

# PATHWAYS to PREVENTION

## Statewide Plan

2019 - 2024



*"We work to create environments where violence does not occur, and where all Alaskans can thrive."*

# Out of every **100 ADULT WOMEN** who reside in Alaska:<sup>1</sup>

**33**

experienced Sexual Violence



**40**

experienced Intimate Partner Violence



**50**

experienced Intimate Partner Violence,  
Sexual Violence, or both



1 <https://scholarworks.alaska.edu/bitstream/handle/11122/8104/avs-alaska-statewide-2015.handout.1103.051b.pdf>

# INTRODUCTION

Alaska is known for many things: the biggest state, the most extreme weather, the tallest mountain in North America, the most diverse neighborhood, the beautiful Alaska Native cultures indigenous to the land. Unfortunately Alaska is also known for some of the highest rates of domestic violence (DV) and sexual violence (SV) in the nation. The rate of rape in Alaska is three times the national average.<sup>1</sup> This is even more pronounced for American Indian and Alaska Native women; four in five have experienced violence in their lifetime.<sup>2</sup> Often referred to as an “epidemic,” violence in our state is prevalent and persistent but also **preventable**.

Violence affects us all. Beyond the actual incidents of violence, there are longer term, potentially damaging effects that often go unrecognized. Experiencing or being exposed to domestic and sexual violence can lead to a range of effects including developmental delays, child abuse, substance abuse, self-harm and psychological problems, lower productivity at work, poor physical health, and increased health care costs.<sup>3</sup>

For over a decade, the Pathways for Prevention Statewide Leadership Team has worked to coordinate strategic approaches to primary prevention in Alaska. Made up of twenty different individuals and organizations, this group uses the best available research and community practices to plan, implement and evaluate violence prevention efforts across the state. In this document you will find a description of our **prevention approach, challenges and strengths** in violence prevention and our **statewide plan** to address domestic and sexual violence in the state.

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1 [ucr.fbi.gov/crime-in-the-u.s./2016/crime-in-the-u.s.-2016/topic-pages/tables/table-2](https://ucr.fbi.gov/crime-in-the-u.s./2016/crime-in-the-u.s.-2016/topic-pages/tables/table-2)

2 <https://www.nij.gov/journals/277/Pages/violence-against-american-indians-alaska-natives.aspx>

3 [www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/intimatepartnerviolence/consequences.html](http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/intimatepartnerviolence/consequences.html)

# A Framework for Prevention: the Social Ecological Model



## INDIVIDUAL

The first level of the model identifies biological and personal history factors that increase the likelihood of becoming a victim or perpetrator of violence.



## RELATIONSHIP

The second level focuses on close relationships and explores how relationships increase the risk of being a victim or perpetrator of violence.



## COMMUNITY

The third level explores the settings in which social relationships take place, and identifies the characteristics of those settings associated with becoming victims or perpetrators of violence.



## SOCIETY

The fourth level looks at the broad societal factors that help create a climate in which violence is encouraged or inhibited.

# A Comprehensive Approach to Prevention

Preventing violence requires us to work together across all parts of our society. To change the behavior of individuals, we need to look at the relationships, families, organizations, communities, and the larger society in which these individuals live. We need to work across all settings of a person’s life, or their social ecology, to prevent violence.<sup>4</sup> Pathways uses the Social Ecological Model—explained on the facing page—to strategically plan and coordinate violence prevention efforts. By doing so, we take a **comprehensive approach to violence prevention** and increase the likelihood of creating positive, meaningful and sustainable change.

## Challenges and Strengths

The issue of domestic and sexual violence are closely tied to many other challenges in Alaska and a variety of factors contribute to our high rates of domestic and sexual violence including intergenerational trauma, Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and inequity, which helps explain why the rates of violence are higher for the Alaska Native population. Many things can and are being done to address these root causes, including promoting cultural connectedness, resilience and implementing Social Emotional Learning practices across the state. **The following pages explore a few of these challenges and strengths.**

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4 [www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/overview/social-ecologicalmodel.html](http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/overview/social-ecologicalmodel.html)



# CHALLENGES

## Intergenerational Trauma/ Intergenerational Resilience

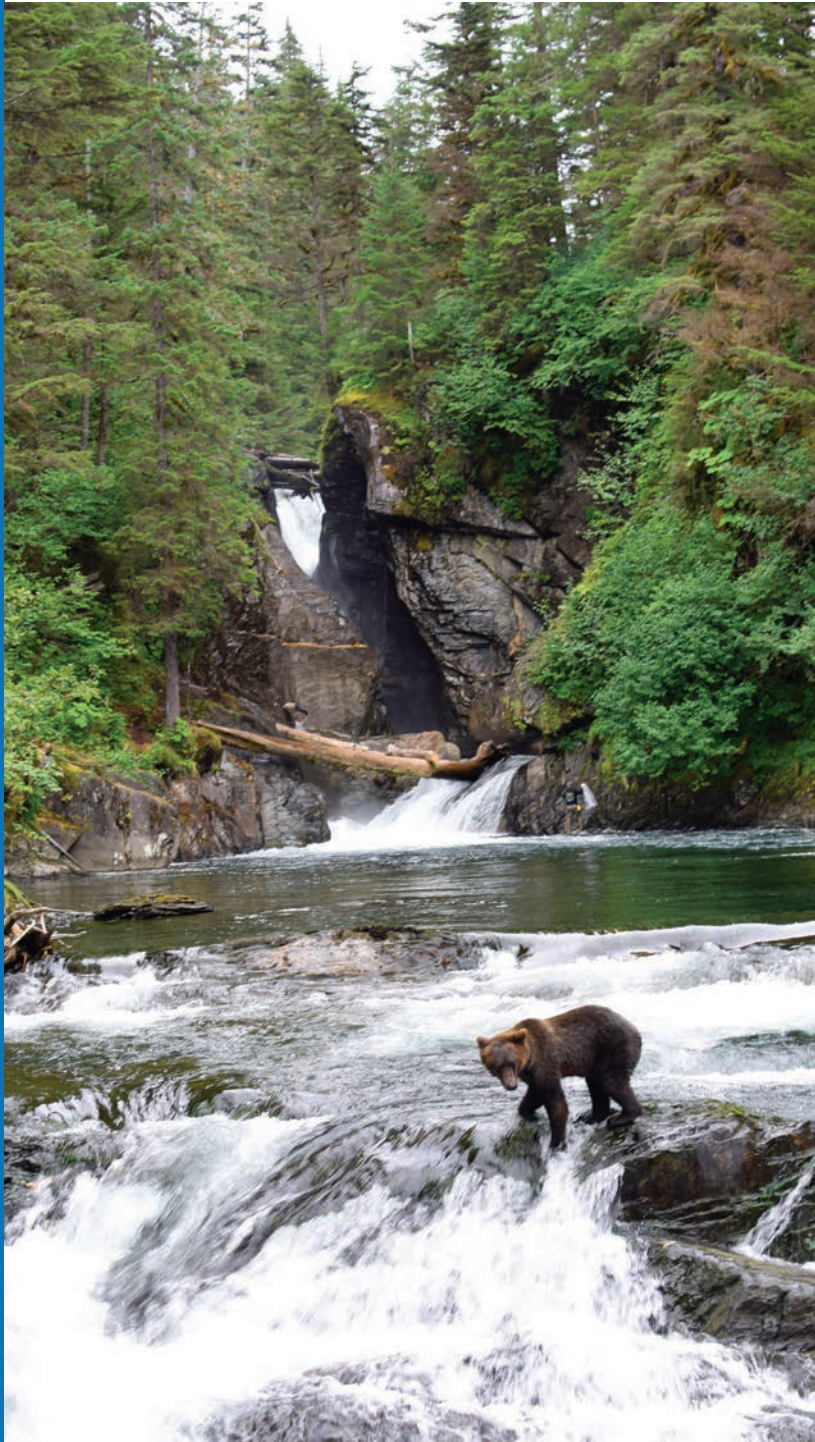
Intergenerational trauma is a reality for many Alaskans. Sometimes known as historical trauma, it is the cumulative emotional and psychological wounding over the lifespan and across generations as a result of massive group trauma<sup>5</sup>. In Alaska, historical traumas include outbreaks of disease that wiped out Alaska Native communities, forced displacement of Alaska Native children to boarding schools, and the loss of Alaska Native language and culture, to name a few. Historical trauma can have varied effects on individuals and communities that may include: unsettled trauma or grief, depression, high mortality, increase of alcohol abuse, child abuse and domestic violence. These effects can be passed on through generations, even changing the cells and DNA of the children of survivors, according to the new science of epigenetics, which looks at how people's genes are affected by their environment<sup>6,7</sup>. The good news from this emerging science is that we can change our biology and therefore our lives for the better. Communities are resilient, creative and strong, thriving despite long histories of trauma.

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5 Braveheart, MY J Psychoactive Drugs. 2003 Jan-Mar;35(1):7-13.

6 Youssef, N. A., Lockwood, L., Su, S., Hao, G., & Rutten, B. (2018). The Effects of Trauma, with or without PTSD, on the Transgenerational DNA Methylation Alterations in Human Offsprings. *Brain sciences*, 8(5), 83. <https://doi.org/10.3390/brainsci8050083>

7 <https://www.apa.org/monitor/2019/02/legacy-trauma>



# CHALLENGES

## Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)

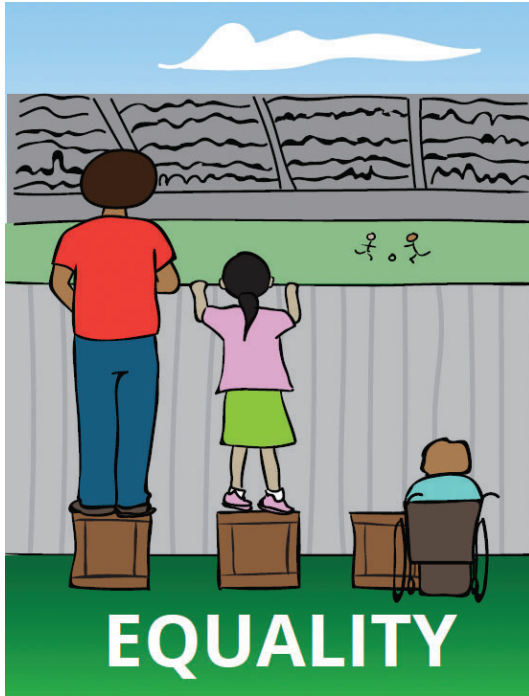
Stressful or traumatic experiences in childhood can have a significant impact on lifelong health and opportunity, including increasing the risk of experiencing or carrying out domestic or sexual violence. These traumatic childhood experiences include abuse and neglect and household dysfunction, such as witnessing DV, or living with someone dealing with substance misuse. These, along with other traumas, are known as Adverse Childhood Experiences, or ACEs. Since 2013, Alaska, along with 30 other states, has collected data on ACEs.

**64.4% of Alaskans experienced at least one or more ACE.<sup>8</sup>**

This experience of childhood trauma is linked to a wide range of health problems across the lifespan because of the effect stress has on a child's developing brain. By creating protective environments where children can thrive, childhood trauma can be prevented. Preventing trauma, supporting healing and building resilience for those who do experience trauma, can dramatically improve the health and wellness of Alaskans and reduce rates of violence.

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8 <http://dhss.alaska.gov/abada/ace-ak/Documents/ACEsReportAlaska.pdf>



# CHALLENGES

## Inequity

In an equitable society, a person of any race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, ability level, or income level - for example - would have the same access to quality health care, education, employment, housing, health and wellness as anyone else. Our current society is built on structural inequities based on historical realities such as slavery and colonization. Policies, practices, and laws have continually favored some people over others, thereby weaving injustice into the fabric of our society. People who are not favored, or who are not in the dominant group, do not have access to the same opportunities. This inequity contributes to higher rates of violence in certain groups of people. As a result, structural inequities like sexism and racism are often referred to as “root causes” of violence. Without addressing these structural inequities, we cannot effectively end domestic and sexual violence. By supporting institutional practices that address oppression and injustice, we can create a society where violence is less likely to occur.



# STRENGTHS

## Cultural Connectedness

Alaska is home to 229 federally recognized tribes with at least twenty distinct indigenous languages. A neighborhood in Anchorage has been recognized as the most diverse in the country, with 99 languages other than English spoken. Alaskans are known to live and work in some of the toughest environments in the country. Overall, Alaskan culture is diverse, colorful, hard to pin down, and resilient. Alaska Native peoples have lived on and been stewards of this land for tens of thousands of years and have survived incredible challenges, including colonization. Alaska Native communities vary widely across the state, with unique cultural practices, languages and values in all five regions. Communities are actively revitalizing cultural practices that were diminished by colonization, implementing language immersion opportunities, and reconnecting with traditional ways, while living in a very modern world. This adaptability is a sign of incredible resilience, and is just one of ways cultural connectedness is a sign of strength in Alaska.

We need to continue to support and investigate a strong relationship with culture as a protective factor against all types of violence in our state. Not only will this allow us to better recognize some current practices as violence prevention, but it could allow new, more effective prevention activities to emerge based on the distinct culture and wisdom of each unique Alaskan community.



# STRENGTHS

## Resilience

Experiencing trauma as a child doesn't guarantee a person will suffer from worse health outcomes. Resilience is the ability to heal, overcome and even thrive despite exposure to Adverse Childhood Experiences. Resilience can be developed at any period over the lifetime. Emerging science tells us that the brain can change and heal, reducing the effects of trauma, and improving health and wellness. We can create environments, practices and policies that support the development of resilience and reduce the effects of childhood trauma, thereby reducing rates of domestic and sexual violence.

## Social and Emotional Learning

Social and emotional learning (SEL) is the process through which children and adults acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions.<sup>9</sup> For a growing number of schools and districts, SEL has become a coordinating framework for how educators, families, and communities partner to promote students' social, emotional, and academic learning. In our state, the Association of Alaska School Boards is doing innovative work integrating SEL with culturally responsive education in meaningful and hopeful ways.<sup>10</sup>

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9 <https://casel.org/what-is-sel/>

10 <https://aasb.org/culturally-responsive-embedded-social-and-emotional-learning-a-comprehensive-approach-to-building-skills-for-life/>

# OUR PATHWAYS

1

Alaska is engaged in addressing the root causes of violence and the promotion of equity.

2

Alaskan youth are leaders in the promotion of healthy relationships.

3

Alaskan youth have the social and emotional skills needed to live a safe and healthy life.

4

Alaskan communities are engaged in supporting the social and structural environments that promote healthy relationships.

5

Alaskan males play an important role in the promotion of healthy relationships and healthy gender identity across Alaska.

6

The state of Alaska has a sustained infrastructure to coordinate domestic violence, teen dating violence, and sexual assault and ACEs prevention efforts.

## DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL ASSAULT

# PREVENTION PLAN FOR ALASKA

2019-2024

This plan builds upon the work that began with our first plan that was developed in 2010. As with the first plan, the pathways outlined here provide a state-level roadmap for the primary prevention of violence in Alaska. Through this plan we will be better able to support educators, parents, youth, researchers, leaders, and communities to work collaboratively to promote safe communities and help prevent violence. The six pathways in this plan work together to strengthen and reinforce positive norms and create a new narrative for our state, one of respect and non-violence. The plan uses a strengths-based approach that is built on research and best practices using the best available evidence.



# Pathway ONE

Alaska is engaged in addressing the root causes of violence and the promotion of equity.

## ALASKA-SPECIFIC PREVENTION PROGRAMMING

By June 30, 2021, at least 90% of Alaska's agencies and systems represented on the Pathways Statewide Steering Committee will support programs and approaches that address the root causes of domestic violence and sexual violence.

## RESOURCES TO ADDRESS THE ROOT CAUSES OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

By June 30, 2022, all regions in Alaska will have access to Alaska specific training about addressing the root causes of DV/TDV/SV.

## EQUITY TOOL—LOCAL COMMUNITY IMPLEMENTATION

By September 30, 2021, an equity tool will be incorporated into a majority of new community prevention team projects that are funded by the State of Alaska.

## DATA ON THE ROOT CAUSES OF DOMESTIC & SEXUAL VIOLENCE

By June 30, 2021, a set of indicators will be tracked that identify the root causes of DV/TDV/SV in Alaska.



# Pathway TWO

Alaskan youth are leaders in the promotion of healthy relationships.

## YOUTH PEER CULTURE REFLECTS RESPECT

By June 30, 2022, at least 10% of youth who are the focus of a statewide social norms campaign will report that their peer culture is respectful.

## COMMON INDICATORS FOR STATEWIDE YOUTH GATHERING

By June 30, 2021, statewide youth leadership gatherings will have identified 2-3 common indicators of their impact.

## SKILLS TO PROMOTE HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

By June 30, 2019, 80% of youth who participate in the LeadOn Youth Leadership Conference will report that LeadOn helped them be a leader in preventing violence in their own community.

## YOUTH MEDIA CAMPAIGN

By June 30, 2024, youth in each region of the state will be exposed to a youth-led media campaign that encourages healthy relationships.



# Pathway THREE

Alaskan youth have the social and emotional skills needed to live a safe and healthy life.

## PRE-K TO 5TH GRADE SCHOOL-BASED SEL RESOURCES

By June 30, 2022, 51% of Alaskan school districts will integrate culturally relevant K-5th grade curricula that promotes healthy social and emotional youth development.

## 6TH-12TH GRADE SCHOOL-BASED RESOURCES

By June 30, 2022, 51% of Alaskan school districts will integrate culturally relevant 6th-12th grade curricula that promotes healthy relationships and social and emotional youth development.

## SCHOOL CLIMATE 3RD-5TH GRADES

By June 30, 2022, at least 50% of students who participate in the School Climate and Connectedness Survey will report that there is at least one adult at their school whom they feel comfortable talking to about things that are bothering them.

## SCHOOL CLIMATE 6TH-12TH GRADES

By June 30, 2021, at least 50% of students who participate in the School Climate and Connectedness Survey will report that students in their school treat one another with respect.

## SCHOOL POLICY

By June 30, 2024, there will be a 25% increase in the number of school districts that have adopted the Association of Alaska School Boards' model SEL policy.



# Pathway FOUR

Alaskan communities are engaged in supporting the social and structural environments that promote healthy relationships.

## CULTURALLY RELEVANT PROGRAMMING

By September 30, 2021, funders will provide support to ensure that DV/TDV/SA prevention strategies are culturally relevant to specific communities in Alaska.

## BROADEN COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

By June 30, 2021, finalize a plan to engage formal and informal leaders within communities in prevention programming.

## INTEGRATE PREVENTION PROGRAMMING

By June 30, 2022, Alaskan community prevention teams working to prevent DV/TDV/SA will have integrated or be actively coordinating with existing (or other) community-wide prevention efforts, focusing on related challenges such as substance abuse and suicide.



# Pathway FIVE

Alaskan males are important in the promotion of healthy relationships and healthy gender identity across the state.

## HEALTHY GENDER NORMS

By June 30, 2021, 51% of men in one region of Alaska will have been exposed to social norms messaging that addresses rigid gender norms

## PREVENTION RESOURCES

By June 30, 2022, 75% of men who are engaged in violence prevention programming will report that they have sufficient access to resources related to meaningful dialogue about healthy masculinity.

## PREVENTION PROGRAMMING

By June 30, 2021, male-led efforts to promote respect and non-violence will be implemented in six regions across Alaska.

## MEASURING MASCULINITY NORMS

By September 30, 2021, a pilot measure of masculinity norms will be available for use by practitioners.



# Pathway SIX

The state of Alaska has a sustained infrastructure to coordinate domestic violence, teen dating violence, sexual assault and ACEs prevention efforts.

## ESTABLISHED STATE PREVENTION FUNDING

By June 30, 2022, the sustained funding of DV/TDV/SV primary prevention strategies will be coordinated by Alaska State funding mechanisms (e.g., CDVSA, ANDVSA, DHSS, DBH, DEED).

## ESTABLISHED COORDINATION AND COLLABORATION

By June 30, 2019, ANDVSA and Pathways partners will work from a coordinated plan to support prevention strategies that are being implemented across Alaska.

## EVALUATION INFRASTRUCTURE

By June 30, 2021, Pathways will utilize a list of common statewide indicators to measure the impact of each goal area/pathway.

## TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FOR PRIMARY PREVENTION

By June 30, 2021, there are sustained technical assistance resources to support the implementation of DV/TDV/SV primary prevention programming throughout Alaska.

## COMPREHENSIVE PREVENTION PROGRAMMING

By June 30, 2024, 51% of community-based organizations who have accessed statewide technical assistance will have improved the comprehensiveness of their prevention programming.

# Take Action

Working together, we have the power to end domestic and sexual violence in our state.

No matter your role, you can get involved to help create safer environments for all Alaskans.

## POLICY MAKERS

- Learn more about statewide and local prevention efforts by contacting programs in your community. Get a full list of programs at [andvsa.org](http://andvsa.org).
- Prioritize resources for the primary prevention of teen dating violence, domestic/sexual violence. Place an emphasis on supporting community collaborations and promising practices for prevention.
- Support legislation that ensures healthy relationships and social and emotional curriculum in schools.

## PARENTS

- Ensure that schools in your community teach a curriculum on preventing dating relationship violence and building social and emotional learning. Find evidence based curriculum in the toolkit: <https://education.alaska.gov/schoolhealth/safechildact>
- Know about healthy relationship skills and practice them often with your children. Find out more here: [breakthecycle.org/back2school-adults](http://breakthecycle.org/back2school-adults)
- Never assume your child could not be in a violent relationship. Ask questions.
- Get support on talking to your teens with Talk Now Talk Often: [tntoak.org](http://tntoak.org)

## EDUCATORS

- Learn about research-based materials that are right for your school to teach about respect. Find evidence based curriculum here: [education.alaska.gov/schoolhealth/safechildact](http://education.alaska.gov/schoolhealth/safechildact)
- Advocate for resources to obtain evidence-based materials on healthy relationships.
- Seek professional development around building safe school environments such as: [aasb.org/wp-content/uploads/Transforming-Schools-A-Framework-for-Trauma-Engaged-Practice-Final.pdf](http://aasb.org/wp-content/uploads/Transforming-Schools-A-Framework-for-Trauma-Engaged-Practice-Final.pdf)
- Encourage youth to take leadership roles and treat the youth you know with respect. Find out more here: [standupsppeakupalaska.org](http://standupsppeakupalaska.org).

## MEN

As men, there are many ways to be partners and allies in ending violence in our communities:

- Build relationships based on respect and equality and share decision making and power.
- Be a respectful role model to younger men. Visit [alaskamenchooserespect.org/compass/](http://alaskamenchooserespect.org/compass/)
- Bring together male allies in your community to develop community-based solutions.
- Contact [info@andvsa.org](mailto:info@andvsa.org) to get connected to campaigns like COMPASS, Coaching Boys into Men, or other opportunities in Alaska.

## WOMEN

- Build relationships based on respect and equality.
- Teach your sons and daughters about the importance of respect in relationships.
- Encourage the men in your life to get engaged in ending men's violence against women.
- Advocate for federal, state, local, and organizational policy change supporting equality and accountability.

## YOUTH

- Learn more about respect, healthy relationships and what to do to help a friend at [loveisrespect.org](http://loveisrespect.org)
- Participate in Lead On! to strengthen your leadership skills to promote respect. More at: [standupsppeakupalaska.org](http://standupsppeakupalaska.org)
- Do not tolerate disrespect and violence within the community and treat others with respect.
- Join a group in your local community that is working to end violence and promote respect.

## ELDERS

- Promote values that are consistent with strong traditions and strong families.
- Get involved in sharing the message through community events and media.
- Translate important prevention goals into your language.
- Provide others with the skills they need to be true Elders.



# Pathways to Prevention Statewide Steering Committee

## ELDERS AND COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVES

Anna Frank, Doug Modig,  
Elizabeth Sunnyboy, Pete  
Hoepfner, Naomi Michalsen

## AIDING WOMEN IN ABUSE AND RAPE EMERGENCIES (AWARE)

Ati Nasiah

## THE ALASKA NETWORK ON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL ASSAULT

Carmen Lowry, Kristen Rankin,  
Rae Romberg

## THE ASSOCIATION OF ALASKA SCHOOL BOARDS

Timi Tullis, and Lori Grassgreen

## ICF

Gretchen Clarke

## THE MAT-SU HEALTH FOUNDATION

Amy Gorn

## SAFE AND FEAR-FREE ENVIRONMENTS (SAFE)

Marilyn Casteel

## SOUTHCENTRAL FOUNDATION

Denise Morris and Rachel Muir

## THE STATE OF ALASKA COUNCIL ON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL ASSAULT

Ann Rausch

## THE STATE OF ALASKA- DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND EARLY DEVELOPMENT

Kami Moore

## THE STATE OF ALASKA- DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES, DIVISION OF PUBLIC HEALTH: SECTION OF WOMEN'S, CHILDREN'S AND FAMILY HEALTH

Mollie Rosier

## STRATEGIC PREVENTION SOLUTIONS

Wendi Siebold

## UNIVERSITY OF ALASKA FAIRBANKS

Jessica Black

For more information, contact [prevention@andvsa.org](mailto:prevention@andvsa.org).

Thank you to Naomi Michalsen for providing many of the photos in this plan.

PATHWAYS TO PREVENTION



WORKING TOGETHER TO END VIOLENCE

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