subterranean homes that had like a tunnel going into a home that was built into the ground. And it was a small and multi-family homes often. And there was like a larger house for the bigger families or more prominent families that took care of more of the tribal members. And they were created in a way that was simple but met the needs of our people. I think that could be a way that if we could modernize that and make it to where there's not moisture during thaw out. And those were the winter homes. Those weren't the summer homes. And that's more of if we could turn those traditional winter homes into year-round housing that is modernized and has the running water and all of the things that are needed or normal today. I think it would be a good step." – Interview Participant, Tribal Government*

- Considering multigenerational housing to accommodate extended families and grandparents raising grandchildren.
- Invest in solutions for safe housing options for elders and men survivors.
- Investigating ways to bill Medicaid for certain services provided by shelters.
- Engage the private sector early in the process of building or renovating building.
- Use shipping containers, tiny homes, or trailers to create housing options.
- Work with the city or Tribe to clean up hazardous apartments or homes and repurpose them for survivors.

6.i. Challenges to Implementing These Ideas

Lack of Coordination and Planning

One of the most noted challenges was the lack of coordination and planning among various system providers. This hinders effective resource allocation. There's often no cohesive strategy between State, Tribal, and non-profit entities regarding where and how to expand services. New programs sometimes start up without proper coordination. This leads to competition for already limited resources and potential duplication of efforts. The fragmented approach can result in inefficiencies and gaps in service provision.

Safety and Resource Concerns

Multiple participants shared that there is a lack of public safety in rural communities. This lack of resources in some communities makes it difficult to keep shelters and residents safe. Additionally, a "culture of safety" and norms of nonviolence was also noted as a challenge when there is an absence of law enforcement.

Building and Operational Challenges

Building new facilities is particularly expensive in remote areas due to high construction and shipping costs. Ongoing operational expenses such as heating, staffing, and maintenance create substantial long-term burdens. Many organizations struggle to find sustainable funding sources to support their existing efforts. These operations become harder to maintain and expand over time.

Community Involvement and Local Solutions

The importance of involving local communities in the process was highlighted. A collaborative approach that includes community input is more likely to succeed. This is especially true in smaller or rural areas where local knowledge and relationships are key to identifying needs and securing ongoing support.

One-size-fits-all solutions were noted to have failed to address the unique needs of different communities, particularly when it comes to transitioning Alaska Native people from rural villages to urban centers. Participants shared that housing programs must be place-based, culturally competent, and responsive to local needs to be truly effective.

Balancing Short-Term and Long-Term Solutions

Balancing short-term interventions with long-term solutions is an ongoing challenge. Many existing programs only offer short-term housing support. These one to three-month interventions are often insufficient for creating sustainable change in survivors' lives. There's a pressing need for longer-term housing options. Ideally, these would last two to three years to provide the stability necessary for true recovery and self-sufficiency.

DV Organizations as Landlords

One participant shared that their DVSA organization was providing housing and support services and struggled to balance their dual role of providing supportive services and landlords. Enforcing housing-related rules and regulations while providing trauma-informed care can create tension and ethical dilemmas with survivors. It is important that solutions provide separation or a buffer between the roles of DV support and housing support.

Hub Communities and Village Housing

Participants expressed concerns about the lack of cost-effectiveness in building housing in very small villages. Instead, they suggested focusing on "hub communities" where larger infrastructure could be shared by multiple nearby communities. This would allow a more practical approach to housing development in remote areas. However, participants also shared that hub communities often serve many villages. For instance, Bethel is a hub community to over 50 villages. This suggests a need to find a balance between establishing enough housing solutions in hub communities and villages.

6.j. Uplifting Existing Community Strengths Is Essential to All Housing Solutions

Despite the challenges noted by participants, they underscored that uplifting existing community strengths should remain at the base of all housing and safety solutions. Participants shared that their communities are strong, resilient, and creative. This includes a need to uplift and support Tribal sovereignty.

- Alaska Native communities are guided by traditional ways of being and values that are strength based and incorporated when addressing housing and safety needs for their communities, tribal citizens, and villages. These strengths should be uplifted. One participant shared:

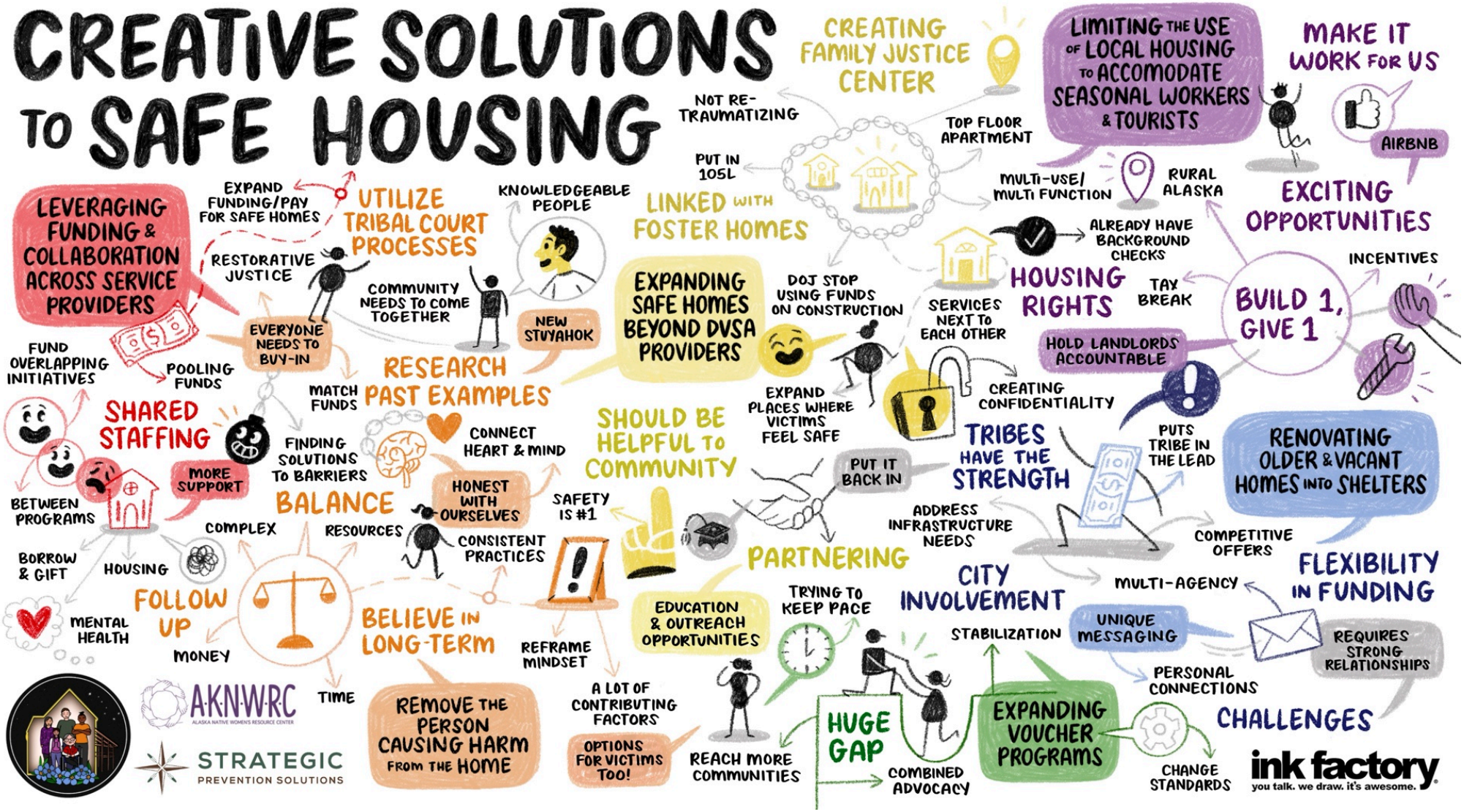
> *"We are very traditional here. We go by our values. We have a lot of elder input. Even our child protection team is all clan leaders. Our rules keepers are all our elders because they're the ones with all the experience, they know."*

> *"We're compliant in all areas, but we also are very traditional. We believe in involving the whole family. If there's a crisis, we pull in everybody, and we deal with it on the spot. Sometimes you have to table things, but we try not to table anything, because that's how the cracks are formed. We don't want cracks. Sometimes people think that could be a conflict. I'm like, 'no,' having your family involved in your life is not a conflict, because you're not going to fool your family."*

- Some individuals and families are strong advocates for addressing community issues.
- Family and friends are the main supports in many communities.
- Community members in rural Alaska have been creative with the resources that are available to them. One participant shared an analogy of how they are creative when building housing:

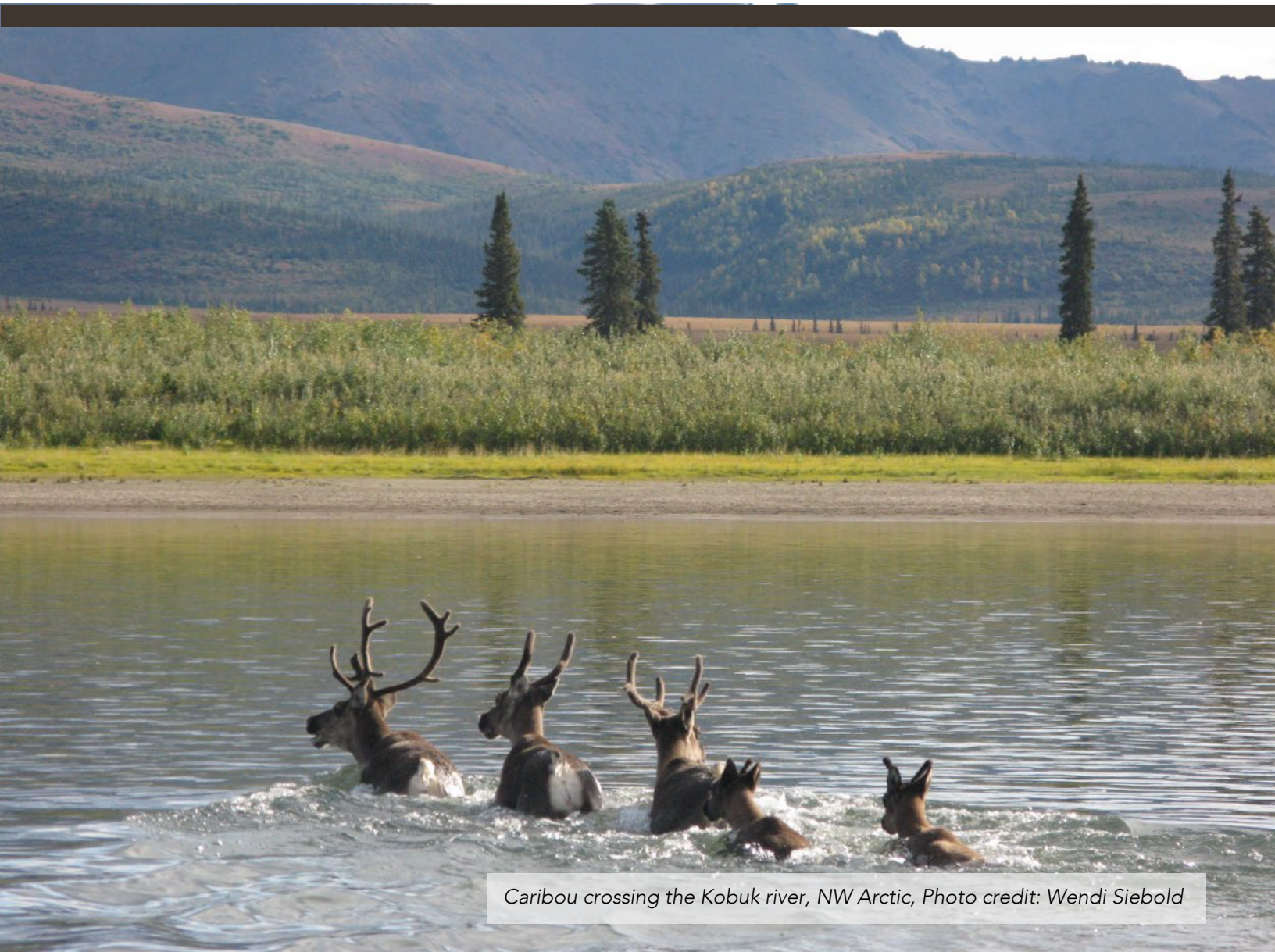
> *"It's the dig once. Let's say you're in a rural community and there's like a wastewater sewer treatment plant going in and they have to bring electrical power from the utility over to this facility. So they'd have to like either put in transmission lines or dig up the road or whatever they need to do to get those power lines over to the new building, you know, what else can you do while the resources are in that community?...While it's already out there, maybe they need to clear a flat part of the land so they can build a house for an entirely different purpose… When we're talking about rural communities, while people*

and equipment are already out there, we'll take advantage of it and have them do the other work that is trying to be accomplished."


CREATIVE SOLUTIONS TO SAFE HOUSING
CREATING FAMILY JUSTICE CENTER
NOT RE-TRAUMATIZING
TOP FLOOR APARTMENT
PUT IN 105L
LIMITING THE USE OF LOCAL HOUSING TO ACCOMODATE SEASONAL WORKERS & TOURISTS
MAKE IT WORK FOR US
AIRBNB
MULTI-USE/ MULTI FUNCTION
RURAL ALASKA
EXCITING OPPORTUNITIES
ALREADY HAVE BACKGROUND CHECKS
HOUSING RIGHTS
TAX BREAK
INCENTIVES
BUILD 1, GIVE 1
LEVERAGING FUNDING & COLLABORATION ACROSS SERVICE PROVIDERS
EXPAND FUNDING/PAY FOR SAFE HOMES
UTILIZE TRIBAL COURT PROCESSES
RESTORATIVE JUSTICE
KNOWLEDGEABLE PEOPLE
LINKED WITH FOSTER HOMES
COMMUNITY NEEDS TO COME TOGETHER
NEW STUYAHOK
EXPANDING SAFE HOMES BEYOND DVSA PROVIDERS
DOJ STOP USING FUNDS ON CONSTRUCTION
SERVICES NEXT TO EACH OTHER
EVERYONE NEEDS TO BUY-IN
FUND OVERLAPPING INITIATIVES
POOLING FUNDS
RESEARCH PAST EXAMPLES
MATCH FUNDS
EXPAND PLACES WHERE VICTIMS FEEL SAFE
CREATING CONFIDENTIALITY
HOLD LANDLORDS ACCOUNTABLE
SHARED STAFFING
FINDING SOLUTIONS TO BARRIERS
CONNECT HEART & MIND
SHOULD BE HELPFUL TO COMMUNITY
TRIBES HAVE THE STRENGTH
PUTS TRIBE IN THE LEAD
RENOVATING OLDER & VACANT HOMES INTO SHELTERS
PUT IT BACK IN
MORE SUPPORT
BETWEEN PROGRAMS
BALANCE
HONEST WITH OURSELVES
SAFETY IS #1
CONSISTENT PRACTICES
RESOURCES
COMPLEX
BORROW & GIFT
HOUSING
ADDRESS INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDS
COMPETITIVE OFFERS
PARTNERING
FLEXIBILITY IN FUNDING
MULTI-AGENCY
CITY INVOLVEMENT
TRYING TO KEEP PACE
EDUCATION & OUTREACH OPPORTUNITIES
FOLLOW UP
MENTAL HEALTH
MONEY
BELIEVE IN LONG-TERM
REFRAME MINDSET
STABILIZATION
UNIQUE MESSAGING
REQUIRES STRONG RELATIONSHIPS
PERSONAL CONNECTIONS
TIME
A.K.N.W.R.C.
ALASKA NATIVE WOMEN'S RESOURCE CENTER
REMOVE THE PERSON CAUSING HARM FROM THE HOME
A LOT OF CONTRIBUTING FACTORS
OPTIONS FOR VICTIMS TOO!
REACH MORE COMMUNITIES
HUGE GAP
COMBINED ADVOCACY
EXPANDING VOUCHER PROGRAMS
CHANGE STANDARDS
CHALLENGES
STRATEGIC PREVENTION SOLUTIONS
ink factory
you talk. we draw. it's awesome.

7. Conclusion

"The more partners that you can have involved– it's going to be a little bit harder to manage, but if you have one entity who's driving that bus–in my experience, that project is going to have a much better chance of success than one entity going at it alone."– Interview Participant, Regional Housing Authority



Caribou crossing the Kobuk river, NW Arctic, Photo credit: Wendi Siebold

7. Conclusion

The findings in this report underscore the severity and complexity of the safe housing crisis facing Alaska Native survivors of DV. The current situation is untenable, with a critical shortage of safe, affordable, and culturally-appropriate housing options across the state. Survivors are often forced to choose between staying with abusive partners or facing homelessness, putting their lives and their children's wellbeing at risk.

Overcrowding, skyrocketing costs, limited services, and a lack of coordinated planning compound challenges to safe housing, especially in remote villages. Survivors face a myriad of obstacles when seeking safety – from geographic isolation and transportation barriers, to eligibility restrictions and cultural disconnection at shelters, to a severe lack of transitional and permanent housing. The seasonal influx of workers and tourists further constricts an already scarce rental market. Service providers, while dedicated, are overburdened and under-resourced in their efforts to help survivors secure safe housing.

While the proposed solutions in this report offer potential pathways forward, meaningful progress will require a significant shift in priorities, policies, and resource allocation at all levels. Piecemeal approaches and short-term fixes will not suffice. Alaska Native communities must be at the forefront of developing and implementing comprehensive, locally-driven strategies that uphold Tribal sovereignty and cultural resilience. Amplifying the voices of survivors and securing long-term, sustainable funding must be central to any initiatives.

A few key next steps emerge as essential:

- → Increasing collaboration across all levels of government, Tribal entities, and nonprofit sectors to align efforts, leverage resources, and avoid duplication.
- → Adjusting eligibility requirements and expanding housing voucher programs to better meet the unique needs of survivors in both urban and rural areas.
- → Renovating and repurposing existing structures to quickly increase the supply of emergency, transitional and permanent housing units.
- → Exploring restorative and community-based approaches to remove harm-doers from homes as an alternative to displacing survivors.
- → Investing in prevention through community education and expanding protective factors to break the cycle of violence.

Enacting these solutions will require unwavering commitment, bold leadership, and a willingness to do things differently. Failure to act decisively will perpetuate the cycle of violence and further jeopardize the lives of countless Alaska Native survivors. The housing crisis is a matter of life and death that demands our most urgent attention and resolute action. The resilience and wisdom of Alaska Native communities, combined with the collective will and resources of all Alaskans, provides hope that there is a future within reach where no survivor has to choose between safety and shelter.

8. Appendix

Table of Key Informant Interview Respondents by Region

Regional Data Summary

Notes from Small Table Discussions at June 2024 Meeting in Anchorage

Interview Protocols

Recruitment Poster & Feedback Cards from 2023 AFN

Handouts from June 2024 Statewide Listening Session

Table of Key Informant Interview Respondents by Region

Wave I Recruited

	Anchorage Municipality	Fairbanks Borough	City & Borough Juneau	Kenai Peninsula Borough	Mat-Su Borough	Northwest Region	Interior Region	South-central	South-east	YK Delta Region	South-west	Statewide	Total
DV Shelter Staff	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	3	4	0	0	12
Victim Advocate	0	1	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	3	0	0	7
Tribal Government	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	1	3	0	9
Other	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	3
Total	1	2	2	1	1	2	3	2	4	9	4	0	31

Wave I Completed

	Anchorage Municipality	Fairbanks Borough	City & Borough Juneau	Kenai Peninsula Borough	Mat-Su Borough	Northwest Region	Interior Region	South-central	South-east	YK Delta Region	South-west	Statewide	Total
DV Shelter Staff	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	2	4	0	0	10
Victim Advocate	0	1	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	2	0	0	5
Tribal Government	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	2	0	6
Other	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	2
Total	1	1	2	1	1	0	2	2	2	8	4	0	22

Wave II Recruited

	Anchorage Municipality	Fairbanks Borough	City & Borough Juneau	Kenai Peninsula Borough	Mat-Su Borough	Northwest Region	Interior Region	South-central	South-east	YK Delta Region	South-west	Statewide	Total
DV Shelter Staff			1			2				1			4
Tribal Government		1		2	1		1	7	1				13
Tribal Housing			3	1		1		1	3			1	10
Regional Housing Authority	1	1			2	6	2	1	2	2	3	6	26
Behavioral Health Aids	3				3	8	2			2	4	1	23
State/ Government		1	1		4	1	1				4	7	16
VPSO		1		1		2	2			2	4	1	
Other						3				1	1		3
Total	4	4	5	4	10	23	8	9	6	7	12	16	108

Wave II Completed

	Anchorage Municipality	Fairbanks Borough	City & Borough Juneau	Kenai Peninsula Borough	Mat-Su Borough	Northwest Region	Interior Region	South-central	South-east	YK Delta Region	South-west	Statewide	Total
DV Shelter Staff													0
Tribal Government					1			3	1				5
Tribal Housing				1					1				2
Regional Housing Authority	2			1					1			1	5
Behavioral Health Aids					2	1					2		5
State/ Government							1				1	3	5
VPSO				1			1		1		2	1	6
Other													0
Total	2	0	0	3	3	1	2	3	4	0	5	5	28

Wave I Key Informant Interview Respondents (DV survivors and DV advocates) (n=22)

Name	Position (if relevant)	Organization (if relevant)
Alvina Imgalrea	Victim Advocate	RurAL CAP (Bethel)
Anette Okitkun	Tribal Government	Kotlik Tribe
Bryana Angulo	Advocate	Tanana Chiefs Conference
Cheri Smith	Executive Director	The LeeShore Center
Donita O'Dell	DV Shelter Staff	WISH
Eileen Arnold	Executive Director	Tundra Women's Coalition
Elena Dock	OVW Grant Manager	Kipnuk Tribe
James John II	OVW Youth Coordinator	Kipnuk Tribe
Jessica Svetkovich	Tribal Government	Knik Tribe
Mandy Cole	Executive Director	AWARE
Nakissha Bialy	DV Shelter Staff	Tundra Women's Coalition
Natalie Wojcik	Executive Director	SAFV
Natasha Jackson		Central Council Tlingit & Haida
Pauline Okitkun	Tribal Government	Kotlik
Robin Campbell	Advocate	Tanana Chiefs Conference
Rowena Palomer	Executive Director	Advocates for Victims of Violence (Valdez)
Shayna Gurtler Rowe	Tribal Government	Gakona Tribal Court
Shirley Fox	OVC Coordinator	Kipnuk Tribe
Suzi Pearson	Executive Director	AWAIC
Teri Vent	Advocate	Huslia

Valerie Chadwick	Development Manager	RurAL CAP (Y-K region)
Yvonne Aloralrea	DV Shelter Staff	Tundra Women's Coalition

Wave II Key Informant Interview Respondents (service providers) (n=28)

Name	Position	Organization
Bob Crosby	Housing Director	Ninilchik Village Tribe
Brandy McGee	Executive Director	Kenai Peninsula Housing Initiatives, Inc
Brenda Stanfill	Executive Director	Alaska Network on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault
Captain Andrew Merrill	Alaska State Trooper, Commander	Alaska Department of Public Safety
Christine Hundley	Program Director	LINKS: High Utilizer Mat-Su
Colleen Dushkin	Executive Director	Association of Alaska Housing Authorities
Danielle Butts	Tribal Consortium	Kodiak Health Care
Danielle Redmond	Program Coordinator	Council on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault
Darrell Hildebrand	VPSO	Tanana Chiefs Conference
David McElwain	VPSO	Port Lions VPSO
Dawn Harris	Housing Services	Native Village of Eklutna
Heather Thorne	TFS Family Violence Prevention Director	Native Village of Eyak
James Hoelscher	VPSO Program Director	Alaska Department of Public Safety: Alaska State Troopers
Jessica Svetkovich	NA/Unknown	Tribal Government

Jimmy Ord	Director, Research & Rural Development	Alaska Housing Finance Corporation
Joel Alowa	Director, Behavioral Health Services	Maniilaq Association
Julia McConkey	Tribal Government	Copper River Native Association
Katie Tepas	Program Coordinator	Alaska Department of Public Safety: Alaska State Troopers
Lenard Wallner	VPSO	Chugachmiut Association
Lieutenant Michael Roberts	Alaska State Trooper, Deputy Commander	Alaska Department of Public Safety: Alaska State Troopers
Linda Berry	APRN- Health care provider	Port Lions Health Care
Lori Syverson	Community Health Worker	Links Resource Center
Melissa O'Bryan	Tribal Housing	Ketchikan Indian Community Housing Authority
Michael Nemeth	VPSO	Aleutian Pribilof Island Association
Michael Toole	Victim Services Director	Ketchikan Indian Community Housing Authority
Myrna Chaney	Housing Director	Ketchikan Indian Community Housing Authority
Shayna Gurtler Rowe	Tribal court	Gakona Tribal Court
Willem Pretorius	VPSO	Port Lions VPSO

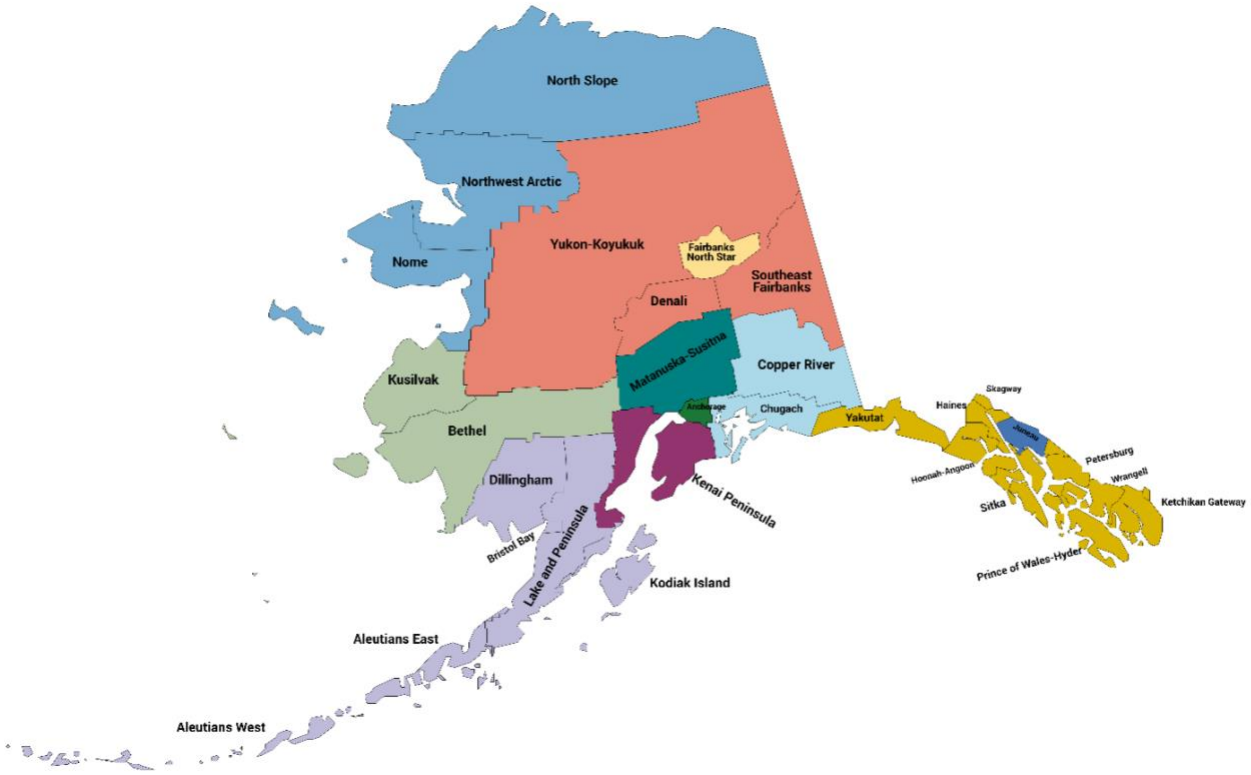
Regional Data Summary

There are multiple ways that "regions" of Alaska are defined. The study team chose to use the regional breakdowns listed below, as defined by The State of Alaska Department of Behavioral Health. This regional breakdown allows for the separation of urban and rural locations while allowing for enough overlap with other regional breakdowns to adequately summarize data across state systems and regional organizations. The Alaska Division of Behavioral Health has divided Alaska into 11 regions for assessment and reporting purposes.[102] Each region contains at least 20,000 individuals, which complies with the HIPAA Privacy Rule for public dissemination of health data.

- Anchorage Municipality
  - Anchorage Municipality (02020)
- Fairbanks North Star Borough
  - Fairbanks North Star Borough (02090)
- City and Borough of Juneau
  - City and Borough of Juneau (02110)
- Kenai Peninsula Borough
  - Kenai Peninsula Borough (02122)
- Matanuska-Susitna Borough
  - Matanuska-Susitna Borough (02170)
- North/Northwest Region
  - Nome Census Area (02180)
  - North Slope Borough (02185)
  - Northwest Arctic Borough (02188)
- Interior Region
  - Yukon-Koyukuk Census Area (02290)
  - Denali Borough (02068)
  - Southeast Fairbanks Census Area (02240)
- Y-K Delta Region
  - Bethel Census Area (02050)
  - Kusilvak Census Area (02158)
- Southcentral Region
  - Chugach Census Area (02063)
  - Copper River Census Area (02066)
- Southeast Region
  - Haines Borough (02100)
  - Hoonah-Angoon Census Area (02105)
  - Petersburg Borough (02195)
  - Sitka City and Borough (02220)
  - Skagway Municipality (02230)

[102] https://health.alaska.gov/dph/Chronic/Pages/Data/geo_bhs.aspx

    - Wrangell City and Borough (02275)
    - Yakutat City and Borough (02282)
    - Ketchikan Gateway Borough (02130)
    - Prince of Wales-Hyder Census Area (02198)
- Southwest Region
    - Aleutians East Borough (02013)
    - Aleutians West Census Area (02016)
    - Bristol Bay Borough (02060)
    - Dillingham Census Area (02070)
    - Kodiak Island Borough (02150)
    - Lake and Peninsula Borough (02164)
- Statewide



							Northwest Region				Interior Region				Southcentral			
		Anchorage Municipality	Fairbanks Borough	City & Borough of Juneau	Kenai Peninsula Borough	Matanuska-Susitna Borough	Nome	North Slope	Northwest Arctic	*AVERAGE**	Yukon-Koyukuk	Denali	SE Fairbanks	*AVERAGE**	Chugach	Copper River	*AVERAGE**	Haines
Community Characteristics																	**Community Characteristics**	
	Population*	287,145.0	95,655.0	32,108.0	59,235.0	113,325.0	10,018.0	10,924.0	7,682.0	*28,624.0*	5,355.0	2,101.0	6,888.0	*14,344.0*	7,000.0	2,614.0	*23,958.0*	2,079.0
	Area (Land, square miles)*	1,706.0	7,338.0	2,704.0	16,017.5	24,707.3	22,969.5	88,823.6	35,663.3	*147,456.4*	145,581.9	12,641.0	24,832.3	*183,055.2*	9,530	24,692.0	*207,747.2*	2,319.0
	Population per square mite	170.6	13.0	11.9	2.4	4.3	0.4	0.1	0.2	*0.2*	0.0	0.1	0.3	*0.1*	0.7	0.1	0.4	0.8
	# of Communities*	1	19	1	41	30	19	13	12	*44*	39	8	17	*64*	5	21	*90*	6
	# of Tribes*	1	0	2	7	3	20	10	11	*41*	34	1	6	*41*	3	7	*10*	1
Population																	**Population**	
	Population Male	50.8%	55.4%	51.3%	52.5%	52.4%	52.3%	59.5%	53.8%	*55.2%*	53.1%	67.4%	56.8%	*59.1%*	53.1%	53.1%	53.1%	51.9%
	Population Female	49.2%	44.6%	48.7%	47.5%	47.6%	47.7%	40.5%	46.2%	*44.8%*	46.9%	32.6%	43.2%	*40.9%*	46.9%	46.9%	46.9%	48.1%
	White	57.5%	68.7%	64.0%	79.6%	76.8%	14.2%	31.8%	10.6%	*18.9%*	23.1%	75.7%	75.0%	*57.9%*	71.6%	53.0%	62.3%	80.9%
	Black or African American	5.4%	3.2%	1.1%	0.7%	0.9%	1.0%	1.8%	1.2%	*1.3%*	0.2%	2.3%	0.9%	*1.1%*	1.6%	0.0%	0.8%	0.0%
	American Indian and Alaska Native	7.8%	4.7%	9.4%	7.4%	5.7%	76.0%	50.2%	80.7%	*69.0%*	64.7%	3.0%	12.8%	*26.8%*	5.3%	33.9%	19.6%	6.2%
	Asian	10.2%	2.2%	7.2%	1.7%	1.8%	1.3%	5.8%	1.3%	*2.8%*	1.3%	3.5%	3.1%	*2.6%*	7.0%	0.5%	3.8%	3.3%
	Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander	3.1%	27.0%	1.4%	0.4%	0.4%	0.0%	1.9%	0.3%	*0.7%*	0.1%	0.0%	0.2%	*0.1%*	1.3%	0.0%	0.7%	0.0%
	2 or more races	14.0%	17.0%	15.0%	8.5%	13.4%	7.2%	7.3%	5.6%	*6.7%*	7.4%	13.3%	5.4%	*8.7%*	8.2%	11.2%	9.7%	9.5%
	Hispanic/Latino	9.9%	8.6%	7.2%	4.4%	5.8%	2.0%	3.9%	2.6%	*2.8%*	2.70%	1.70%	7.10%	*3.83%*	5.9%	6.5%	6.2%	8.2%
Income & Employment																	**Income & Employment**	
	Median Household Income	$100,751.0	$100,751.0	$95,711.0	$76,272.0	$84,636.0	$70,121.0	$83,472.0	$77,647.0	*$77,080.0*	$47,826.0	$87,292.0	$75,378.0	*$70,165.3*	$83,068.0	$70,606.0	*$76,837.0*	$68,276.0
	Persons in Poverty	11.1%	11.1%	6.9%	12.5%	10.4%	21.1%	7.9%	18.5%	*15.8%*	22.9%	7.3%	13.2%	*14.5%*	4.9%	11.2%	*8.1%*	5.8%
	Labor force participation females aged 16 years+	76.6%	73.3%	76.7%	67.4%	67.2%	76.7%	83.1%	69.4%	*76.4%*	79.0%	77.8%	60.6%	*72.5%*	81.9%	72.7%	*77.3%*	69.2%
	Unemployment Rate	3.7%	3.7%	4.5%	63.8%	5.9%	16.5%	6.8%	15.5%	*12.9%*	11.1%	1.9%	6.6%	*6.5%*	8.8%	6.5%	*7.7%*	4.3%
Housing																	**Housing**	
	Total Housing Units*	120,871.0	42,692.0	14,073.0	32,567.0	51,178.0	4,116.0	2,625.0	2,726.0	*9,467.0*	4,018.0	1,385.0	3,537.0	*8,940.0*	3,565.0	2,769.0	*6,334.0*	1,410.0
	Average Household Size (persons)	2.6	2.5	2.4	2.5	2.8	3.4	3.3	4.0	*3.6*	2.4	2.3	3.0	*2.5*	2.5	2.4	*2.4*	2.6
	Median Rent	$1,381.0	$1,503.0	$1,464.0	$1,126.0	$1,318.0	$1,349.0	$1,231.0	$1,386.0	*$1,322.0*	$906.0	$863.0	$1,190.0	*$986.3*	$1,364.0	$877.0	*$1,120.5*	$889.0
	Owner-occupied housing units	65.0%	59.6%	64.3%	76.8%	76.0%	62.6%	46.7%	61.0%	*56.8%*	72.4%	86.9%	75.0%	*78.1%*	62.6%	68.8%	*65.7%*	69.7%
	Renter-occupied housing units	35.0%	40.4%	35.7%	23.2%	24.0%	37.4%	53.3%	39.0%	*43.2%*	27.6%	13.1%	25.0%	*21.9%*	37.4%	31.2%	*34.3%*	30.3%
	Renter-occupied housing units with complete plumbing facilities	99.8%	95.0%	99.0%	97.1%	95.3%	81.9%	93.9%	85.3%	*87.0%*	63.1%	60.9%	87.9%	*70.6%*	99.4%	93.8%	*96.6%*	84.5%
	American Indian/Alaska Native percent renter occupied housing	11.6%	8.5%	11.1%	7.4%	6.9%	61.6%	54.2%	60.6%	*58.8%*	61.1%	7.2%	10.8%	*26.4%*	7.3%	41.2%	*24.3%*	4.2%
	Rental vacancy rate	7.0	7.9	3.3	5.9	3.2	2.1	4.5	1.0	*2.5*	6.3	18.9	9.1	*11.4*	7.2	8.3	*7.8*	2.0
Rates of Violence																	**Rates of Violence**	
	Reported Rates of DV (Lifetime)	48.3%	44.8%	55.4%	52.0%	52.5%	51.0%	n/a	n/a	*51.0%*	n/a	n/a	n/a	*n/a*	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
DV Shelter Services																	**DV Shelter Services**	
	# of DV Organizations*	3	1	1	3	1	1	1	1	*3*	0	0	0	*0*	2	0	2	0
	# of DV Shelter Beds*	52	56	32	47	32	12	28	5	*45*	0	0	0	*0*	7	0	7	0
	# of DV Transitional Beds*	10	0	14	23	0	0	0	0	*0*	0	0	0	*0*	0	0	0	0
Public Safety Resources																	**Public Safety Resources**	
	Village Public Safety Officers (VPSOs)	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	n/a	Yes	No	Yes	*Mixed*	Yes	Yes	Yes	*Yes*	No	Yes	Mixed	No
	Alaska State Troopers (AST)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	*Mixed*	Yes	Yes	Yes	*Yes*	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Health Services																	**Health Services**	
	Health Clinic or Hospital	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	*Yes*	Yes	No	Yes	*Mixed*	Yes	Yes	*Yes*	No
	Behavioral Health Services	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	*Yes*	Yes	No	Yes	*Mixed*	Yes	Yes	*Yes*	Yes
	Tribal Health Corporation	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	*Yes*	Yes	No	Yes	*Mixed*	Yes	Yes	*Yes*	Yes
Transportation																	**Transportation**	
	Connected to road system	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	*No*	Mixed	Yes	Yes	*Mixed*	Mixed	Mixed	Mixed	Yes
	# of hotels*	50+	27	14	0	20	5	4	1	*10*	1	10	5	*16*	7	5	12	3
	Average hotel cost (per night)	$183.0	$208.00	$243.0	$449.0	$187.0	$345.0	n/a	$212.0	*$278.5*	n/a	$116.0	$169.0	*$142.5*	$160.0	$239.0	*$199.5*	$204.0
	Bed Tax Revenue*	$12,536,354.0	$2,933,702.0	$3,202,323.0	$713,633.0	$1,271,433.0	$191,327.0	$333,491.0	$102,786.0	*$627,604.0*	$18,464.0	$2,950,183.0	n/a	$2,968,647.0	$621,937.0	n/a	$621,937.0	$133,173.0

Analysis Note: Averages are totaled by averaging the borough average. Cells marked with an "" indicate that values were totaled instead of averaged*

	Southeast									Yukon-Kuskokwim (YK) Delta Region			Southwest						
	Hoonah-Angoon	Ketchikan	Petersburg	Prince of Wales-Hyder	Sitka	Skagway	Wrangell	Yakutat	*AVERAGE**	Bethel	Kusilvak	*AVERAGE**	Aleutian East	Aleutian West	Bristol Bay	Dillingham	Kodiak	Lake and Peninsula	*AVERAGE**
Community Characteristics	2,329.0	13,910.0	3,374.0	5,799.0	8,462.0	1,303.0	2,134.0	564.0	*39,954.0*	18,538.0	8,372.0	*26,910.0*	3,407.0	5,219.0	854.0	4,854.0	13,065.0	999.0	*28,398.0*
	7,525.0	4,858.0	3,829.0	3,923.0	2,870.0	9.5	2,555.0	7,623.0	*35,511.5*	40,638.6	17,077.1	*57,715.7*	6,982.0	4,390.0	504	18,569.0	6,550.0	23,652.0	*60,143.0*
	0.2	2.1	0.9	1.4	3.0	2.9	0.8	0.1	*1.3*	0.4	0.4	*0.4*	0.5	1.3	1.0	0.3	1.1	0.0	*0.7*
	10	4	4	18	1	1	1	1	*46*	39	17	*56.0*	8	8	3	10	12	18	*59*
	3	2	1	6	1	1	1	1	*17*	37	17	*54.0*	7	5	3	11	9	16	*51*
Population	55.8%	52.0%	49.1%	55.6%	52.2%	41.2%	53.2%	62.4%	*52.6%*	53.5%	54.7%	*54.1%*	61.7%	66.8%	57.3%	51.3%	53.5%	50.9%	*56.9%*
	44.2%	48.0%	50.9%	44.4%	47.8%	58.8%	46.8%	37.6%	*47.4%*	46.5%	45.3%	*45.9%*	38.3%	33.2%	42.7%	48.7%	46.5%	49.1%	*43.1%*
	53.2%	64.0%	57.7%	45.1%	62.3%	78.1%	57.0%	30.7%	*58.8%*	9.1%	3.2%	*6.2%*	16.9%	26.0%	45.3%	16.0%	50.6%	17.1%	*28.7%*
	0.4%	0.7%	1.2%	0.4%	0.7%	3.1%	0.0%	2.1%	*1.0%*	1.2%	0.8%	*1.0%*	5.4%	3.9%	4.0%	1.6%	9.0%	2.2%	*4.4%*
	28.9%	14.6%	7.9%	38.5%	9.4%	4.9%	22.9%	26.1%	*17.7%*	83.4%	90.9%	*87.2%*	37.1%	9.3%	31.5%	71.1%	11.4%	61.8%	*37.0%*
	0.8%	8.5%	17.8%	1.4%	7.9%	2.2%	0.8%	20.2%	*7.0%*	1.4%	0.2%	*0.8%*	19.8%	40.7%	5.6%	1.6%	22.7%	3.5%	*15.7%*
	0.2%	0.2%	0.5%	0.8%	1.2%	0.0%	2.2%	2.1%	*0.8%*	0.2%	0.1%	*0.2%*	0.3%	3.5%	2.0%	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%	*1.0%*
	16.6%	10.5%	11.3%	13.5%	17.5%	11.7%	16.1%	17.4%	*13.8%*	4.3%	4.1%	*4.2%*	12.4%	11.2%	12.6%	9.7%	13.7%	15.4%	*12.5%*
	9.9%	5.6%	9.1%	4.1%	7.4%	2.5%	5.8%	6.6%	*6.6%*	2.2%	0.9%	*1.6%*	11.9%	15.4%	8.7%	3.3%	8.8%	0.1%	*8.0%*
Income & Employment	$62,344.0	$82,763.0	$77,826.0	$61,779.0	$95,261.0	$79,583.0	$61,000.0	$76,875.0	*$73,967.4*	$64,094.0	$42,663.0	*$53,378.5*	$79,961.0	$100,662.0	$94,167.0	$69,412.0	$91,138.0	$61,607.0	*$82,824.5*
	11.6%	9.7%	4.6%	15.3%	6.9%	6.2%	10.1%	10.0%	*8.9%*	25.3%	34.3%	*29.8%*	12.6%	9.6%	7.9%	15.9%	8.0%	15.2%	*11.5%*
	77.6%	74.8%	76.9%	74.0%	80.9%	86.6%	63.7%	91.6%	*77.3%*	57.0%	56.1%	*56.6%*	83.8%	77.0%	75.6%	72.0%	83.3%	74.6%	*77.7%*
	14.0%	4.1%	4.4%	7.5%	5.0%	11.0%	3.4%	1.8%	*6.2%*	16.2%	20.9%	*18.6%*	4.4%	3.0%	2.7%	11.3%	5.7%	14.0%	*6.9%*
Housing	1,708.0	6,615.0	1,792.0	3,252.0	4,138.0	631.0	1,350.0	420.0	*21,316.0*	6,003.0	2,335.0	*8,338.0*	1,089.0	1,403.0	875.0	2,417.0	5,798.0	1,380.0	*12,962.0*
	2.5	2.5	2.6	2.4	2.4	2.6	2.2	2.1	*2.4*	3.8	4.3	*4.1*	2.4	3.8	2.6	3.2	2.9	2.6	*2.9*
	$996.0	$1,275.0	$1,074.0	$883.0	$1,309.0	$1,044.0	$966.0	$1,304.0	*$1,082.2*	$1,408.0	$819.0	*$1,113.5*	$1,035.0	$1,672.0	$1,183.0	$1,106.0	$1,646.0	$933.0	*$1,262.5*
	74.5%	65.7%	73.4%	72.6%	64.5%	65.6%	65.2%	55.8%	*67.4%*	59.0%	70.9%	*65.0%*	58.8%	27.7%	50.7%	60.8%	56.6%	67.2%	*53.6%*
	25.5%	34.3%	26.6%	27.4%	35.5%	34.4%	34.8%	44.2%	*32.6%*	41.0%	29.1%	*35.1%*	41.2%	72.3%	49.3%	39.2%	43.4%	32.8%	*46.4%*
	89.1%	99.6%	99.7%	91.7%	97.6%	99.3%	100.0%	99.0%	*95.6%*	70.7%	73.8%	*72.3%*	96.2%	98.1%	95.0%	91.5%	100.0%	76.6%	*92.9%*
	38.5%	17.8%	9.3%	30.8%	16.5%	2.1%	24.1%	12.7%	*17.3%*	67.3%	88.6%	*78.0%*	32.4%	5.1%	30.0%	65.7%	13.4%	73.8%	*36.7%*
	8.9	7.0	16.7	9.7	6.2	7.4	8.1	11.3	*8.6*	3.8	1.3	*2.6*	4.1	3.4	13.2	4.8	9.5	14.4	*8.2*
Rates of Violence	n/a	50.0%	n/a	n/a	47.0%	n/a	n/a	n/a	*50.0%*	50.8%		*50.8%*	44.8%		51.7%	n/a	43.8%	n/a	*46.8%*
DV Shelter Services	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	*4*	1	1	*2*	0	1	0	1	1	0	*3*
	0	32	0	0	24	0	0	0	*56*	0	3	*3*	0	5	0	16	25	0	*46*
	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	*2*	13	0	*13*	0	0	0	0	0	0	*0*
Public Safety Resources	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	*Mixed*	No	Yes	*Mixed*	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	*Yes*
	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	*Yes*	Yes	Yes	*Yes*	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	*Yes*
Health Services	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	*Mixed*	Yes	Yes	*Yes*	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	*Yes*
	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	*Yes*	Yes	Yes	*Yes*	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	n/a	*Mixed*
	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	*Mixed*	Yes	Yes	*Yes*	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	*Yes*
Transportation	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	Mixed	No	No	*No*	No	No	No	No	No	No	*No*
	4	10	3	4	10	6	2	2	*44*	2	1	*3*	1	0	3	2	5	0	*11*
	n/a	$136.0	$186.0	$164.0	$253.0	$210.0	n/a	$234.0	*$198.1*	$238.0	$1,370.0	*$804.0*	$265.0	n/a	$350.0	$325.0	$258.0	n/a	*$299.5*
	$89,100.0	$748,642.0	$65,689.0	$60,159.0	$671,145.0	$47,861.0	$61,261.0	$175,657.0	*$2,052,687.0*	$423,201.0	n/a	*$423,201.0*	$26,884.0	$308,577.0	$182,826.0	$264,904.0	$318,570.0	$340,994.0	*$1,442,755.0*

Analysis Note: Averages are totaled by averaging the borough average. Cells marked with an "" indicate that values were totaled instead of averaged*

Section	Sources
Community Characteristics	Alaska Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development.(2022). Communities and regions of Alaska. *Alaska Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development.* Retrieved from: https://gis.data.alaska.gov/documents/25d05bbb9aca4ab087a7ccb0fa9b8d84/explore National Congress of American Indians. (2023). Alaska Area Tribal Directory. *National Congress of American Indians.* Retrieved from: https://www.ncai.org/tribal-directory/region/alaska-region/page/1/sort/asc U.S. Census Bureau, U.S. Department of Commerce, & U.S. Census Bureau. (2023). ACS Demographic and Housing Estimates. *American Community Survey, ACS 1-Year Estimates Data Profiles, Table DP05.* Retrieved September 19, 2024, from https://data.census.gov/table/ACSDP1Y2023.DP05. U.S. Census Bureau, U.S. Department of Commerce, & U.S. Census Bureau. (2023). Annual Geographic Information Table. *Geography, GEO Geography Information, Table GEOINFO* . Retrieved from: https://data.census.gov/table/GEOINFO2023.GEOINFO?d=GEO Geography Information. U.S. Census Bureau, U.S. Department of Commerce, & U.S. Census Bureau. (2020). Quick Facts: Geography. Retrieved from: https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/AK/POP060220#POP060220
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Income & Employment	U.S. Census Bureau, U.S. Department of Commerce, & U.S. Census Bureau. (2023). Financial Characteristics. *American Community Survey, ACS 1-Year Estimates Subject Tables, Table S2503* . Retrieved from: https://data.census.gov/table/ACSST1Y2023.S2503?t=Income and Poverty. U.S. Census Bureau. (2022). Poverty Status in the Past 12 Months. *American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Tables, Table S1701.* Retrieved from: https://data.census.gov/table/ACSST5Y2022.S1701. U.S. Census Bureau (2022). Employment Status. *American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Tables, Table S2301.* Retreived from: https://data.census.gov/table/ACSST5Y2022.S2301?t=Employment and Labor Force Status.
Housing	U.S. Census Bureau. (2022). Households and Families. *American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Tables, Table S1101.* Retrieved from: https://data.census.gov/table/ACSST5Y2022.S1101. U.S. Census Bureau. (2022). Physical Housing Characteristics for Occupied Housing Units. *American Community Survey, ACS 1-Year Estimates Subject Tables, Table S2504.* Retrieved from: https://data.census.gov/table/ACSST1Y2022.S2504?g=040XX00US02$0500000&moe=false. U.S. Census Bureau, U.S. Department of Commerce, & U.S. Census Bureau. (2023). Selected Housing Characteristics. American Community Survey, ACS 1-Year Estimates Data Profiles, Table DP04. Retrieved September 19, 2024, from https://data.census.gov/table/ACSDP1Y2023.DP04.
Rates of Violence	Alaska Victimization Survey (2015). Intimate partner violence by region. *Justice Center: University of Alaska Anchorage* . Retrieved from: https://www.uaa.alaska.edu/academics/college-of-health/departments/justice-center/avs/avs-results/regional-results.cshtml
DV Shelter Services	Alaska Department of Public Safety, Council on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault, answered September 18, 2024.
Public Safety Resources	Alaska Department of Public Safety, Public Information Request, answered March 1, 2024
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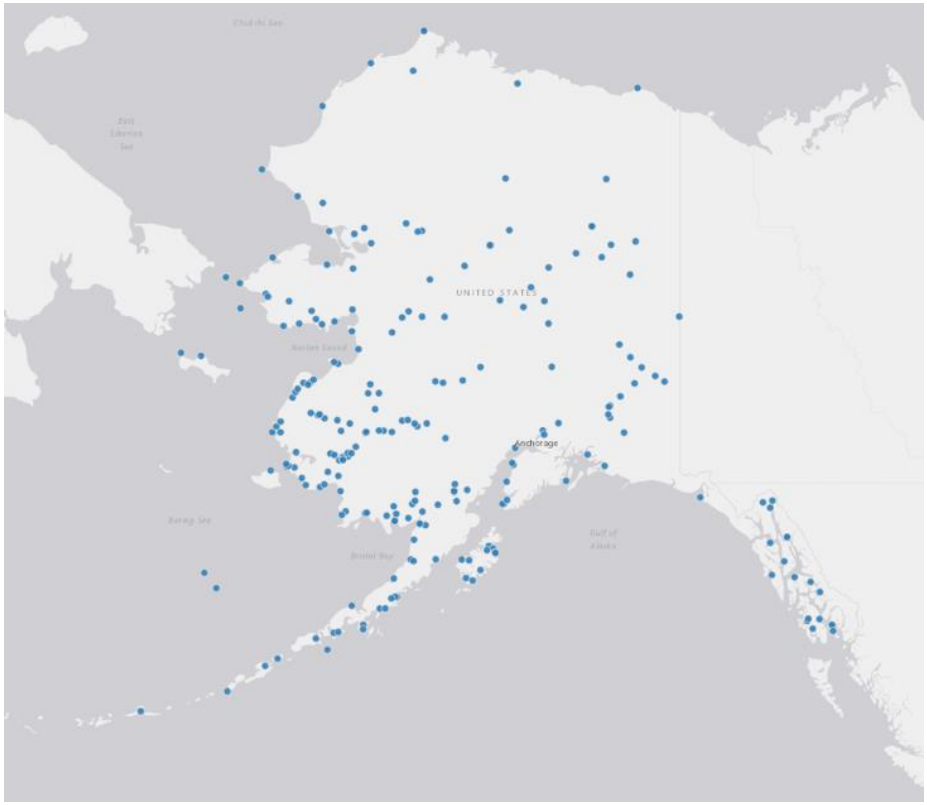
Transporation	Federal Highway Administration. (2001). National Highway System. *U.S. Department of Transportation.* Retrieved from: https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/akdiv/docs/nhsalaska.pdf Smartscrapers. (n.d.). Hotels in Alaska. Retrived from: https://rentechdigital.com/smartscraper/business-report-details/united-states/list-of-hotels-in-alaska Office of the State Assessor (2024). Bed Tax Rate and Bed Tax Revenue. *Alaska Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development.* Retrieved from: https://www.akleg.gov/basis/get_documents.asp?session=33&docid=32469 Budget Your Trip. (2024) Travel Costs from Around the World. *Budget Your Trip.* Retrieved from: https://www.budgetyourtrip.com/

Federally Recognized Alaska Native Villages/Tribes

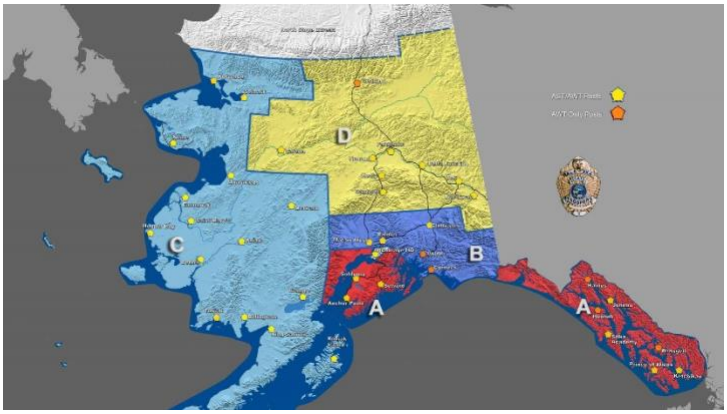
There are 229 Federally Recognized Alaska Native Villages/Tribes Within the State of Alaska.



Alaska State Troopers[103]

As of March 1, 2024, there were a total of 198 Alaska State Troopers assigned to patrol. AST had an 18% vacancy rate, as of February 1st, 2024. [104] In the table below, the totals for each detachment only include Troopers assigned to patrol functions and does not include other Trooper units such as investigations, narcotics interdiction, or agency leadership.

	# Troopers on Patrol[105]	Population in region[106]	1 Trooper per …
A Detachment North (Soldotna)	35	40,044	1,144 residents
A Detachment South (Juneau)	13	10,149	780 residents
B Detachment (Palmer)	31	74,521	2,403 residents
C Detachment (Anchorage)[107]	57	43,242	758 residents
D Detachment (Fairbanks)	62[108]	114,267	1,843 residents
Total	198		



[103] https://dps.alaska.gov/AST/Home

[104] Alaska Department of Public Safety (2024). Department of Public Safety Alaska State Troopers, Aircraft Section, & Village Public Safety Officer Program. FY2025 Budget Overview. Retrieved from: https://www.akleg.gov/basis/get_documents.asp?session=33&docid=29005

[105] Does not include the captain and lieutenant that make up the command staff and the sergeant working at the courthouse

[106] This number represents only the number of people who rely on AST as their primary provider of public safety.

[107] Posts in C Detachment area combination of standard trooper posts with personnel living full time in communities, while other posts are staffed by personnel on a two week on/ two week off situation, living there off time in other communities in Alaska.

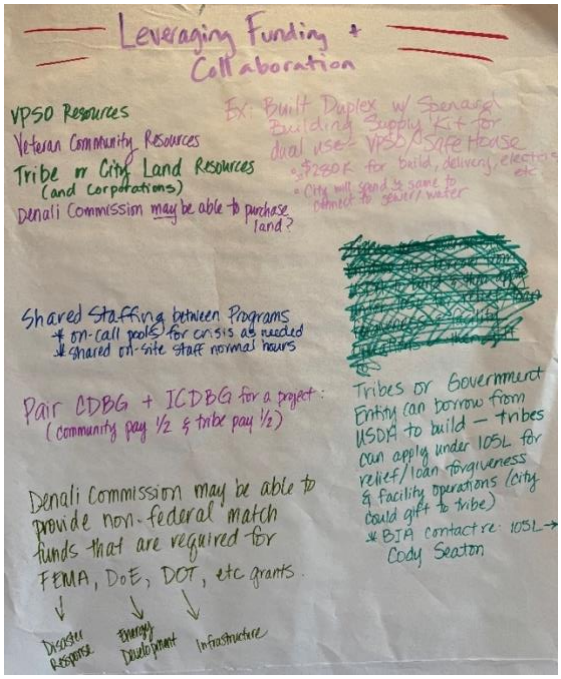
[108] Includes 11 vacant positions (i.e., 51 actual Troopers are employed and assigned patrol in this region

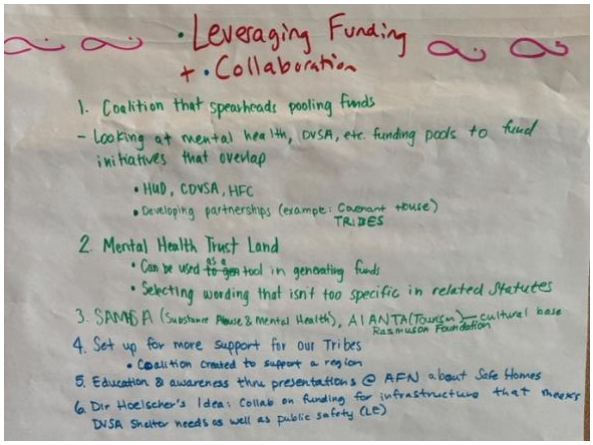
Village Public Safety Officers

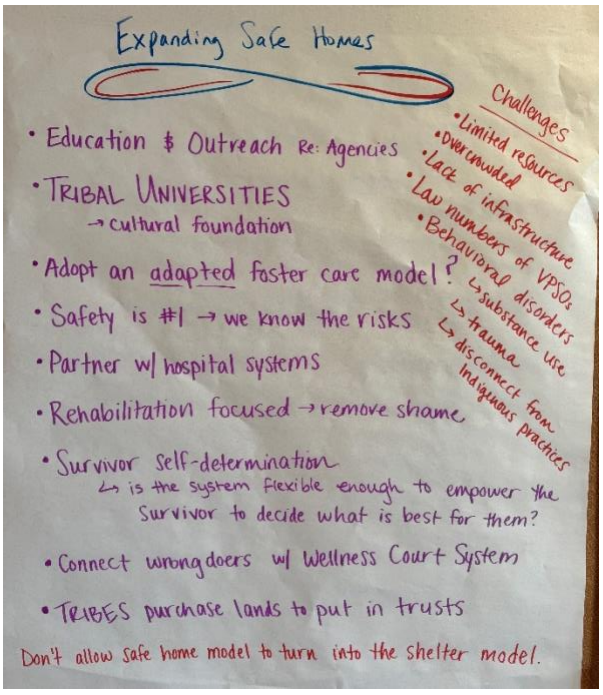
VPSOs are employed by regional non-profit organizations, such as Tanana Chiefs Conference. As stated, they are organized and managed by AST under statue.

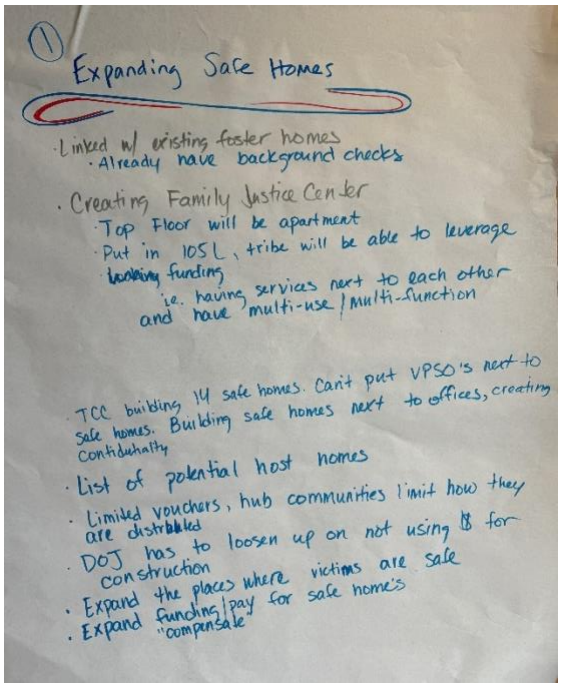
As of March 1, 2024, there were a total of 69 VPSOs located in communities across Alaska.

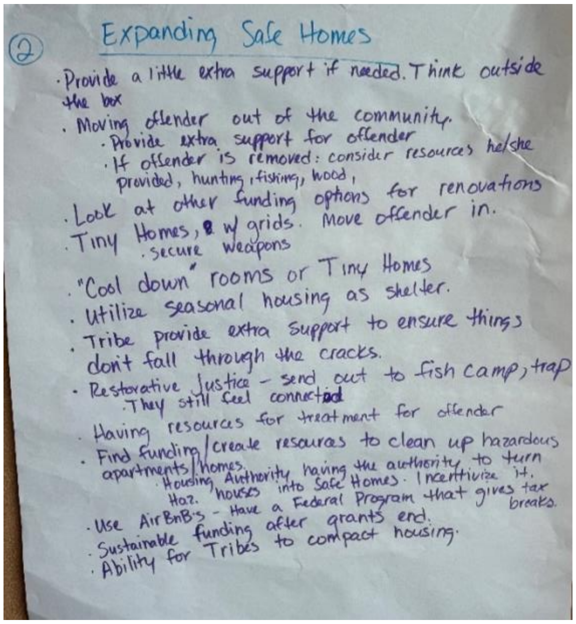
Tanana Chiefs Conference	11	Chugachmiut	3
Northwest Artic Borough	5	Central Council of the Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska	8
Kodiak Area Native Association	6	Bristol Bay Native Association	6
Kawerak	7	Association of Village Council Presidents	7
Copper River Native Association	6	Aleutian Pribilof Islands Association	10

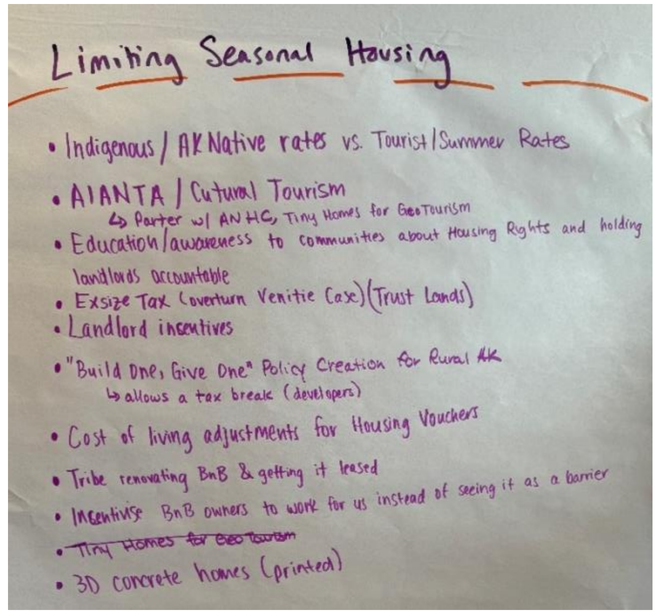

Leveraging Funding + Collaboration
VPSO Resources
Veteran Community Resources
Tribe or City Land Resources (and Corporations)
Denali Commission may be able to purchase land?
Ex: Built Duplex w/ Seenagl Building Supply Kit for dual use: VPSO/Safe House
$720K for build, delivery, electric etc
City will spend $ same to connect to sewer/water
Shared Staffing between Programs
* on-call pools for crisis as needed
* shared on-site staff normal hours
Pair CDBG + ICDBG for a project: (community pay ½ & tribe pay ½)
Denali Commission may be able to provide non-federal match funds that are required for FEMA, DoE, DOT, etc grants.
Disaster Response
Energy Development
Infrastructure
Tribes or Government Entity can borrow from USDA to build — tribes can apply under 105L for relief/loan forgiveness & facility operations (city could gift to tribe)
* BIA contact re: 105L → Cody Seaton

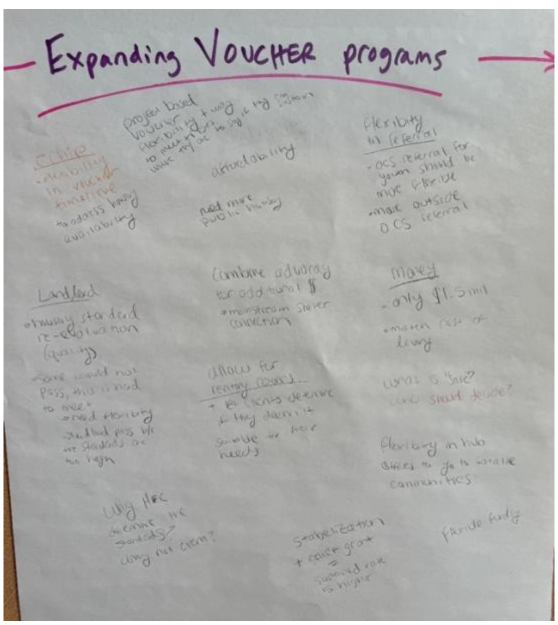

Leveraging Funding + Collaboration
1. Coalition that spearheads pooling funds
- Looking at mental health, DVSA, etc. funding pools to fund initiatives that overlap
• HUD, CDVSA, HFC
• Developing partnerships (example: Covenant House) TRIBES
2. Mental Health Trust Land
• Can be used as a tool in generating funds
• Selecting wording that isn't too specific in related statutes
3. SAMHSA (Substance Abuse & Mental Health), AIANTA (Tourism) — cultural base Rasmuson Foundation
4. Set up for more support for our Tribes
• Coalition created to support a region
5. Education & awareness thru presentations @ AFN about Safe Homes
6. Dir Hoelscher's Idea: Collab on funding for infrastructure that meets DVSA shelter needs as well as public safety (LE)

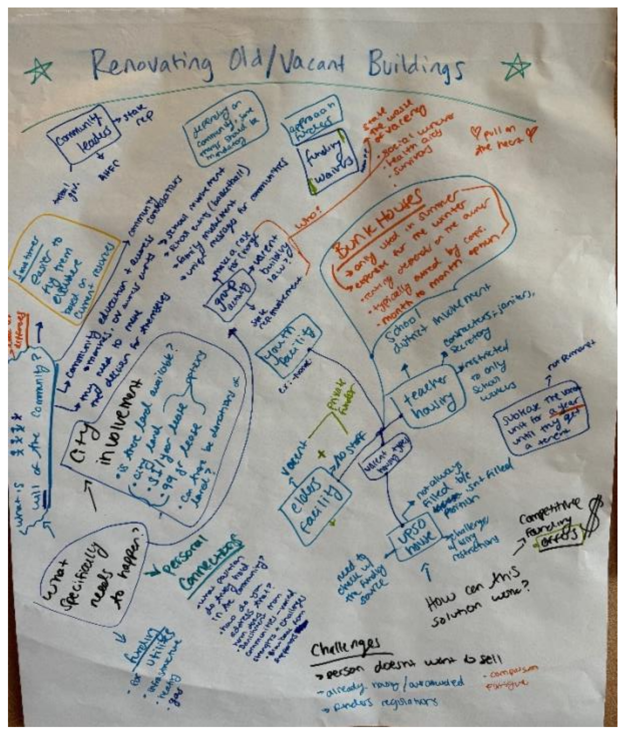

Expanding Safe Homes
Challenges
• Limited resources
• Overcrowded
• Lack of infrastructure
• Law numbers of VPSOs
• Behavioral disorders
↳ substance use
↳ trauma
↳ disconnect from Indigenous practices
• Education & Outreach Re: Agencies
• TRIBAL UNIVERSITIES → cultural foundation
• Adopt an adapted foster care model?
• Safety is #1 → we know the risks
• Partner w/ hospital systems
• Rehabilitation focused → remove shame
• Survivor self-determination
↳ is the system flexible enough to empower the Survivor to decide what is best for them?
• Connect wrongdoers w/ Wellness Court System
• TRIBES purchase lands to put in trusts
Don't allow safe home model to turn into the shelter model.

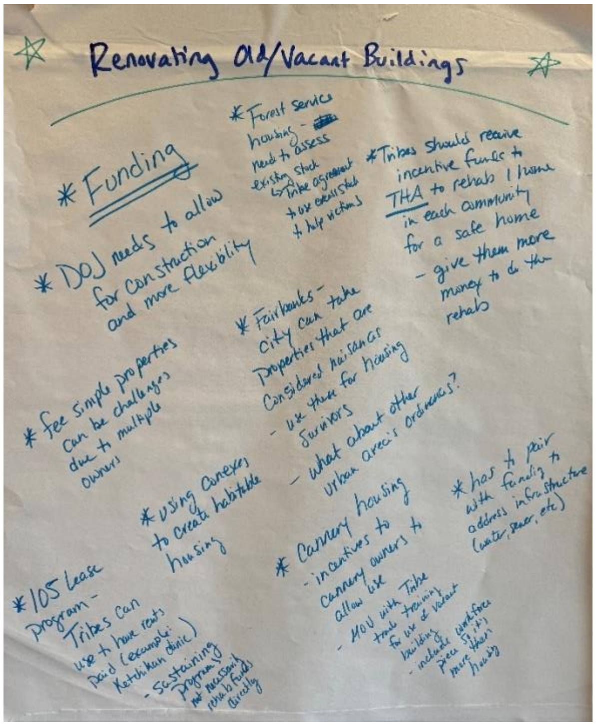

1
Expanding Safe Homes
- Linked w/ existing foster homes
- Already have background checks
- Creating Family Justice Center
- Top Floor will be apartment
- Put in 105L, tribe will be able to leverage funding
ie. having services next to each other and have multi-use / multi-function
- TCC building 14 safe homes. Can't put VPSO's next to safe homes. Building safe homes next to offices, creating confidentiality
- List of potential host homes
- Limited vouchers, hub communities limit how they are distributed
- DOJ has to loosen up on not using $ for construction
- Expand the places where victims are safe
- Expand funding/pay for safe homes "compensate"

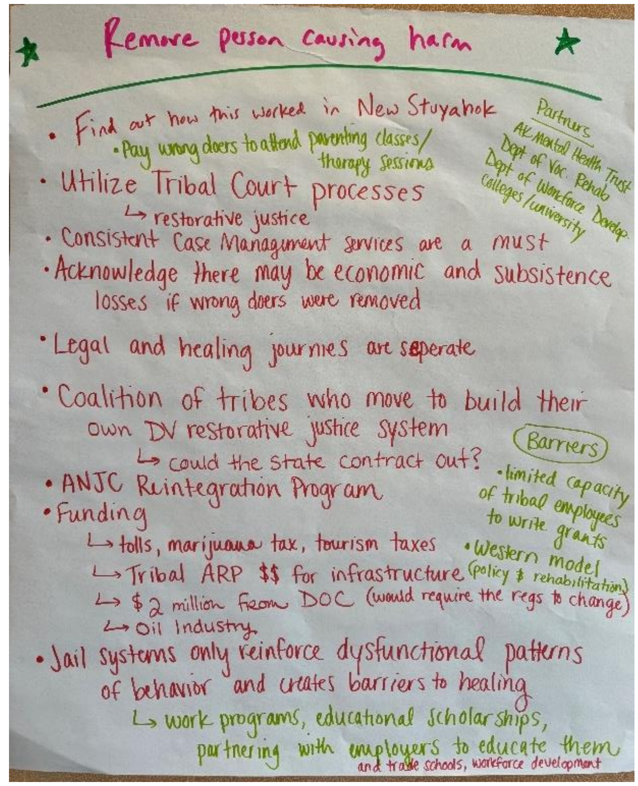

② Expanding Safe Homes
· Provide a little extra support if needed. Think outside the box
· Moving offender out of the community.
· Provide extra support for offender
· If offender is removed: consider resources he/she provided, hunting, fishing, wood,
· Look at other funding options for renovations
· Tiny Homes, & w/ grids. Move offender in.
· secure weapons
· "Cool down" rooms or Tiny Homes
· Utilize seasonal housing as shelter.
· Tribe provide extra support to ensure things don't fall through the cracks.
· Restorative Justice - send out to fish camp, trap
· They still feel connected
· Having resources for treatment for offender
· Find funding/create resources to clean up hazardous apartments/homes.
· Housing Authority having the authority to turn Haz. houses into Safe Homes. Incentivize it.
· Federal Program that gives tax breaks.
· Use AirBnB's - Have a
· Sustainable funding after grants end.
· Ability for Tribes to compact housing.


Limiting Seasonal Housing
• Indigenous / AK Native rates vs. Tourist/Summer Rates
• AIANTA / Cultural Tourism
↳ Porter w/ ANHC, Tiny Homes for GeoTourism
• Education/awareness to communities about Housing Rights and holding landlords accountable
• Exsize Tax (overturn Venitie Case)(Trust Lands)
• Landlord incentives
• "Build One, Give One" Policy Creation for Rural AK
↳ allows a tax break (developers)
• Cost of living adjustments for Housing Vouchers
• Tribe renovating BnB & getting it leased
• Incentivise BnB owners to work for us instead of seeing it as a barrier
• Tiny Homes for GeoTourism
• 3D concrete homes (printed)


Expanding VOUCHER programs


Renovating Old/Vacant Buildings
Bunk Houses
City involvement
teacher housing
elders facility
What specifically needs to happen?
personal connections
How can this solution work?
Challenges
→ person doesn't want to sell


Renovating Old/Vacant Buildings
*Funding
*DOJ needs to allow for construction and more flexibility
*Tribes should receive incentive funds to THA to rehab 1 home in each community for a safe home
- give them more money to do the rehab
*Fairbanks - city can take properties that are considered nuisances
- use these for housing survivors
- what about other urban area's ordinances?
*fee simple properties can be challenges due to multiple owners
*using conexes to create habitable housing
*105 Lease Program - Tribes can use to have rents paid (example: Ketchikan clinic)
*Cannery housing
- incentives to cannery owners to allow use
*has to pair with funding to address infrastructure (water, sewer, etc)


Remove person causing harm
• Find out how this worked in New Stuyahok
• Pay wrong doers to attend parenting classes/therapy sessions
• Utilize Tribal Court processes
↳ restorative justice
• Consistent Case Management services are a must
• Acknowledge there may be economic and subsistence losses if wrong doers were removed
• Legal and healing journies are seperate
• Coalition of tribes who move to build their own DV restorative justice system
↳ could the state contract out?
• ANJC Reintegration Program
• Funding
↳ tolls, marijuana tax, tourism taxes
↳ Tribal ARP $$ for infrastructure
↳ $2 million from DOC (would require the regs to change)
↳ Oil Industry
• Jail systems only reinforce dysfunctional patterns of behavior and creates barriers to healing
↳ work programs, educational scholarships, partnering with employers to educate them
and trade schools, workforce development
Partners
AK Mental Health Trust
Dept of Voc. Rehab
Dept of Workforce Develop
Colleges/university
Barriers
• limited capacity of tribal employees to write grants
• Western model (policy & rehabilitation)

Key Informant Interviews

Standard Questions

1. From what you have seen, where do Native people go when they need to be safe from domestic violence or sexual assault and cannot stay home?
2. Where are safe places in your community? [note/clarify region or context]
1. (family, friends, work, safe homes, shelters)Are you aware of any safe homes in your community?

a. How many do you know of?
b. What influences the decision to go to one? (e.g., returning, length of stay)

2. How about shelters? Is that an option for folks in your community? Why or why not?
3. We know housing is limited in villages. How do people in your community find and keep stable housing?
3. Probe: If someone was experiencing domestic violence or abuse, what are some ways they would find a safe place to stay?
4. What are some of the challenges people tend to experience when seeking safety?
4. Can you give me an example or scenario?
5. What circumstances or housing situations would make a person return to an unsafe situation?
6. For this project, we need to speak with people in each region of Alaska, and I would really appreciate your help finding other people whom we can interview. Who else should we speak with to find out more about what we discussed today?

First Wave Prompts:

- Victim advocate(s)
  - Just use standard (emphasis on safe homes)
- DV shelter staff (Outreach coordinators, managers)
  - How many beds are usually available at your shelter?
  - What hub communities or communities do your clients tend to come from? (e.g., their hub, local communities, state-wide?)
  - Do you know where victims may go when they cannot access your shelter?

Executive Director Focus Group

Introduction

Thank you all again for agreeing to speak to us. I'm Wendi Siebold, President at Strategic Prevention Solutions, and this is Tiana Teter with the AKNWRC and our MSW intern at SPS. AKNWRC received earmarked funds from Lisa Murkowski's efforts to conduct a statewide assessment of safe housing for Alaska Native people who have experienced DV. SPS is coordinating the assessment, and we are speaking to you as part of a larger data collection effort across the state.

We hope to use the findings from this project to determine safe housing needs, understand the challenges our communities face when seeking safety, and create a strong picture of the issues we face in Alaska with the housing crisis and interpersonal violence. We appreciate you taking the time to give us your insights.

[*Share screen*]

Paste Jamboard link into chat and direct people to the jamboard
Show and discuss project timeline

[NEXT PAGE]

Informed Consent

Before we start, I would like to share some quick points on confidentially for our discussion:

- This group discussion should last about an hour. Taking part in this interview is voluntary and you may choose to not answer any of the questions.
- We ask that the conversation we have today remain confidential, meaning that no one here will share who said what with anyone outside of this group.
- We will be recording the interview so we can accurately quote when needed and help us focus on the conversation. We will not be sharing the recording with anyone but the SPS study team.
- The information we learn during this conversation will be grouped with responses from other individuals. Nothing you share will be connected to your name in any reports produced as part of the project.
- We may use quotes from our discussion to illustrate themes unless you specifically ask us not to quote a particular sentiment. Your words will not be connected to your name: we will identify you as "a shelter director."
- Summary results may be shared with AKNWRC, project partners, government entities, and the public generally. Information may also be shared at meetings, conferences, and

through other means to benefit those working in domestic violence and housing safety.

Does anyone have any questions for us before we get started?

{*Answer questions, then* Turn on recorder}

Questions

1. From what you have seen, **where do Alaska Native people go when they need to be safe from domestic violence or sexual assault and cannot stay home?**

Now, let's talk a little bit about the services at your shelter.

2. If your region has a shelter, **how likely is it for a survivor to go to a shelter over other options**? Do you know where survivors may go when they cannot access your shelter?

Probes:

a. Have you observed any differences between survivors seeking help in rural compared to urban regions?
b. Are there communities that are NOT served by your regional shelter?
c. Do you offer regional services such as travel vouchers to victims seeking help?

3. **Where are other types of safe places in your community**? [note/clarify region or context] (family, friends, work, safe homes, shelters)

Probes:

a. Are you aware of any safe homes in your community?
b. What influences the decision to go to one? (e.g., returning, length of stay)

Now, let's talk specifically about safety for survivors who live in villages (or rural areas)

4. **What are some ideas you have for how we can keep people housed and safe in rural communities?**

a. What is the role of law enforcement?
b. What is the role of housing authorities? State government?
c. What is the role of Tribes and Tribal organizations?

(ASK FOLLOWING QUESTIONS ONLY IF NEEDED /
HAVEN'T ALREADY BEEN ADDRESSED)

5. What are some of the challenges people tend to experience when seeking safety?
a. Can you give me an example or scenario?

6. What circumstances or housing situations would make a person return to an unsafe situation?

That was our final question, thank you all for sharing your insights. They will be very valuable for our work on safety and housing in Alaska. If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to us at the following email address: wendi@spsconnect.com

Behavioral Health Aides, Troopers, VPSO, Other

Opening language:
Hi _____[name of interviewee]____. Thank you again for signing up to talk with me about safe housing in your region. The Alaska Native Women's Resource Center is doing a statewide assessment to determine the housing needs for Alaska Native people experiencing domestic violence and/or sexual assault. We hope to use the findings from this project to understand the challenges our communities face when seeking safety, and create a strong picture of the issues we face in Alaska with the housing crisis and interpersonal violence. We appreciate you taking the time to give us your insights.

Our conversation is confidential, which means that I will keep your identity private in any summary of the findings of this assessment. In other words, your name will not be used alongside any quote or specific finding in any public reports.

In order to help me be present in this interview I would like to record our conversation. This will only be for the evaluation team's use and will not be made public. Are you okay with me recording our conversation today?

[Wait for "yes" or "no" verbal answer]

If "yes" – Great! I am now going to begin recording. {Turn on recorder}
If "no" – Ok, I understand. I will take some notes as we speak but I will not turn on the recorder.

Do you have any questions for me before we begin?

Questions

1. From what you have seen, where do Native people in your region go when they need to be safe from domestic violence or sexual assault and cannot stay home?

2. Where are safe places in your community? (Note/clarify region or context) (Family, friends, work, safe homes, shelters)

3. What are the ways that [insert interviewee role – BHAs, State Troopers, VPSOs, etc] support people who experience domestic violence in your community?

4. One thing we're looking for in these interviews are creative ways to address safe housing. One example of a potentially promising model is the Bay Haven shelter in Hooper Bay. That shelter was built by using Tribal corporation money, State money, and

private donations. We've been told this may be a promising model for leveraging resources in rural AK. How do you see this kind of approach working?

a. (probe) Any challenges you foresee?
b. (probe) Any real positives?

5. What are some of the things that [insert interviewee role – BHAs, State Troopers, VPSOs, etc] can do to help keep people who experience DV housed?

6. In what ways can State government and Tribes coordinate to keep people who experience DV housed?

7. Are there any other creative solutions or next steps you can think of to keep people who experience domestic violence housed?

8. Is there anyone else we speak with to find out more about what we discussed today? [ask for contact information and a "warm hand off" (if they can introduce you) for each contact they mention]

That's all of the questions I have. Thank you for taking the time to speak with me.
If you have any questions or would like to change anything you said during today's interview, please contact me om the next few weeks. Thank you again!

Regional Housing Authority

Opening language:
Hi _____[name of interviewee]____. Thank you again for signing up to talk with me about safe housing in your region. The Alaska Native Women's Resource Center is doing a statewide assessment to determine the housing needs for Alaska Native people experiencing domestic violence and/or sexual assault. We hope to use the findings from this project to understand the challenges our communities face when seeking safety, and create a strong picture of the issues we face in Alaska with the housing crisis and interpersonal violence. We appreciate you taking the time to give us your insights.

Our conversation is confidential, which means that I will keep your identity private in any summary of the findings of this assessment. In other words, your name will not be used alongside any quote or specific finding in any public reports.

In order to help me be present in this interview I would like to record our conversation. This will only be for the evaluation team's use and will not be made public. Are you okay with me recording our conversation today?

[Wait for "yes" or "no" verbal answer]

If "yes" – Great! I am now going to begin recording. {Turn on recorder}
If "no" – Ok, I understand. I will take some notes as we speak but I will not turn on the recorder.

Do you have any questions for me before we begin?

Questions

1. From what you have seen or heard, where do Native people go when they need to be safe from domestic violence or sexual assault and cannot stay home?

2. Can you think of any challenges people experiencing DV tend to experience when seeking safety that is related to housing?
    a. Can you give me an example or a scenario?

3. What factors determine how housing resources are allocated?
    a. How does escaping violent situations factor into your housing decisions, if at all?
    b. Have you observed differences in allocation between rural and urban applicants for housing?
4. Is it a priority of your organization to address housing for people in DV situations?
    a. What are the challenges to ensuring that this happens?

5. One thing we're looking for in these interviews are creative ways to address safe housing. One example of a potentially promising model is the Bay Haven shelter in Hooper Bay. That shelter was built by using Tribal corporation money, State money, and private donations. We've been told this may be a promising model for leveraging resources in rural AK. How do you see this kind of approach working?
    a. (probe) Are there any challenges you foresee?
    b. (probe) Are there any positives?

6. Are there any other creative ways you can think of to keep people who experience domestic violence housed?
    (probe) Anything specific that systems/governments can do?

7. Is there anyone else in your region that we should speak with to find out more about what we discussed today? [ask for contact information and a "warm hand off" (if they can introduce you) for each contact they mention]

That's all of the questions I have. Thank you for taking the time to speak with me.
If you have any questions or would like to change anything you said during today's interview, please contact me om the next few weeks. Thank you again!

Tribal Government

Opening language:
Hi _____[name of interviewee]____. Thank you again for signing up to talk with me about safe housing in your region. The Alaska Native Women's Resource Center is doing a statewide assessment to determine the housing needs for Alaska Native people experiencing domestic violence and/or sexual assault. We hope to use the findings from this project to understand the challenges our communities face when seeking safety, and create a strong picture of the issues we face in Alaska with the housing crisis and interpersonal violence. We appreciate you taking the time to give us your insights.

Our conversation is confidential, which means that I will keep your identity private in any summary of the findings of this assessment. In other words, your name will not be used alongside any quote or specific finding in any public reports.

In order to help me be present in this interview I would like to record our conversation. This will only be for the evaluation team's use and will not be made public. Are you okay with me recording our conversation today?

[Wait for "yes" or "no" verbal answer]

If "yes" – Great! I am now going to begin recording. {Turn on recorder}
If "no" – Ok, I understand. I will take some notes as we speak but I will not turn on the recorder.

Do you have any questions for me before we begin?

Questions

1. From what you have seen, where do Alaska Native people in your region go when they need to be safe from domestic violence or sexual assault and cannot stay home?

2. Where are safe places in your community? (Note/clarify region or context) (Family, friends, work, safe homes, shelters)

3. How does your Tribe support those experiencing domestic violence in your community?

4. One thing we're looking for in these interviews are creative ways to address safe housing. One example of a potentially promising model is the Bay Haven shelter in Hooper Bay. That shelter was built by using Tribal corporation money, State money, and private donations. We've been told this may be a promising model for leveraging resources in rural AK. How do you see this kind of approach working?
    a. (probe) Any challenges you foresee?
    b. (probe) Any real positives?

5. What are some of the **things that Tribes can do** to help keep people who experience DV housed?

6. In what ways can **State government** play a role and/or support Tribes?

7. Are there any **other creative solutions or next steps** you can think of to keep people who experience domestic violence housed?

8. Is there anyone else we speak with to find out more about what we discussed today? [ask for contact information and a "warm hand off" (if they can introduce you) for each contact they mention]

That's all of the questions I have. Thank you for taking the time to speak with me.
If you have any questions or would like to change anything you said during today's interview, please contact me om the next few weeks. Thank you again!


SAFE HOUSING ASSESSMENT
Win $100!
Drawing held at 10AM Saturday the 21st
Share your thoughts and enter our drawing for the chance to win 1 of 3
$100 Visa gift cards
AKNWRC
ALASKA NATIVE WOMEN'S RESOURCE CENTER
STRATEGIC
PREVENTION SOLUTIONS
We value your feedback!
3 winners will be drawn at 10AM on Saturday, October 21st. Winners can pick up their prizes from the table by 1pm.

Safe Housing Assessment

Please answer the question below to be entered into a raffle

If someone in your community was experiencing domestic violence or abuse, what are some ways they could remain safely housed?

STRATEGIC PREVENTION SOLUTIONS

AKNWRC

Community _____

Name _____

Phone Number _____

Mailing Address _____

Email Address _____

Please fill out your contact information above. If your name is drawn you'll be contacted by phone by a member of our team on October 21st at 10AM

STRATEGIC PREVENTION SOLUTIONS

AKNWRC

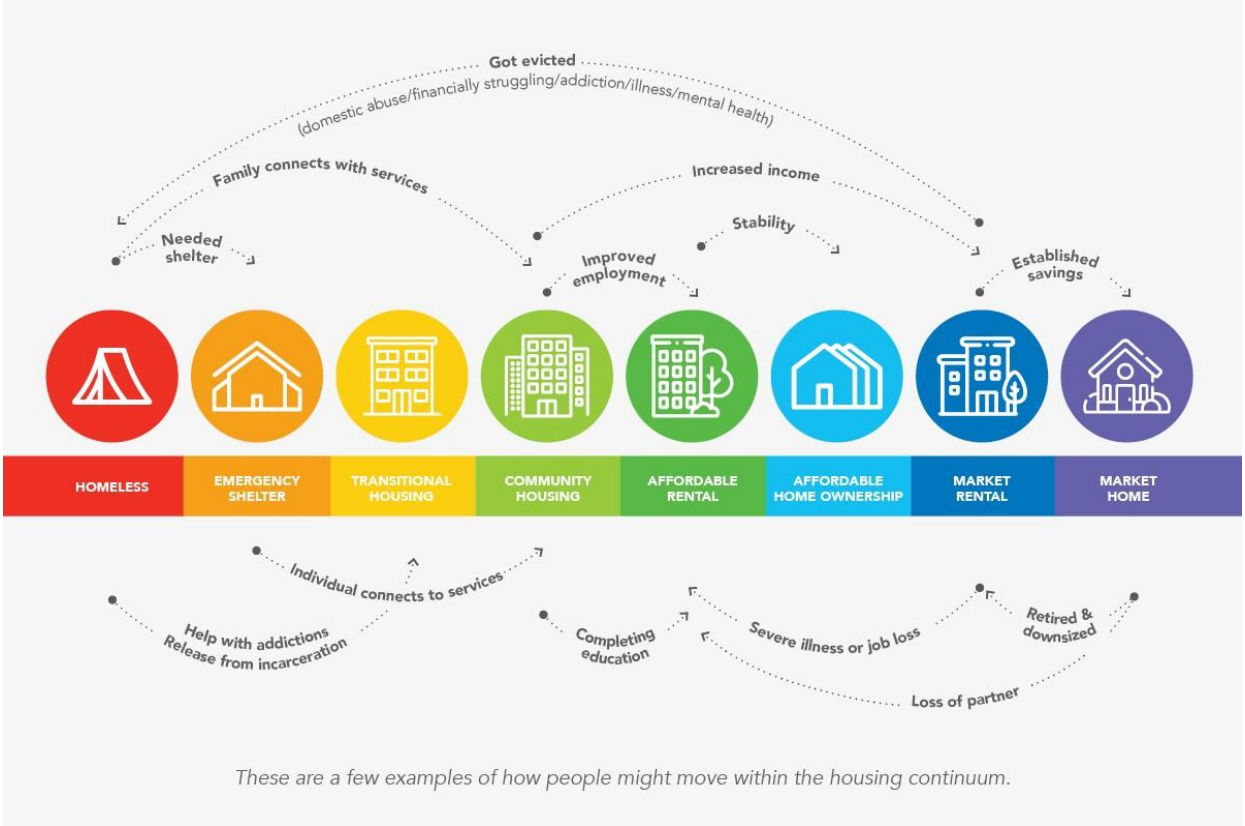
Participants of June 28, 2024 Listening Session in Anchorage, Alaska

First Name	Last Name	Job Title	Tribe/Organization Name if affiliated
Jessica	Svetkovich	Department of Justice Coordinator	Knik Tribe
Andrew	Merrill	Captain/Detachment Commander	Alaska State Troopers
Cheri	Smith	Executive Director	LeeShore Center
Maria	Versteeg	Intake Specialist	Sitka Tribe of Alaska
Brenda	Stanfill	Executive Director	Alaska Network on Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault
Bryana	Angulo	Tribal Protective Services Manager	Tanana Chiefs Conference
Taylor	Feightner	Youth Services Manager	Tundra Women's Coalition
Sally	Contreras	Housing Manager	Bering Straits Regional Housing Authority
Brandy	McGee	Executive Director	Kenai Peninsula Housing Initiatives
Teri	Vent	Victim Advocate	Native Village of Huslia
MaryBeth	Gagnon	Executive Director	State of Alaska, Council on Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault
Joel	Alowa	Prevention Services Director	Maniilaq Association
Darrell	Hildebrand	Public Safety Manager	Tanana Chiefs Conference
Shayna	Gurtler Rowe	Tribal Justice Coordinator	Native Village of Gakona
Donita	O'Dell	Housing Advocate	WISH (Women in Safe Homes)
James	Hoelscher	Director	State of Alaska VPSO Division
Kristin	Reardon	Program Manager	Denali Commission
Darlene "Dar" Kawennano:ron	Johnson	Community Technical Assistance Coordinator	Alaska Tribal Victim Services/RurAL CAP, Inc.
Hannah	Katongan	Occupancy Specialist	Bering Straits Regional Housing Authority
Taylor	Donovan	Housing Services Director	Rural CAP
Gloria	Burns	Vice President	Ketchikan Indian Community
Aaron	Bean	Tribal Court Coordinator	Craig Tribal Association
Shirley	Fox	Tribal victim service director	Kipnuk Traditional Council
Madison	Smith	Service Program Lead	Alaska Housing Finance Corporation

Molly	Jacobson	OVC Program Coordinator	Native Village of Eklutna
Dawn	Harris	social services director	Native Village of Eklutna
Faith	Rukovishnikoff	Executive Assistant	Native Village of Eklutna
Marissa	Moses		
Renee	Romer		State of Alaska/VPSO
Darlene	Dye		Alaska State Troopers
Trudy	Anderson		Alaska Network on Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault
		STAFF	
Emily	Singerhouse	Research Associate	Strategic Prevention Solutions
Tiana	Teter	Research Associate	Strategic Prevention Solutions
Wendi	Siebold	President	Strategic Prevention Solutions
Kate	Chaussee	Finance Director	Alaska Native Women's Resource Center
Martha	Bravo	Executive Coordinator	Alaska Native Women's Resource Center
Rick	Garcia	Co-Director, Law and Policy	Alaska Native Women's Resource Center
Marlene	Minnette	Program Specialist	Alaska Native Women's Resource Center
Frances	Andrews	Grants Manager & Senior Program Specialist	Alaska Native Women's Resource Center
Kendra	Kloster	Co-Director, Law & Policy	Alaska Native Women's Resource Center

Types of Housing & Definitions

This document is a reference for housing types and definitions common in Alaska and other regions of the U.S. The housing types are emergency housing, transitional housing, permanent supportive housing, and long-term housing; and are viewed commonly on a continuum of stability. Below is a visual produced by United Way Halifax that shows the interrelationship of housing types with available supportive services and life circumstances. The quotes included in this document are from the domestic violence survivors, advocates, and system providers who participated in interviews with SPS project staff in 2023 and early 2024.



These are a few examples of how people might move within the housing continuum.

Emergency Housing

Definition

Emergency housing means a facility or home with a primary purpose of providing temporary or transitional shelter and supportive services to the homeless in general or to a specific population of the homeless (e.g., DV survivors), usually for no more than sixty days. These facilities are often the first-place people turn to during or after experiencing an economic or domestic violence crisis.

Housing structures

- Domestic violence, emergency, or homeless shelter, safe homes
- Hotel or motel
- Rotating location such as a church or public building

Housing Models

Emergency Housing Vouchers

- The Emergency Housing Voucher program allows Public Housing Authorities, Continuums of Care, and Victim Service Providers to assist individuals and families who are homeless, at-risk of homelessness, fleeing, or attempting to flee, domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or human trafficking, or were recently homeless or have a high risk of housing stability.

Supporting/Supplemental Information[1]

> "… a lot of these women that are experiencing domestic violence, they either don't have a good work history just because the lack of working. A lot of them have been stay-at-home moms. You know, they don't have the training, so I think [if Alaska housing] would open up more housing vouchers, so there's not a three-year wait list. I think a lot more people would consider leaving dangerous situations if they knew that they had…that level of extra help. But a three-year waitlist doesn't help anybody."

> "…if individuals could stay long enough that they could find housing, they normally would continue on their progress. [However], if by the time they got to what was the end of their stay at emergency shelter they hadn't lined anything up, we saw that they would start looking backwards. How can I at least go back to what I had? Because living in shelter is less than what you had in many ways and your children are uprooted, they can't have their friends there to come, visit them, you know, it's just such a different environment. So, lack of housing, I feel perpetuates people being stuck in relationships that are violent."

> "I think that we could keep working on improving the voucher system and that section eight voucher system and getting that voucher system out to more communities, because right now it's only in ten communities."

> "And the housing … choice voucher is so helpful because you start out with a high level of assistance and then transition … like they have supports to get you, support you in employment, and so you become gradually more responsible for your rent, the portion that you are responsible for, so that you can phase out of needing that assistance, and if you experience major setbacks you can go back a step that works nicely cause it's over several years."

Transitional Housing

Definition

Transitional housing has the purpose of facilitating the movement of homeless individuals and families to permanent housing within a reasonable amount of time (usually 24 months). Transitional housing includes housing primarily designed to serve deinstitutionalized homeless individuals and other homeless individuals with mental or physical disabilities and homeless families with children.

Housing structures

Subsidized Housing:

- Includes all federal, state, or local government programs that reduce the cost of housing for low-income and moderate-income residents. Housing can be subsidized through housing vouchers, helping homebuyers with downpayment assistance, and reducing the interest on a mortgage,

Rent and Sublet

- The lease is in the program's name and sub-leased to the survivor.

Own

- The program owns and operates the housing

Housing Models

Scattered site

- Survivors live in an apartment in the community in a full market rental unit. The survivor can hold the lease in his/her name or the program can hold the lease and sublease to the survivor. This model allows the survivor to remain in the unit once the financial assistance has ended.

Clustered Site

- In this model, the program owns a building with multiple units or rents a group of apartments in one location. The program serves as a landlord, and the survivor lives in a program-owned apartment building. This model allows survivors to build up a rental history before obtaining permanent housing.

Communal Living

- This is similar to a shelter. Housing may have separate bedrooms, but the residents share common living spaces such as: Living room, dining room, kitchen area etc.

Supporting/Supplemental Information

> "I would say [there are] two categories. Somebody, perhaps like you or myself, who was harmed and victimized, who could transition into either transitional housing or just my own place, versus somebody who has chronic mental health issues or substance abuse issues, to some extent a mental health trust beneficiary and needing permanent supportive housing. They need to have somebody working with them long-term. They cannot be on their own. And so those people, without question, are the most vulnerable. So, I know [our local domestic violence advocacy agency] has a program on permanent

> supportive housing that they do… To me, there's tiered. There's the emergency shelter. Then there's transitional housing to then housing on your own. And then there's always people who are going to need that permanent supportive housing."

Permanent/Supportive Housing

Definitions

Permanent supportive housing is an intervention that combines affordable housing assistance with voluntary support services to address the needs of chronically homeless people. The services are designed to build independent living and tenancy skills and connect people with community-based health care, treatment and employment services. (End Homelessness)

- SUPPORTIVE HOUSING PROGRAM: This program is authorized by title IV of the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act (the McKinney Act) (42 U.S.C. 11381–11389). The program is designed to promote the development of supportive housing and supportive services, including innovative approaches to assist homeless persons in the transition from homelessness, and to promote the provision of supportive housing to homeless persons to enable them to live as independently as possible.
- SUPPORTIVE HOUSING FOR THE ELDERLY: Housing that is designed to meet the special physical needs of elderly persons and to accommodate the provision of supportive services that are expected to be needed, either initially or over the useful life of the housing, by the category or categories of elderly persons that the housing is intended to serve.
- SHELTER PLUS CARE PROGRAM (S+C): Authorized by title IV, subtitle F, of the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act (the McKinney Act) (42 U.S.C. 11403–11407b). S+C is designed to link rental assistance to supportive services for hard-to-serve homeless persons with disabilities (primarily those who are seriously mentally ill; have chronic problems with alcohol, drugs, or both; or have acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS and related diseases) and their families. The program provides grants to be used for rental assistance for permanent housing for homeless persons with disabilities. Rental assistance grants must be matched in the aggregate by supportive services that are equal in value to the amount of rental assistance and appropriate to the needs of the population to be served. Recipients are chosen on a competitive basis nationwide.
- Dedicated Affordable Housing
    - Affordable Housing: Affordable housing is generally defined as housing on which the occupant is paying no more than 30 percent of gross income for housing costs, including utilities. (HUD)

Housing structures

Dedicated Plus Project

- A permanent supportive housing project that serves individuals and families that meet one of the following criteria:

- Experiences chronic homelessness,
- Resides in a transitional housing project that will be eliminated and meets the definition of chronic homelessness in effect at the time in which the individual or family entered the transitional housing project,

Housing Models

- Housing First (HUD)
  - Housing First is an approach to quickly and successfully connect individuals and families experiencing homelessness to permanent housing without preconditions and barriers to entry, such as sobriety, treatment or service participation requirements. Supportive services are offered to maximize housing stability and prevent returns to homelessness as opposed to addressing predetermined treatment goals prior to permanent housing entry.
- Rapid Re-Housing
  - Rapid re-housing is an intervention, informed by a Housing First approach that is a critical part of a community's effective homeless crisis response system. Rapid re-housing rapidly connects families and individuals experiencing homelessness to permanent housing through a tailored package of assistance that may include the use of time-limited financial assistance and targeted supportive services. Rapid rehousing programs help families and individuals living on the streets or in emergency shelters solve the practical and immediate challenges to obtaining permanent housing while reducing the amount of time they experience homelessness, avoiding a near-term return to homelessness, and linking to community resources that enable them to achieve housing stability in the long-term. Housing relocation and housing stabilization are service activities under the rapid rehousing component.
- The Continuum of Care (CoC) Program (24 CFR part 578) is designed to promote a community-wide commitment to the goal of ending homelessness; to provide funding for efforts by nonprofit providers, states, Indian Tribes or Tribally designated housing entities (as defined in section 4 of the Native American Housing Assistance and Self-Determination Act of 1996 (25 U.S.C. 4103) (TDHEs)), and local governments to quickly rehouse homeless individuals, families, persons fleeing domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking, and youth while minimizing the trauma and dislocation caused by homelessness; to promote access to and effective utilization of mainstream programs by homeless individuals and families, and to optimize self-sufficiency among those experiencing homelessness.

Supporting/Supplemental Information

> "…if [survivors] don't have good work history then they're stuck working jobs, you know, with super low wages and with the high cost of rent these days. That's one of the challenges … our clients can't afford the rents that are being charged."

> "I would say [there are] two categories. Somebody, perhaps like you or myself, who was harmed and victimized, who could transition into either transitional housing or just my

> own place, versus somebody who has chronic mental health issues or substance abuse issues, to some extent a mental health trust beneficiary and needing permanent supportive housing. They need to have somebody working with them long-term. They cannot be on their own. And so those people, without question, are the most vulnerable. So, I know [our local domestic violence advocacy agency] has a program on permanent supportive housing that they do… To me, there's tiered. There's the emergency shelter. Then there's transitional housing to then housing on your own. And then there's always people who are going to need that permanent supportive housing."

Long-Term Housing

Definition

Housing that is sustainable, accessible, affordable, and safe for the foreseeable future. Long-term housing is usually leased for a year. However, depending on the landlord, leases can be shorter than one year.

Housing structures

Single family homes, multi-family homes, apartments, condominiums

Housing Models

The Empowering Choice Housing Program

- A referral-based housing assistance program, designed to meet the housing needs of individuals or families displaced by domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence, and stalking. Families are eligible to receive rental assistance through the Alaska Housing Finance Corporation through a housing voucher program or preferential placement on public housing waiting lists.

Supporting/Supplemental Information

> "So AHFC has their Empowering Choice Housing Voucher Program. I don't know how much you know about the eCHIP program. So that's something to... Most certainly, that can always and should be, in my mind, expanded so that more victims have access to affordable housing once they leave shelter. The issue there is, of course, then having predominantly apartment complexes that have space or are willing to take somebody in with a voucher. So, it's not just enough to have the vouchers. There actually has to be space available. And so sometimes we see that those it can be difficult. So, there's just not enough actual housing space in the state for low-income housing."

> "So, another voucher that they have is the empowerment voucher that has been allocated to shelters or communities that have Alaska housing in their town. And so that's why we have the empowerment voucher because we have Alaska housing here in Valdez. And so, I have five vouchers and we give it to the people that we serve, the people that are ready to transition from the shelter to an apartment. Then they applied for Alaska housing. And with that, there is one piece of paper, which is the voucher, and

we sign off that this voucher is awarded to this individual. So having an apartment is not, so when you have the voucher, that does not necessarily mean that you have an apartment. You have to look for an apartment after you acquire the voucher, or even you don't have the voucher yet, start applying, start looking."

World Café Roundtable Discussion Instructions

→ 2 staff per table – one facilitates and one takes notes – notetaker needs to report out during large group debrief

→ 6 groups of 5 people; 2 tables discuss the same topic in each round; 3 topics per round

→ Each person will discuss in detail two solutions (one per round). Then in large group everyone can discuss all solutions.

Questions for every group:

1. From your perspective, how can this work in your region?
2. What needs to happen with funding, partnerships, communication, etc.

ROUND 1 (30 mins) (6 tables; 3 topics)

Topic 1: Leveraging Funding & Collaboration Across Service Providers

Topic 2: Expanding Safe Homes Beyond DVSA Providers

Topic 3: Expanding Voucher Programs

ROUND 2 (30 mins) (6 tables, 3 topics)

Topic 4: Limiting the Use of Local Housing to Accommodate Seasonal Workers and Tourists

Topic 5: Renovating Older and Vacant Homes

Topic 6: Remove the person causing harm from the home

Gallery Walk (15 mins)

- Participants from all groups walk around the tables and read the notes; add anything they want to add
- People can also add notes during the break immediately after

Staff please **tape notes on walls at end of break** and before large group discussion so everyone can see them

Large Group Debrief (1.5 hours)

- Notetakers report out to whole group
- Graphic recorder will be drawing as people report out and discuss each "solution"