

MEETING AGENDA

Meeting: Board of Trustees
Date: December 16, 2025
Time: 10:00 AM
Location: Virtual Only
Teleconference: [Zoom Link](#); Meeting ID: 862 3388 1875; Passcode: 907
Call-in number +1 253 215 8782; alaskamentalhealthtrust.org
Trustees: Brent Fisher (Chair), Corri Feige, Kevin Fimon, Anita Halterman, Josie Hickel,
Agnes Moran, John Morris

Tuesday, December 16, 2025

Page No.

10:00am Call to Order – Brent Fisher, Chair

Roll Call
Approval of Agenda
Announcements
Ethics Disclosure

10:05am Strategic Planning – Review Framework

- Mary Wilson, CEO

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11:30am Adjourn

Additional Documents:

1. Public Comments

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Approval Memo



To: Brent Fisher, Board Chair
From: Mary L. Wilson, Chief Executive Officer
Date: December 16, 2025
Re: The Trust Strategic Plan: A Strategic Vision to Support Generations of Alaskans

Requested Motion:

The Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority Board of Trustees approves and adopts “The Trust Strategic Plan: A Strategic Vision to Support Generations of Alaskans” dated December 16, 2025.

The attached Trust Strategic Plan: A Strategic Vision to Support Generations of Alaskans affirms the Trust’s shared commitment to advance efforts to improve the lives of Trust beneficiaries, while prudently managing the assets that make our work possible for generations to come.

This framework reflects a Trustee-led effort to clarify the Trust’s direction for the years ahead. Through a comprehensive planning process informed by staff, statutory advisors, partners, and beneficiaries, trustees examined how the Trust and the Trust Land Office can most effectively align investments, leadership, and land stewardship to strengthen Alaska’s system of care.

The result is a clear, durable foundation for decision-making that connects the Trust’s financial and land assets with its programmatic mission, ensuring both are managed for lasting impact. It provides structure for how we will set priorities, measure progress, and remain accountable to the people and communities we serve.

This framework marks the beginning of a new chapter for the Trust. It builds on three decades of progress, the insight of trustees, staff, partners, and beneficiaries, and a clear resolve to strengthen Alaska’s system of beneficiary care for the future. Guided by these Core Commitments and Priorities, the Trust will continue to learn, adapt, and lead with purpose, turning data into action, and action into the pursuit of system-wide impact. Together, the Trust and TLO aim to carry this vision forward, working toward a future of thriving communities and strong systems of care across Alaska.

The Trust Strategic Plan: A Strategic Vision to Support Generations of Alaskans

Background and Context

The Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority administers the Mental Health Trust, a perpetual trust, to improve the lives of Alaskans who experience mental illness, developmental disabilities, chronic alcoholism and substance use disorders, Alzheimer's disease and related dementia, or traumatic brain injuries. Since its creation in 1994, the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority has carried a dual responsibility: to protect and grow its assets in perpetuity and to catalyze systems that ensure Alaskans can live with dignity, purpose, and community. Trustees and staff alike recognize that the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority is more than a grantmaker; it is a steward of public resources and a leader in shaping Alaska's mental health system.

This stewardship is reflected through the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority (Trust) and the Trust Land Office (TLO). Together, teams at the Trust and the TLO fulfill a shared mission to serve beneficiaries today and for generations to come.

At the center of the organization is the Trust: the catalyst that turns vision into action. This is where the Trust's purpose comes to life; where data and insight become strategy, and strategy becomes meaningful change. The Trust leads in grantmaking and systems work, translating resources into partnerships, advocacy, and investments that strengthen Alaska's systems of care. Working alongside state agencies, advisory boards, and community organizations, the Trust connects efforts, amplifies innovation, and helps remove barriers that stand in the way of progress. Through this catalytic role, the organization doesn't just manage its grantmaking processes; it mobilizes them to spark collaboration, ignite change, and create lasting impact for beneficiaries and communities across Alaska.

Trust beneficiaries include Alaskans living with mental illness and substance use disorders, who may recover with the right supports, as well as individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities, Alzheimer's disease and related dementia, and traumatic brain injury, who need lifelong supports to live with dignity and independence.

The TLO is a foundational driver that helps make the Trust's catalytic work possible. Managing nearly one million acres of non-public, Trust-owned land and natural resources across Alaska, the TLO turns stewardship into sustainability - ensuring that the Trust's land assets help to generate both financial return and long-term opportunity. Its work extends beyond revenue; it's about responsible development that builds and strengthens local economies, creates jobs, and bolsters the very systems the Trust supports. Every decision is guided by the same principle: to protect and grow the Trust's endowment for future generations. In this way, the TLO connects the Trust's land to Alaska's people, transforming natural assets into enduring impact for beneficiaries statewide.

Together, the Trust and TLO form the Trust's engine for lasting impact. The Trust catalyzes change across systems of care while the TLO helps sustain that work through forward-looking management of

the Trust's lands and natural resources for revenue generation. Aligned in purpose, they embody the Trust's promise to improve lives today while building the foundation for lasting well-being across Alaska to support beneficiaries in the future.

Overseeing the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority and the TLO is the Board of Trustees. Trustees have a fiduciary obligation to ensure that all Trust assets - both land and natural resources, as well as financial and investment assets - are managed prudently and in the best interest of the Trust's beneficiaries. This includes: 1) ensuring the Trust's lands and resources are prudently managed and monetized by the TLO for future generations of beneficiaries; 2) preserving and protecting the corpus of the Trust fund, managed by the Alaska Permanent Fund Corporation; and, 3) coordinating with beneficiary serving partners across Alaska.

In order to meet Trust beneficiary needs, strong partnerships are required. By engaging with Statutory Advisors, state agencies, Alaska Native Tribes and Tribal organizations, fellow funding organizations, and community and beneficiary organizations, the Trust can advance its mission through shared purpose and coordinated action.

A Collective Effort to Define the Next Era of the Trust

In 2025, the Trust embarked on a new strategic planning process to chart its path for the future. Thirty years of investment had brought meaningful progress - but also new complexity, new opportunities, and new questions about how to sustain and amplify the Trust's impact in a changing Alaska. The organization set out to create a clear, unifying framework that connects the Trust's founding mission to the realities of today and the possibilities of tomorrow.

This effort was about more than setting priorities; it was about reimagining how the agency works to serve beneficiaries across generations. The Trust's catalytic leadership in programs, partnerships, and beneficiary-related advocacy is intentionally aligned with the TLO's stewardship and development of land and natural resources, creating a single, integrated approach to impact and sustainability. Together, Trust and TLO embody a shared vision: to invest in systems of care that help Alaskans thrive today, while protecting and growing the assets that will sustain that care long into the future.

Through this process, the Trust sought to:

- Define a strategic direction that links its statutory mission to modern realities
- Clarify how the Trust leads as both catalyst and steward: through investment, collaboration, and long-term resource management
- Strengthen alignment across grantmaking, partnerships, and advocacy
- Ensure that beneficiaries' voices continue to guide every decision and direction the Trust takes

From Vision to Framework: Our Blueprint for Generational Change

For three decades, the Trust has invested in mental health services and supports that improve the lives of beneficiaries and strengthen the systems they rely on. These investments have delivered real progress, yet Alaska's system of care can improve upon meeting beneficiary needs. The needs of

beneficiaries are evolving, expectations for systems of care are higher than ever, and new opportunities for innovation and collaboration are emerging.

To meet this moment, the Trust recognized the importance of setting a clear direction; one that leverages Trust and other resources, strengthens the beneficiary-serving workforce, accelerates impact, and unites partners around a shared vision for the future. This vision takes shape in the Trust's new framework for systemic change, ***The Trust Strategic Plan: A Strategic Vision to Support Generations of Alaskans*** (Framework).

More than a plan on paper, the Framework defines the levers the Trust will use to strengthen systems, support beneficiaries, and build lasting impact. It clarifies where the Trust can play a catalytic role, how resources will be aligned with beneficiary needs, and how progress will be measured over time. Above all, this Framework is the engine that will allow the Trust to realize its mission and vision:

Mission Statement

The Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority and the Trust Land Office work together to improve the lives of Trust beneficiaries by strengthening Alaska's system of care, prudently managing Trust assets, and driving lasting, positive change across the state.

Vision Statement

A future where every Alaskan supported by the Trust has care, connection, and the opportunity to thrive.

How to Read the Framework

The Framework is built around two elements: **Core Commitments** and **Priorities**. Together, they show *how* the Trust drives progress and *where* it focuses its efforts to best support Alaskans.

Through these Commitments and Priorities, the Framework sets a clear course for strengthening Alaska's behavioral health system. Every effort, from stewardship to partnership, works not only to support beneficiaries today, but to build a future where fewer Alaskans need that care because the system itself engages earlier, is stronger, and is more effective

The Core Commitments

The Trust's three Core Commitments define *how* the Trust fulfills its mission. They capture the ways in which the Trust leads change across Alaska: using data to make decisions, working alongside partners to strengthen the systems that help Alaskans thrive, and managing its resources with care.

1. **Make Data-Informed Investments**
2. **Foster Transformative Partnerships**
3. **Steward Natural Resources for Impact**

The Priorities

The Trust's four Priorities describe *where* the Trust directs its focus to strengthen Alaska's system of care. They envision a future where families get support early, crisis response is timely and accessible, treatment and recovery are within reach, and long-term supports help people live with purpose and belonging. Each Priority helps align the Trust's investments and partnerships to bring that future closer.

- **Prevention & Early Intervention**
- **Crisis Response**
- **Treatment & Recovery**
- **Ongoing Support and Wellbeing**



The Framework in Action

The Framework's three Core Commitments serve as the foundation for how it delivers impact through data-driven decisions, collaborative partnerships, and stewardship:

Core Commitment 1: Make Data-Informed Investments

To put this new Framework into action, the Trust will embark on an effort to more clearly understand Alaska's full system of care: what's working, where gaps remain, and where there's real opportunity to make things better. Building on existing research, statewide assessments, and partner data, the Trust will bring together what's already known - and look deeper where questions remain - to create a clear, data-informed picture of beneficiary needs across the state.

The Trust will systematically identify and address opportunities within Alaska's continuum of care to help ensure that beneficiaries have access to the right supports at the right time. Through this work, the Trust will strengthen its role as Alaska's leader in behavioral health and disability services, using data, experience, and on-the-ground insight to inform our work on

behalf of beneficiaries, and guide partners and decision-makers toward a shared understanding of need and opportunity.

Core Commitment 2: Foster Transformative Partnerships

Transformative change happens through shared leadership and respect. Across the Trust and the TLO, the agency is deepening collaboration at every level to create lasting impact for beneficiaries and communities statewide.

The Trust seeks to strengthen partnerships with its grantees, state agencies, Alaska Native Tribes, community organizations and fellow funders to align priorities, collaboratively invest, and accelerate progress across Alaska's continuum of care. Acting as a convener and catalyst, the Trust will bring partners together to help build capacity, attract funding, and scale innovations that strengthen the systems beneficiaries rely on most. Rooted in collaboration and cultural respect, this work empowers communities to design and deliver solutions that ensure the investment contributes to enduring systems change.

At the same time, the TLO aims to position itself as a development and investment partner for Alaska's business community. By contributing to the advancement of development opportunities and forging partnerships that link strong financial performance with impact, the TLO looks to support sustained revenue generation while helping to strengthen the broader Alaska economy. Through strategic collaboration with industry, the TLO ensures that every resource is managed not only for return, but in the best interest of the Trust and its beneficiaries.

Core Commitment 3: Steward Natural Resources for Impact

The Trust's ability to serve beneficiaries - today and for generations - depends on the strength and stability of its land and resource portfolio. Through the TLO, this portfolio is managed with purpose: to generate steady, diversified revenue.

The TLO's work reflects Alaska's unique story in natural resource development. The TLO strives to balance opportunity with stewardship, growth with responsibility, and near-term returns with enduring value. Through this work, the TLO aims to:

- **Advance responsible mineral exploration and development**
- **Explore nature-based solutions**
- **Leverage high-potential urban and commercial lands**
- **Expand alternative energy leasing**
- **Grow tourism and recreation-based income**
- **Manage land and natural resources for renewal and productivity**
- **Maximize utilities, easements, and rights-of-way**
- **Pursue innovative opportunities**

Together, these efforts ensure that the TLO's management of Trust lands continues to create strength, stability, and opportunity; fueling the Trust's ability to help improve lives and support thriving communities across Alaska.

Collectively, the Core Commitments form the foundation for the work ahead. Building on them, the Framework turns to the Trust's four strategic Priorities; the areas where the Trust's focus and investments take shape to strengthen Alaska's system of beneficiary care and improve lives across the state.

Priority 1: Prevention & Early Intervention

Prevention and early intervention represent the Trust's most powerful opportunity to change the trajectory of Alaskans' lives. **Our North Star for this work is simple: every child in Alaska has the chance to grow up healthy, supported, and resilient, with families and communities equipped to meet their needs from the very beginning.** Success means fewer children entering state systems, stronger families staying together, and healthier youth who are ready to learn and thrive in their communities. By investing in early childhood screening, culturally grounded prevention, family-centered supports, and innovative solutions, the Trust can reduce youth suicide, substance use, and adverse childhood experiences while equipping parents and caregivers with the tools they need. Early action ensures that developmental needs are identified, addressed, and supported at the right time, leading to better outcomes across education, health, and long-term independence.

Priority 2: Crisis Response

Our North Star guiding this priority is clear: no Alaskan faces a crisis without a direct and timely path to help and support. The Trust's vision is a coordinated, compassionate response to crisis, through mobile teams, stabilization centers, crisis lines, and supports that reflect the strength of Alaska's people and places. This vision includes swift access to help, seamless transitions to care, and communities that rely on prevention and support rather than emergency rooms or incarceration. By catalyzing initiatives like Crisis Now, advancing technology, and deepening partnerships, the Trust aims to help support a statewide crisis response network that delivers timely, life-saving support as close to home as possible.

Priority 3: Treatment & Recovery

Access to effective, timely treatment remains one of Alaska's greatest challenges. Every year, thousands of Alaskans seek care for mental illness, substance use, dementia, or traumatic brain injury , often navigating barriers of distance, cost, and workforce shortage. **Our North Star guiding this work is that every Trust beneficiary has access to timely, quality, and culturally grounded treatment as close to home as possible.** Building on existing strengths across Alaska's behavioral health system, the Trust is working to expand local capacity, strengthen the care workforce, leverage technology, and support treatment that reflects the diversity and needs of Alaskan communities. Through these efforts, the Trust envisions a

future where barriers of distance or cost no longer stand between Alaskans and the care they need .

Priority 4: Ongoing Support and Wellbeing

For many Trust beneficiaries, support is not temporary - it is a lifelong need. Sustaining quality of life requires more than services; it depends on stability and belonging. **Our North Star guiding this work is that every Trust beneficiary has the support needed to live with dignity and self-determination across the lifespan.** The Trust envisions an Alaska where every beneficiary has access to stable living conditions, reliable, person-centered care, meaningful work, and opportunities for connection in their community of choice. By strengthening long-term support systems, the Trust aims to ensure that the Alaskans it serves can live with independence, dignity, and a lasting sense of belonging.

Looking Forward

This Framework marks the beginning of a new chapter for the Trust. It builds on three decades of progress, the insight of Trustees, staff, partners, and beneficiaries, and a clear resolve to strengthen Alaska's system of beneficiary care for the future. Guided by these Core Commitments and Priorities, the Trust will continue to learn, adapt, and lead with purpose, turning data into action, and action into the pursuit of system-wide impact. Together, the Trust and TLO aim to carry this vision forward, working toward a future of thriving communities and strong systems of care across Alaska.

From: [Lange, Martin P \(DOH\)](#)
To: public.comment@mhtrust.org
Subject: public comment on the AMHTA Strategic Framework
Date: Thursday, November 20, 2025 9:25:50 AM

CAUTION: This email originated from outside the State of Alaska mail system. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear Mr. Fischer,

I am writing to provide feedback on the AHMTA Strategic Framework document. I am the executive director of the Alaska Commission on Aging and I have questions and feedback from that position. I am not writing as a representative of the Commission, but as one who works with the Trust on a regular basis to carry out the will of the Commission. I am submitting this in after reviewing it with the Chair of the Commission. Please accept my feedback as viewed through this lens.

The mission and vision statements are very clear, and the three core commitments are well stated.

Under Core Commitment 1, it speaks of bringing together what's already known and digging deeper. Who will dig deeper? The existing partners? Or will consultants be brought in who may be better at getting to the less obvious information?

In the next paragraph of Core Commitment 1, Alaska's continuum of care is mentioned but it is not included in the document. I know there are a few continuum of care models in existence. Is this the one put forth by the Alaska Department of Health? It would be helpful to include the document referred to along with the framework.

Under Core Commitment 2, it says AHMTA is "deepening collaboration." My first question was "how?" It seems that the "deepening" will happen by the Trust "acting as a convener and catalyst, the Trust will **bring partners together** to help..." Am I reading this correctly? If so, I understand from this that the Trust will be holding trainings with its advisory groups, state agencies, and NGOs. If this is true, I am very glad to be part of the new Framework.

Moving on to the Priorities, I only have two comments.

Under Priority 3, the very last word is "deserve." I do not like this word because I believe it can create an entitlement mindset. Personally, I would reword it to "the care they need."

Under Priority 4, the North Star statement says "every Trust beneficiary has the purpose and support needed..." I interpret that statement to mean that the Trust can give people purpose. Is this the intention of this word? I understand that the Trust can give people support, but purpose in life is more of a spiritual or philosophical matter.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback. I look forward to working with the Trust fulfil these Core Commitments and Priorities to help our mutual beneficiary groups.

All the best!

Marty Lange

Executive Director - Alaska Commission on Aging

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From: [Julia Luey \(she/her\)](#)
To: public.comment@mhtrust.org
Cc: [Alyssa Bish](#)
Subject: Public Comment: AMHTA Strategic Plan
Date: Friday, November 21, 2025 1:55:07 PM
Attachments: [Outlook-jebm30cb.png](#)

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Dear Trustees and Leadership of the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority,

Thank you for releasing this Strategic Framework and for the clarity, courage, and long-view commitment reflected throughout it. We are deeply encouraged by the Trust's direction, especially the prioritization of *Prevention and Early Intervention*. Given that last year, 1 in 5 Alaska high school students reported a suicide attempt, this focus could not be more timely or more critical.

At VOA Alaska, we see the impact of this crisis every day, and we wholeheartedly support the Trust's recognition that early action is the most powerful investment we can make in the long-term health of Alaska's youth and families.

As one of the few youth-serving behavioral health providers in the state offering a full continuum of care from prevention and early intervention, crisis response to community-based services, day treatment, and residential youth treatment, we are relieved and energized to see a strategic vision that aligns so strongly with the needs we witness across Alaska.

VOA Alaska stands ready to partner with the Trust to develop, grow, and sustain meaningful, evidence-based modalities that meet young people and families where they are in their healing journey. The direction outlined in this framework gives us real optimism about what we can achieve together for generations to come.

Thank you for your leadership, your stewardship, and your unwavering commitment to Alaska's most vulnerable youth. We look forward to building this future alongside you.

With deep appreciation,
Julia

Julia Luey | President & CEO
[VOA Alaska](#) | jluey@voaak.org | Main: 907.279.9640 | Direct: 907.279.9650



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From: [Christy McMurren](#)
To: public.comment@mhtrust.org
Subject: Strategic plan
Date: Sunday, November 23, 2025 9:04:44 AM

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Somehow, we must invest in prevention while AT THE SAME TIME, support people who are already having difficulty. It seems no matter what, we haven't been able to do away with the stigma that accompanies seeking help for mental health problems. So, by focusing on basic, universal , good mental health.

For instance, back in the day, there were public health nurses who could visit every new parent. There was no stigma to getting this help because it was open to everyone. The idea being that EVERY new parent needs help and support and education around child development and healthy relationships. It's not just a percentage of parents who have "problems" who need this.

The other thing I would say is that it takes a decade or more to see big results from efforts supporting positive relationships, knowledge of child development, etc. Many program grants are not supported for this long and so we just keep spinning our wheels to come up with better ideas that can be implemented quickly . There's just no shortcuts in these efforts. And I will say that the professionals who are implementing these strategies need lots of supervision and support in order to make the programs healthy and viable to begin with. Invest in the workforce. People who work in programs that support healthy relationship etc, often , are the least educated, least paid, least supported workers doing the hardest jobs. That, coupled with short term grants, I believe, are two big reasons we don't see the outcomes we're looking for.

One more thought—— educating the general population about how economic forces influence a child's ability to learn and success in school — when a child's home isn't stable for instance, then their readiness to learn is compromised. If children are moving from home to home every year (and changing schools), and the accompanying stress that causes, then it's no wonder children aren't connected to their neighborhoods and teachers/school community.

From: [Zachary Coss](#)
To: public.comment@mhtrust.org
Subject: Public Comment on Strategic Plan
Date: Sunday, November 23, 2025 3:23:11 PM
Attachments: [Strategic Frame Work Comment.docx](#)

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Good afternoon,

Please see the attached document for my comment on the Trust's strategic plan. If there is any additional information I need to provide, please let me know.

Thanks,

Zac Coss
(907) 254-1263

Alaska has some of the nation's worst statistics, we have the nation's highest rate of domestic violence, our suicide rate is twice the national average, along with reporting some of the highest rates of alcoholism and chronic homelessness on a per capita basis in the country

Over the last decade, Alaska's indicators have been on a steady upward trajectory, our suicide, domestic violence, and alcoholism rates have all worsened. Instead of providing a roadmap for what the Trust will do to reverse these worsening indicators, the framework makes vague promises about collaboration and compassion.

A stronger framework would explicitly identify the problem the Trust is attempting to solve: the problem is X, this is what solves X, and this is what the Trust is doing to solve or reduce the problem of X.

In practice, this would look like a funding period that has a dedicated focus: for the next X years, the Trust will be focused on reducing the rate of substance abuse across the state. To accomplish this goal, the Trust will be issuing RFPs, reaching out to the members of the communities, and asking local leaders the what support they need from the Trust to achieve real change.

While this is occurring, the Trust should contract with ISER to perform a cost-benefit analysis. This analysis would let the Trust know what type of funding is successful, and what type of funding is ineffective. With that analysis in hand, every grant the Trust issues should move the Trust closer to tackling the specific targeted indicator. Importantly, the goal is to provide funds that solve the issue targeted, not provide funds to hit a category's funding target.

From: [John Coss](#)
To: public.comment@mhtrust.org
Subject: Trust Seeks Public Comment on Strategic Plan
Date: Monday, November 24, 2025 7:02:56 AM
Attachments: [AMHT Framework Comments.pdf](#)

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Good morning,

I would like to submit the attached document as a public comment for the Trust's Strategic Framework document.

If there are any questions, comments, concerns, or additional information I can provide, please let me know. All the best.

Thank you,

John Coss
john.coss6@gmail.com
(907) 254-4621

Core Commitment 1: Make Data-Informed Investments

It is striking that a \$740 million endowment that's been around for decades and gives out tens of millions each year is only now deciding to make "data-informed investments."

That raises an obvious question: up until this point, has the Trust *not* been using data when it approves grant applications?

From an outsider's perspective, the Trust's grantmaking process appears less like a rigorous cost-benefit analysis and more like a game of hungry-hungry hippos: funds are quickly snapped up by proposals that staff favor, or proposals that align with the Trust's current slate of passion projects, rather than by investments tied to measurable outcomes.

The Strategic Framework provides no explanation of how the Trust will use data when allocating funds or even which data metrics it will be using.

Moving forward, the Trust needs to adopt the mindset that:

"We (the Trust) are an organization that operates with constrained resources. We have a limited budget that we use to fund projects, programs, and proposals.

And yet we end up funding project after project, without a coherent system that explains and evaluates the rationale behind why we approve the investments that we do.

Many organizations come to us and explain *what* our investments will fund: a project that will reduce recidivism, a project that will increase access to mental health services, a project that will expand SA/DV programs.

But very few, if any, people come to us and explain *why* we should make this particular investment: this project will reduce recidivism rates by 8%, or this project will cause mental health-related ER visits to decrease by 10%, or this program will prevent XX number of children from being victims."

Currently, the Trust funds a panoply of projects. These projects lack a clear theme, have no overarching direction, and whose funding decisions were made with no concrete evidence to support the outcomes the grants promised.

For example, in 2022, when the Trust gave a \$50k grant to help expand the Alaska Christian College's counseling center, how did the Trust decide it would approve that grant?

Did the trustees determine that they had done such a good job funding SA/DV shelters, behavioral health centers, addiction treatment services, legal representation, that the only behavioral health need in the state that had not been addressed was to fund a private college's counseling center?

Or was this grant simply a feel-good story that looked good in a brochure? The way to evaluate that claim would be to rigorously dive into the outcomes the grant funding achieved, but oh wait.....the Trust uses no evaluation metrics or data-backed impact when it makes grant decisions.

Moving forward, how will similar grant requests be evaluated? If pulled in front of the Legislature, will the Trust be able to explain the outcomes each grant will achieve, along with reasons why grant applicants were denied funding?

Speaking of the Legislature, the plan emphasizes addressing data gaps. Yet the Trust previously spent \$100k to support the Adverse Childhood Experiences Research Analyst position. What was the point in funding that position, if not to gather data that the Trust could act on?

Priority 1: Prevention & Early Intervention

Early intervention, crisis response, recovery, well-being... the priorities are nothing more than a Christmas tree of good intentions. The plan's current structure avoids making measurable commitments, politically unfavorable actions, or providing a roadmap to address the Trust's long and storied history of approving ineffective grant applications.

The following questions highlight the gap between the plan's ambitions and the practical, often difficult, actions required to achieve them.

The plan speaks of "healthier youth who are ready to learn and thrive in their communities." Achieved in part by "innovative solutions, the Trust can reduce youth suicide, substance use, and adverse childhood experiences."

Those are broad and worthy aspirations. But is the Trust willing to pursue politically unpopular measures that the evidence supports?

For example, research increasingly links social media platforms like TikTok to negative mental-health outcomes and elevated suicide rates among youth. Considering that the Trust aims to bring about “healthier youth,” will the Trust be pushing to ban youth’s ability to access social media? Will the Trust be lobbying for a TikTok ban?

Professor Matt Burman notes that, “the PFD has been especially important in mitigating poverty among the vulnerable populations in the state, including rural Indigenous peoples, seniors, and children. . . Without the PFD, poverty rates among AIAN people would have risen by as much as one-third. In recent years, poverty rates among children would have risen by almost 50%.

If child well-being is a priority, will the Trust be advocating for larger PFDs? Since the PFD is an exceptionally effective tool at fighting youth poverty. Or, does the Trust’s version of “healthier youth” look past the poverty rates for children?

Likewise, mandating that children be vaccinated before being allowed to attend school is a highly effective way of preventing children’s deaths, reducing hospitalizations, and improving the public’s health. Will the Trust be advocating for mandatory vaccine requirements?

Goal: Access to Treatment / Workforce

The plan identifies “workforce shortages” as a key barrier. The University of Alaska system and the Department of Labor are also working to address these shortages. What is the Trust’s unique contribution to solving the labour force problem that other state entities are failing to do?

Regarding workforce shortages, Alaska is projected to have the nation’s highest nursing vacancy rates by 2030. Will the Trust be lobbying for Alaska to join the Nurse Licensure Compact?

According to KFF, immigrants comprise 28% of the long-term care workforce. Given the recent shifts in federal immigration policy, will the Trust be supporting expanding the visa pathways for health-care workers?

Medicaid’s low reimbursement rates and high denial rates discourage providers from accepting beneficiaries, many of whom are our beneficiaries. Will the Trust be advocating for higher Medicaid reimbursement rates?

KFF estimates that the One Big Beautiful Bill will reduce federal Medicaid spending in Alaska by 11%, or \$1.5 billion to \$2.5 billion over the next decade.

Hospitals and medical providers have raised concerns that the Medicaid cuts may force some hospitals in rural areas to close or to cut back services. A significant number of the Trust's beneficiaries utilize Medicaid.

In the push for health care access, will the board be considering shifting money away from grant funds to help back-fill the lost federal Medicaid funds?

If not, how can the Trust claim it is "strengthening the continuum" of care when Alaska's largest health care insurance is facing a fiscal cliff?

Medicare's residency program caps the nation's physician supply and limits access to care. Will the Trust support lifting federal residency caps, or is this outside the scope of "Access to effective, timely treatment?"

You aim to "expand local capacity." Does this mean building new facilities or creating new organizations? What is the target for this new capacity, is it: 10% more beds, 20% more clinicians? Without a metric to benchmark, this is not a viable strategy.

Regarding access to treatment, you "envision a future where barriers of distance or cost no longer stand between Alaskans and the care they deserve." Will there really be no upper limit on the amount the Trust will spend to ensure a beneficiary gets access to the care they deserve?

Suppose one beneficiary requires a treatment that costs 100% of the Trust's annual grant budget. Will the Trust be satisfied pausing grant disbursements for one year, to fund a single beneficiary's health care needs?

If 100% of the annual grant budget is too much, what about 20%? 10% 1%?

Where is the line in the sand that is too much money for the Trust to be spending on a single beneficiary's ability to access the care they deserve?

Once you have determined where the line in the sand is, would the trust be willing to spend that amount of money each year on medical care for every beneficiary in the state? Or will there be a cap on the Trust's annual budget for the money the Trust is willing to spend on ensuring access to medical care?

When the plan emphasizes “culturally grounded prevention” and fostering a “sense of belonging,” it raises an important question: who determines which cultural practices are valid and which are not?

If a community’s preferred approach to “prevention” conflicts with established medical evidence, will the Trust defer to that community’s practice, or will it override it? Are there cultural preferences the Trust will accept and others it will not?

At that point, isn’t the Trust simply substituting its own cultural judgments under the guise of respecting others?

The plan relies heavily on collaboration with agencies and partners, but what happens if those partners do not deliver on workforce development, regulatory changes, or capacity building? What is the fallback plan?

And while the plan speaks at length about partnership and stewardship, it is silent about the Trust’s own governance history: the 2018 legislative audit, the past statutory violations, the CEO resignation, and prior compliance failures.

On the topic of governance, the Trust continues to operate “mini-grants.” These grants award up to \$2.5k, require minimal documentation, and can be distributed without a vote by the board.

In FY-24, these accounted for \$1.6 million scattered across 1000+ awards. This is a \$1.6 million governance loophole.

If the board cannot take the time to determine if a \$2.5k grant to a local non-profit advances its mission more effectively than other potential uses of that money, and do so publicly, then it is not making strategic investments; it is distributing favors.

Wrap Up

This is a strategic plan that explains how a large pool of capital will be spent, but it treats the capital itself as a passive piggy bank.

The plan fails to identify solvable problems and proposes non-binding solutions to these unidentified problems, solutions that lack accountability and are widely unrealistic. The current version is a plan for keeping the Trust *busy*, rather than making the Trust *effective*.

The core question remains: if, in five years, a beneficiary sued the Trust for failing in its fiduciary duty, could they use this document as evidence? Probably not, because the document does not commit to anything specific. And from a governance perspective, that's the whole ballgame.

From: JREC
To: public.comment@mhtrust.org
Subject: Public Comment - Reentry Services
Date: Monday, November 24, 2025 10:40:51 AM

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To whom it may concern,

My name is Tim Hunt. I live in Juneau, Alaska and am the coordinator of the Juneau Reentry Coalition. It's vital that the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority continues funding for reentry services. Trust beneficiaries benefit greatly from these services as they are supported before, during, and after incarceration. They prevent further involvement in the criminal justice system, saving money and time for courts and corrections. They also divert crisis situations that overwhelm our first responders and hospitals to evidence-based community support programs and services that are better equipped to facilitate long-term change.

For example, I spoke to a justice-involved individual recently who was on the verge of losing his apartment due to involuntary time off from work. We were able to get him into a treatment program. We were able to get him some assistance for employment and transportation. We were also able to help this individual get grant money to increase his housing stability so that he can focus on his sobriety, family, and work. Due to reentry services, options are available that don't include turning to illegal activities to obtain money or relapsing to alcohol/drugs due to stress and poor coping skills.

Many times, these individuals are outcasts in the community because they made a mistake. These are the individuals that need the most help because they often have little support. Please continue to support reentry services in Juneau and throughout Alaska because they do benefit one of the most vulnerable populations. Without our help, they will suffer and our community, as a whole, will suffer.

You guys help us help our most at-risk population and we are all better off for it. We couldn't do it without reentry services. Thanks for taking the time to receive and read public comment.

--

Tim Hunt
Coalition Coordinator
Juneau Reentry Coalition

From: [Maureen DiFranco](#)
To: public.comment@mhtrust.org
Subject: SPAM Public Comments Submission
Date: Monday, November 24, 2025 11:45:28 AM
Attachments: [image.png](#)

You don't often get email from mdifranco@peninsulailc.org. [Learn why this is important](#)

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To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Maureen DiFranco and I am currently employed as an Independent Living Advocate for ILC in the Soldotna office.

I have assisted many individuals to apply for the trust grant and can attest to the positive outcomes associated with the grants.

Many people we serve are on limited income and any extra expense becomes a burden. A lot of individuals that I have helped start "normalizing" their barriers and working around them instead of fixing them.

The grants help us help others solve problems and improve the quality of their lives. All are life changing, from fixing cars, to repairing teeth, to purchase of wish list items, a bicycle, furniture, ect.

Thank you so much for offering the grants to those in need who qualify, I hope they continue to exist.

Sincerely,

Maureen DiFranco **Independent Living Advocate**
Central Peninsula Independent Living Center
Phone: 907-262-6333 Fax: 907-260-4495



<http://www.pickclickgive.org/index.cfm/pfdorgs.info/Independent-Living-Center-or-ILC>



From: [Kathleen Yarr](#)
To: public.comment@mhtrust.org
Date: Monday, November 24, 2025 2:32:47 PM

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Innovation in prevention & treatment ideas is key. Just because one agency has received the grant in the past, should not mean they should receive it again unless they've come up with innovative ways to help beneficiaries & additional ways to finance their organization. The Trust cannot be their only means of support

Alternative therapies s/b funded. Therapies such as acupuncture, meditation & psychedelics for those with depression

Thanks for asking
Sent from my iPhone

From: [Kim Champney](#)
To: public.comment@mhtrust.org
Subject: Public Comment - Trust Strategic Plan
Date: Monday, November 24, 2025 2:33:14 PM
Attachments: [Public Comment - Trust Strategic Plan November 2025.pdf](#)

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Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the draft strategic plan. Please see the attached document.

Sincerely,

Kim

Kim Champney, MSW (she/her)
Alaska Association on Developmental Disabilities
907.957.1970 phone and text
<http://www.aaddalaska.org>

We build better lives. From the Shared Vision work

Alaskans share a Vision of a flexible system in which each person directs their own supports, based on their strengths and abilities, toward a meaningful life in their home, their job and their community. Our Vision includes supported families, professional staff and services available throughout the state now and into the future.

To facilitate a united provider voice for best practices, advocacy, partnerships and networking.

November 24, 2025

Brent Fisher, Chair
Board of Trustees
Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority
5745 Community Park Loop, Suite 200
Anchorage, Alaska 99508

Dear Chair Fisher,

On behalf of the Alaska Association on Developmental Disabilities, I thank you for the opportunity to provide comment on the Trust's strategic plan. AADD commends the Trustees, Trust leaders and staff for the time and effort spent to clarify the Trust's core commitments and priorities.

We appreciate the three Core Commitments, especially the commitment to transformative partnerships. Beneficiaries with I/DD have definitely benefitted from system change projects and pilots that have been developed in close partnership with Trust program officers; elevating the value of these partnerships is a strength of the plan. In addition we appreciate the clear and concise format of the strategic priorities. The four priority areas are reflective of the continuum of care we all strive to provide to Trust beneficiaries.

We do have one recommendation to consider. Priority 3 is dedicated to Treatment & Recovery and provides examples of areas where Alaskans may seek treatment; mental illness, substance abuse, dementia and traumatic brain injury are all good examples of conditions that require active habilitative treatment, likely in a clinical or medical setting. However, also included in the list is developmental disabilities. While beneficiaries with developmental disabilities may need treatment because of a co-occurring mental illness or other mental health issue such as trauma, or substance abuse, or age-related dementia, they do not typically seek "treatment" for their developmental disability. We believe supporting beneficiaries with developmental disabilities to live meaningful lives in their homes, their jobs and their communities would best fit under Priority 4 dedicated to Ongoing Support and Wellbeing.

Thank you for considering this small but important change to this document. And again, many thanks for the important work of the Trust.

Sincerely,



Kim Champney, MSW
Executive Director

From: adelaune555@gmail.com
To: public.comment@mhtrust.org
Subject: Public Testimony
Date: Monday, November 24, 2025 3:21:53 PM

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ADA Communication

1.

There is a growing issue in Alaska concerning people with cognitive impairments who are facing communication barriers from different state and local government agencies. The American with disabilities Act requires that public and private entities provide "auxiliary aids and services" to ensure that people with disabilities can communicate effectively, meaning their **communication is as effective as it is for people without disabilities.**

I am currently working with an elderly woman who lives in Southall Manor (senior and disability Housing in Fairbanks) who experiences a Traumatic brain injury which affects her ability to read and understand written communication. Many state organizations, including AHFC, have been moving to an electronic portal system that requires computer literacy and the use of email to give and receive information. Many seniors do not use or are confused about computer technology and don't have an email address nor know how to use it. This elderly woman has no email or computer knowledge. She received an written eviction notice from AHFC stating that she did not respond to the AHFC portal requiring her to fill out a form. Because of this she was given a 30-day eviction notice. She has lived there 11 years and was always on time for her rent payment. I was able to intervene and assist her in submitting the required information. She has the same issue with her medical clinic since they have transitioned to an electronic portal system.

I called and spoke to AHFC staff in Juneau and was told that she could find someone to help her but they were not changing the way they communicate with residents. This attitude unfortunately is not uncommon within some of our state organizations. My adult son diagnosed with FASD and co-occurring mental health issues and he also has trouble understand letters from state agencies. Many Alaskan individuals that have cognitive impairments also do not completely understand either written or electronic communications. They require assistance from other individuals to understand or clear written communications so they can comply with rules and regulations and deadlines. This should require no funding as we are only asking that these agencies do what they are already required to do under ADA regulations.

2. Aging Caregivers

There is an increasing number of seniors in Alaska that are caregivers for AMHTA beneficiaries. I am one of these Alaskans. I have 2 adult sons that have been diagnosed with developmental disabilities. One of them also experiences substance abuse disorders and the other, who is still living with me, also experiences mental health issues. Both of these young men need support and assistance but do not qualify for waiver services. As I move closer to 80 years old, my increasing concern is what will happen to them when I can no longer care for them.

I also care for my significant other who is 76 years old, has a physical disability and also is affected by an undiagnosed traumatic brain injury. As she ages her memory is more and more of an issue. She needs to take medication regularly but lacks the ability to remember which medication she needs, how much to take and when to take it. Like my 2 sons, she can live a relatively independent life as long as she has some support.

Alaska has a large population of people of all ages that experience different cognitive disabilities. Many of these people get by with the support and help of families and friends but these caregivers have lives, too. What happens when the caregivers have conflicts with their jobs, schools and other responsibilities? What happens when an elder is unsafe and cannot remain alone for more than a few hours, or an adult child can't deal with a situation and is triggered into a mental health crisis escalation.

Alaska needs to build systems of support that allows adults to live as independently as possible. Supports that lift barriers and supplement not hinder independence.

Thank You,
Art Delaune

1841 Cheltom Lane
Fairbanks, Alaska 99709
907 479 2838

From: [Joan Franz](#)
To: public.comment@mhtrust.org
Subject: Comments related to FASD and Resources needed by children and adults
Date: Monday, November 24, 2025 7:03:58 PM

[You don't often get email from joanbf Franz@gmail.com. Learn why this is important at <https://aka.ms/LearnAboutSenderIdentification>]

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Hello,

I have been traveling and just saw this opportunity to share some of my experiences working with children having a diagnosis of FASD and their families, as well as being a current Occupational Therapist on the Fairbanks FASD Diagnostic team since its inception over 15 years ago. I apologize for sending this after the 5pm deadline, understanding that I just saw this email this evening. I hope that you will accept my input and comments. I have worked with TCC starting their Infant learning program throughout the bush, in Fairbanks for the ACCA Infant Learning program, at the FNSB School District and in private practice as a pediatric Occupational Therapist. I have attended two of the International FASD Conferences and learned about successful programs throughout the world.

As part of the Fairbanks diagnostic team, I became aware through medical histories that 98% of the birth mothers had been sexually abused in their childhood and there was rarely a history of counseling nor support for these women. Counseling would be an essential support. Many of the birthmothers come from families with alcohol addiction of one or both parents and need outside resources to help them. In the past 10 years the children I have evaluated and treated often have been affected by multiple drugs in utero. These additional drugs result in some different behavioral and cognitive challenges.

The individual with FASD can greatly benefit from an “external brain” support throughout all of their life span whether that be a parent/caregiver, a mentor, a community PHN or program with staff who understand the needs and most helpful approaches to providing that external brain with guidance in executive function and concrete organizational life skills. Day or week long camps and frequent group activities and experiences with other FASD individuals during teen and adulthood has been very helpful for many of the people who I have worked with. They learn strategies from each other and develop friendships with individuals who truly understand their struggles. Teaching life skills and helping with organization of their day, homework, chores and recreational activities results in experiencing success and how you handle failures.

All parents raising children with FASD have found it extremely helpful to have a group with childcare provided to learn from each other and a knowledgeable group leader.

Occupational and speech therapy and counseling are essential services throughout the individuals childhood to develop treatment plans that recognize the child's strengths and needs and providing strategies for parents struggling with difficult behaviors. Canada has provided some successful temporary group homes for children in crisis that gives respite for families and allows directed focus on problem behaviors.

I hope that you will support much needed resources to children and families affected by fetal alcohol exposure.

Joan Franz OTR/L