



Support the Line Items in the Governor's Budget for AHFC's Homeless Services

The Governor's Council on Disabilities and Special Education, Alaska Mental Health Board, Advisory Board on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse and the Alaska Commission on Aging, in collaboration with the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority, have identified the affordable supported housing as one of their four legislative priorities for 2009. Supported housing is the key to continued and sustained recovery for many Trust beneficiaries. Current economic trends have made this priority increasingly important for action this legislative session.

Supported and Affordable Housing Need

- Problem or community need
 - 3,500 Alaskans homeless on any given night
 - 1,600 are in families with children
 - The average age of the homeless in Alaska is 9.
 - 4,000⁺ and growing are number of people on rental assistance waitlist
 - Wait time on the list can be 2 years or longer
 - Lack of housing disproportionately affects Trust beneficiaries
 - challenges associated with disabling conditions
 - lack of opportunities for economic advancement
 - need for supportive living situations
 - physical accommodations required to meet special needs
 - need assistance locating and maintaining independent apartment units
- Opportune time to change our system
 - Alaska is positioned to receive federal funding this year:
 - Neighborhood stabilization program funds (17 million)
 - Possible 3 million or more from the federal economic stimulus package in the form of a national housing trust
 - \$10 million dollars in the governor's budget focusing on homeless programs (6 million of this is new funding).

Supported housing for Trust beneficiaries **Background**

There has been a great deal of policy work and services coordination in the past few years on the needs of homeless Alaskans. And yet, even with this increased focus, economic and social factors continue to drive up the numbers of homeless individuals and families. Trust beneficiaries with the highest needs are

frequently represented in the lowest income bracket due to challenges with mental illness, addiction and often times multiple diagnoses

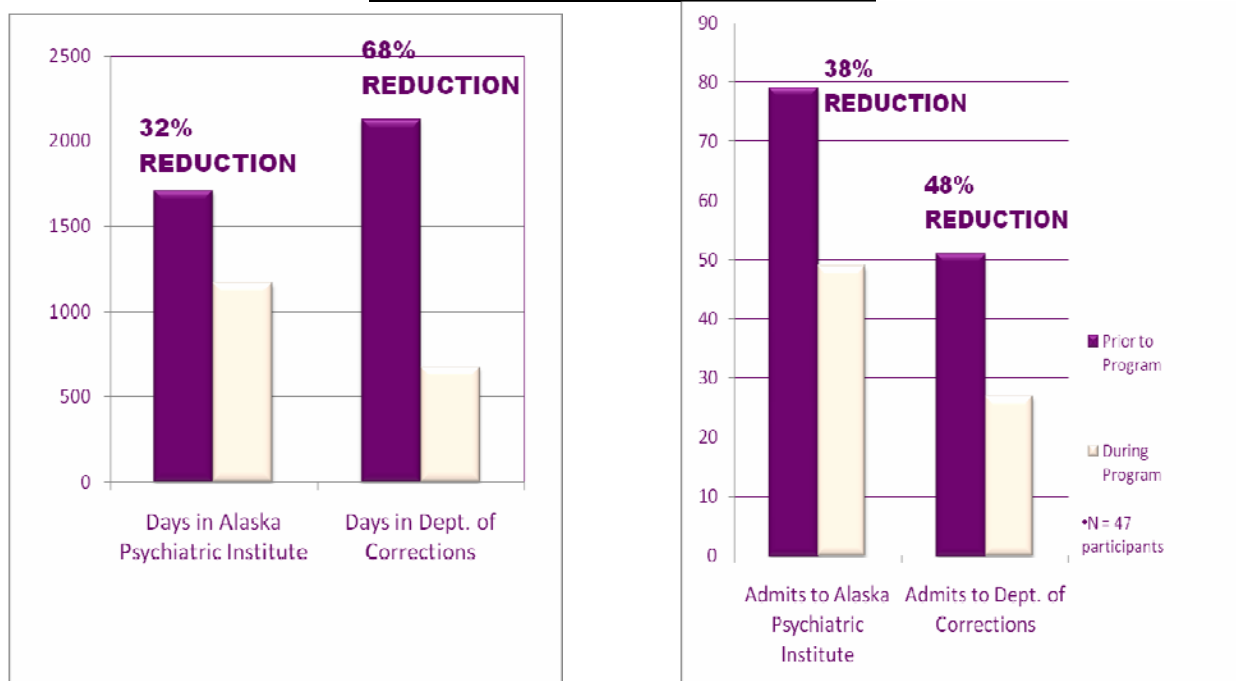
Many state and federal funding streams currently focus on subsidizing housing for individuals in the upper income brackets of the federal poverty limit guidelines (50%-80% of the poverty limits for area median income). These programs are often comprised of housing construction subsidies or limited assistance to residents in the form of rental subsidies.

The funding to provide the necessary subsidy on the building and the supportive services for people in the lower income brackets (30% of area median income and below) and who need more support services is very difficult to pull together and maintain.

State resources for non-Medicaid eligible activities such as social support and skill development in the home have dwindled over the past 10 years to the point of virtually not existing. This void leaves landlords and housing providers with a larger share of the costs to house people in these income brackets.

A targeted supported housing fund will provide supplemental funding to the housing projects to allow for supportive services and adequate rental subsidies. With an approach of maintaining affordability while offering outreach and support services, Trust beneficiaries can afford housing that provides a safe healthy environment for recovery and stability.

A successful demonstration of the model.
Alaska's Bridge Home pilot program



Source: 2004-2008 Alaska Mental Health Trust and DHSS Division of Behavioral Health pilot program: Bridge Home, Anchorage Community Mental Health Services, grantee. For more information, contact Nancy Burke, Program Officer, Trust; Supported Housing Office, DHSS Division of Behavioral Health.