

**FY27 Trust Budget Development
Stakeholder Engagement Summary Notes**
July 2025

Introduction

The Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority's FY27 budget development is a collaborative, data-driven process focused on improving the lives of Alaskans with mental illness, developmental disabilities, substance use disorders, Alzheimer's and related dementia, and traumatic brain injuries. The Trust's priorities are shaped by extensive stakeholder engagement, including meetings, surveys, and public data, ensuring both community needs and evidence inform funding decisions. The final FY27 budget will be completed in September 2025 after board of trustee approval.

This summary highlights the key information and priorities identified through this data-gathering process. The Trust is committed to continuous engagement with partners and stakeholders, ensuring that their input, alongside data analysis, guides resource allocation for beneficiaries across Alaska.

For more information about the current budget development process, visit our [FY27 Budget Development Webpage](#).

Purpose of Stakeholder Meetings and Data Gathering

The Trust's budget process utilizes both data and stakeholder input to ensure that funding aligns with community needs. Data gathered from published reports and stakeholder meetings provides diverse perspectives to help set priorities, target investments, and develop collaborative solutions.

Stakeholders Engaged

Program staff organized stakeholder meetings and gathered data based on the Trust's established focus and priority areas. This list represents partner organizations that were engaged:

- AARP
- Alaska Behavioral Health Association
- Alaska Commission on Aging
- Alaska Court System
- Alaska Dementia Action Collaborative
- Alaska Hospital & Healthcare Association
- Alaska Housing Finance Corporation
- Alaska Mental Health Board & Alaska Board on Alcohol & Drug Abuse
- Alzheimer's Resource of Alaska
- Anchorage Project Access
- Brain Injury Council of Alaska
- Bristol Bay Native Association
- Cook Inlet Housing Association

- Department of Administration - Public Defenders & Office of Public Advocacy
- Department of Corrections
- Department of Education & Early Development
- Department of Health
- Department of Family and Community Services
- Department of Public Safety
- Division of Behavioral Health
- Division of Juvenile Justice
- Division of Public Health
- Division of Senior & Disabilities Services
- Governor's Council on Disabilities & Special Education
- Independent Living Center
- NAMI Juneau
- Reentry Coalitions From: Anchorage, Fairbanks, Juneau, Mat-Su
- RurAL CAP
- SAIL, Inc.
- Statewide Independent Living Council
- South Central Foundation
- The Glory Hall
- Tribal Behavioral Health Directors From: Kenaitze Tribe, Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium, Southcentral Foundation, Eastern Aleutian Tribes, Metlakatla, Kodiak Area Native Association
- University of Alaska – Alaska Training Center
- University of Alaska – Alaska Justice Information Center
- University of Alaska Anchorage – Center for Human Development
- University of Alaska Anchorage – College of Health

Note: While the data chronicled in this summary were organized expressly to gather information to support Trust budget-related decision making, Trust staff remain engaged with partners throughout the year.

Stakeholder Discussion and Data Summary

The bullets below represent the comments recorded by Trust staff during the FY27 budget development stakeholder meetings and organized and aligned by Areas of Focus (AOF) in *Strengthening the System II, Alaska's Comprehensive Integrated Mental Health Program Plan (2025-2029)*, aka the "Comp Plan."

AOF. 1: Early Childhood & Youth	AOF. 7: Services in the Least Restrictive Environment
AOF. 2: Healthcare	AOF. 8: Services in Institutional Settings
AOF. 3: Economic & Social Well-being	AOF. 9: Workforce
AOF. 4: Substance Use Disorder Prevention	AOF. 10: Data
AOF. 5: Suicide Prevention	
AOF.6: Protecting Vulnerable Alaskans	

Area of Focus Description	Feedback and Data
<p>1. Early Childhood & Youth</p> <p>Programs serving young children and youth will promote resiliency, prevent and address trauma, and provide timely access to early intervention services. Programs serving youth will provide connections to the community, safe and secure options, and ongoing system coordination and development will be prioritized.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce ACEs with early screening and positive experiences. • Expand early childhood mental health and education. • Strengthen school-based behavioral health services. • Improve youth mental health care and crisis support. • Support families and prevent the need for foster care. • Grow and train the behavioral health workforce. • Increase access to quality childcare.
<p>2. Healthcare</p> <p>Alaskans have access to integrated healthcare options that promote optimal health, wellness, and independence</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address critical provider shortages, especially in rural areas. • Expand integrated healthcare and telehealth options. • Focus on comprehensive care for those with brain injuries, Alzheimer's, FASD, and complex behaviors. • Train providers, improve screening, expand rehabilitation and support services. • Fill gaps in treatment and home/community-based services (HCBS).
<p>3. Economic & Social Well-being</p> <p>Trust beneficiaries have strong economic and social well-being.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prioritize affordable and supportive housing, particularly for individuals with complex needs and those residing in rural areas. • Address transportation barriers, including access to Medicaid vouchers and appointments, especially for those with mobility challenges. • Expand employment and training opportunities in rural areas. • Prevent homelessness by addressing housing shortages and barriers.

<p>4. Substance Use Disorder Prevention</p> <p>Prevention and treatment for drug and alcohol misuse provided through collaborative, effective, and informed strategies.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand local, culturally relevant mental health and substance use services. • Strengthen telehealth, rural workforce, and crisis response. • Prioritize culturally integrated care. • Invest in prevention, outpatient, and peer support programs. • Support staff recruitment, training, and access to broadband. • Advocate for Medicaid expansion and workforce incentives. • Engage communities early and offer long-term support.
<p>5. Suicide Prevention</p> <p>Individuals, families, communities, and governments take ownership to prevent suicide and self-harm in Alaska</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain funding for suicide prevention and anti-stigma campaigns. • Expand resources for rural suicide prevention coalitions and promote the 988 hotline. • Address workforce shortages and promote peer/culturally informed support • Launch a coordinated, statewide adolescent behavioral health initiative to address the youth mental health crisis.
<p>6. Protecting Vulnerable Alaskans</p> <p>Alaskans are free from abuse, neglect, self-neglect, and exploitation.</p>	<p>Expand support for working families to prevent child welfare involvement and build resilience.</p>
<p>7. Services in the Least Restrictive Environment</p> <p>Trust Beneficiaries' behavioral health needs are accurately assessed and met in the least restrictive environment.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prioritize diversion from incarceration; corrections should not be the leading behavioral health provider. • Clarify agency roles and safety for Title 47 mental health holds. • Expand in-state Crisis Intervention Training and Mental Health First Aid training for justice staff. • Concern over reentry coalition coordinator funding ending in FY27. • Address justice workforce shortages through peer support certification, telehealth, and contract-based solutions. • Support court efforts in responding to behavioral health needs and maximizing diversion. • The rising complexity of medical and behavioral needs strains community resources.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand HCBS and in-home supports for all. • Use technology and flexible models for rural delivery. • Focus on early screening and support for caregivers.
8. Services in Institutional Settings Trust beneficiaries who are in an institutional setting receive the necessary services and recovery supports to return to the community of their choice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invest in corrections technology for behavioral health and reentry. • Address affordable housing for reentrants, especially in rural areas. • Continue pursuing the Medicaid 1115 waiver for pre-release coverage. • Expand mental health training for probation officers and law enforcement. • Address staff shortages and the increasing complexity of needs in institutions. • Invest in in-state care to reduce out-of-state placements.
9. Workforce The State of Alaska has the workforce capacity in place to support the resources and funding of a Comprehensive Integrated Mental Health Program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address provider shortages across all professions. • Strengthen recruitment, retention, and provider sustainability. • Expand integrated care, telehealth, and support for complex needs.
10. Data The State of Alaska has the data and technology systems in place to support the resources and funding of a Comprehensive Integrated Mental Health Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve data sharing, collection, and analysis—especially for targeted populations. • Use data for decision-making and advocacy. • Invest in user-friendly technology and ensure data privacy.

Cross-Cutting Themes

These common themes from stakeholder engagement cross multiple areas of focus of the Comp Plan:

Workforce Development:

- Persistent provider shortages across all sectors (health, behavioral health, justice, rural/urban).
- Need for recruitment, retention, training, and culturally competent staff.
- Peer support and career pathways for Alaska Natives and rural residents.

Cultural Relevance & Community Engagement:

- Emphasis on culturally competent and community-driven services, especially for Alaska Native populations.
- Early and ongoing community involvement in program design and delivery.
- Integration of traditional practices and peer support.

Access & Equity:

- Expand telehealth and technology to bridge rural-urban gaps.
- Address barriers to care: transportation, housing, affordability, and access to early intervention.
- Ensure services are delivered in the least restrictive, most supportive environments.

Prevention & Early Intervention:

- Focus on early childhood, youth, and family support to prevent trauma, substance use, suicide, and institutionalization.
- Early screening, positive experiences, and school-based interventions.

Integrated & Coordinated Care:

- Promote integrated healthcare, behavioral health, and social services.
- Strengthen system coordination, transitions, and wrap-around supports.

Data & Technology:

- Enhance data collection, sharing, and analysis to support informed decision-making.
- Invest in user-friendly technology and protect data privacy.

Sustainable Funding & Advocacy:

- Advocate for Medicaid expansion, workforce incentives, and multi-year funding.
- Simplify grant processes and invest in successful pilot programs.

Support for Vulnerable Populations:

- Prioritize services for those at risk of abuse, neglect, homelessness, and institutionalization.
- Expand crisis response, diversion, and reentry supports.