



**Area of Focus:  
Services in the Least  
Restrictive Environment**

## Services in the Least Restrictive Environment

Trust Beneficiaries' behavioral health needs are accurately assessed and met in the least restrictive environment.

**Objective 7.1:** Promote consistent and comprehensive screening and standardized assessment and reassessment tools to reduce duplication and increase efficiencies across the service spectrum.

**Objective 7.2:** Increase access to effective and flexible, person-centered, long-term services and supports in urban and rural areas to avoid institutional placement where inappropriate.

**Objective 7.3:** Reduce the number of Trust beneficiaries entering or becoming involved with Alaska's criminal justice or juvenile justice system.

Alaska's ongoing effort to increase community-based services represents a positive step in mental health care. However, to fully realize the benefits of this approach, there is a need for systemic enhancements. These improvements should focus on reducing wait times for services, involving Trust beneficiaries in their care planning, and ensuring the availability of appropriate support levels in the community. By doing so, Alaska can provide more effective, efficient mental health care to its citizens.

Alaska's evolution towards community-based mental health services marks a significant step forward in its approach to mental health care. By focusing on providing services in the least restrictive environments and involving Trust beneficiaries actively in their treatment and recovery, the State can improve outcomes for individuals with behavioral health needs. However, the current limitations in the system, such as long waiting lists and insufficient support levels, highlight the need for continued policy enhancements and system reforms to fully realize the benefits of this approach.

**Objective 7.1:** Promote consistent and comprehensive screening and standardized assessment and reassessment tools to reduce duplication and increase efficiencies across the service spectrum.

- a. **Strategy:** Evaluate assessment tools and case-mix methodologies to discern what best meets the diverse needs of all divisions serving Trust beneficiaries.
- b. **Strategy:** Evaluate areas of improvement and efficiencies for screening needs and tools for all divisions serving Trust beneficiaries.

**Objective 7.2:** Increase access to effective and flexible, person-centered, long-term services and supports in urban and rural areas to avoid institutional placement where inappropriate.

### LONG-TERM SERVICES AND SUPPORTS:

A wide range of services to help people with disabilities who need support to live more independently by assisting with personal and healthcare needs and activities of daily living, such as eating, bathing, grooming, etc.

[Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services — LTSS Overview](#)

- a. **Strategy:** Increase access to community-based crisis intervention services.
- b. **Strategy:** Provide a mechanism for individuals to receive timely assessment and placement in the least restrictive environments.
- c. **Strategy:** Leverage Medicaid options to provide alternatives to institutional placement.
- d. **Strategy:** Use appropriate assistive technologies and environmental modifications to improve safety and health outcomes for vulnerable Alaskans living in their communities.
- e. **Strategy:** Establish a multi-agency committee focused on meeting the needs of individuals with complex presenting behaviors.
- f. **Strategy:** Establish standards of care focused on person-centered services.
- g. **Strategy:** Increase options, availability, and access of least restrictive, long-term services and supports through counseling on options and person-centered interviewing.

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h. **Strategy:** Increase residential providers for individuals who do not receive home and community-based 1115 Behavioral Health Reform Medicaid Waiver services to provide an alternative to institutional placement.

i. **Strategy:** Promote interdepartmental and divisional communication and cooperation through memorandums of agreement and data usage agreements.

**Objective 7.3:** Reduce the number of Trust beneficiaries entering or becoming involved with Alaska’s criminal justice or juvenile justice system.

a. **Strategy:** Establish a process to use pre-arrest intervention and pre-charge diversion.

b. **Strategy:** Collaborate with justice and community partners to develop and implement services for Trust beneficiaries.

c. **Strategy:** Assist in coordination of care for beneficiaries at risk of becoming involved with justice systems.

d. **Strategy:** Expand access to services for justice-involved individuals who are Trust beneficiaries involved in the criminal justice or juvenile justice system.

e. **Strategy:** Expand re-entry and case management systems navigation for individuals and families within the DFCS and DOC systems.

### ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGIES:

Any item, piece of equipment, software program, or product system that is used to increase, maintain, or improve the functional capabilities of persons with disabilities.

*Assistive Technology Industry Association — What is AT<sup>2</sup>*

### DIVERSION:

Programs that allow law enforcement, prosecutors, or courts to offer resolutions of criminal cases that reduce the collateral consequences associated with the criminal justice process.

*Alaska Criminal Justice Data Analysis Commission 2023 Annual Report — Diversion<sup>3</sup>*

## ENDNOTES

- 1 Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services — LTSS Overview. <https://www.cms.gov/training-education/partner-outreach-resources/american-indian-alaska-native/ltss-ta-center/information/tribal-leaders/ltss-overview>
- 2 Assistive Technology Industry Association — What is AT. <https://www.atia.org/home/at-resources/what-is-at/>
- 3 Alaska Criminal Justice Data Analysis Commission 2023 Annual Report — Diversion. [https://ajc.alaska.gov/datacommission/docs/reports/DAC\\_2023\\_Annual\\_Report.pdf](https://ajc.alaska.gov/datacommission/docs/reports/DAC_2023_Annual_Report.pdf)