

GOAL 3

TRUST BENEFICIARIES HAVE STRONG
ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL WELL-BEING.

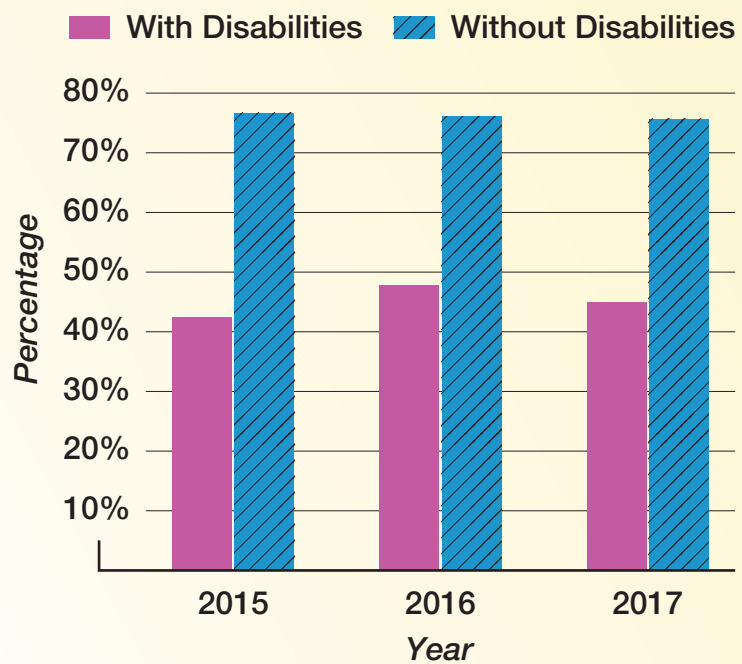
- 3.1 Objective:** Alaskans have stable, safe housing with appropriate, community-based social supports to maintain tenancy.
- 3.2 Objective:** Ensure that competitive and integrated employment at part-time or full-time jobs pays minimum wage or above in integrated, typical work settings.
- 3.3 Objective:** Expand resources that promote successful, long-term employment for Trust beneficiaries.
- 3.4 Objective:** Enhance timely access to basic needs services.

GOAL 3: ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL WELL-BEING

Being active in local communities, having a safe place to call home, and being employed are vital components to living a meaningful life. Having a place to live and the capacity to meet one's basic needs can lower stress. Working and volunteering can provide day-to-day purpose. Ensuring Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority (the Trust) beneficiaries have access to secure homes, basic needs, and fulfilling work affords them opportunities to improve their social well-being. Through this goal, efforts are made to have beneficiaries meaningfully engaged in their communities by promoting volunteer, recreational, and peer-directed opportunities.

Alaska's geography and high number of rural and remote communities amplify typical economic stability concerns, presenting unique transportation challenges and diverse economic structures. Services such as supported employment provide individuals with assistance to acquire and maintain the skills necessary for employment. Supported employment is one component in the beneficiary employment continuum that aids beneficiaries in becoming employed long-term. Successful long-term employment is strongly influenced by a myriad of different situational dynamics, including access to safe and affordable housing and healthcare, appropriate

Figure 4: Employment Rate for People in Alaska with Disabilities vs. Those Without Disabilities



Source

Data from the Annual Disability Statistics Compendium from the Institute on Disability/UCED University of New Hampshire

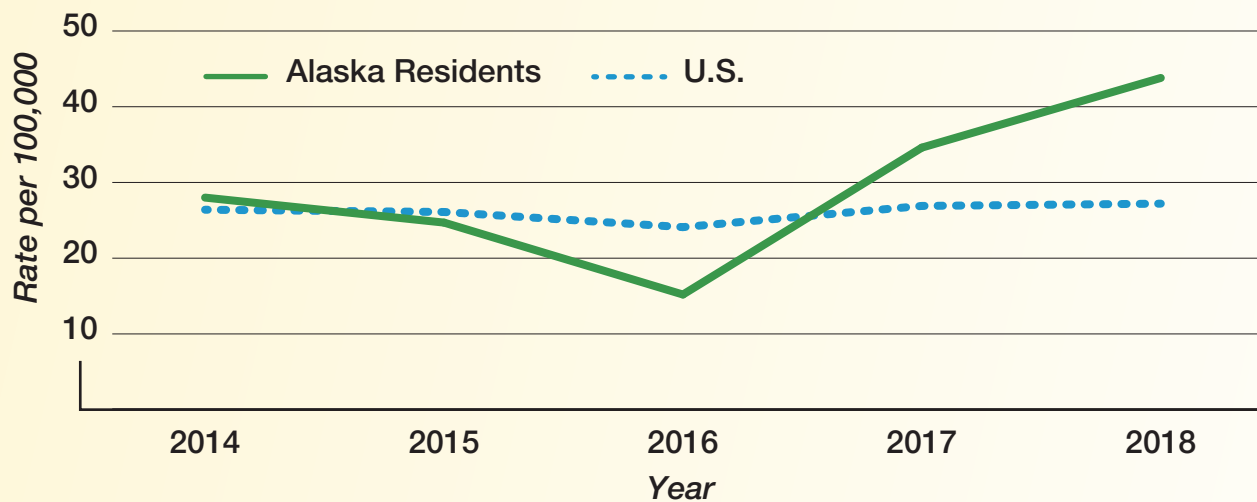
vocational training and support, and financial literacy training, as well as understanding the impact of employment on benefits, such as Medicaid and Social Security, and being aware of applicable employment safety net programs. Another facet of successful, long-term employment is integrating individuals with disabilities who work in typical settings alongside individuals without disabilities.

Supportive housing is affordable housing paired with tenant supports and services that may be permanent for some populations and transitional or time-limited for others. Research shows supportive housing helps people with disabilities live stably in the community; reduces their use of costly systems, especially emergency healthcare and corrections; and can even help them receive more appropriate healthcare and improve their health.

The employment disparity between typical, working-age Alaskans with disabilities and the general population continues to be wide. Approximately 17.9% of Alaskans ages 18-64 with disabilities live in poverty compared to 8.2% of Alaskans without disabilities.¹ Improving employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities has the potential to lessen reliance on publicly funded services and increase self-sufficiency. Employment has also been associated with lower healthcare costs to federal and state benefit programs.

3.1 Objective: Alaskans have stable, safe housing with appropriate, community-based social supports to maintain tenancy.

Figure 5: Chronic Homelessness (rate per 100,000)



Source

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Office of Community Planning and Development, Annual Homeless Assessment Report; Alaska Point in Time Survey - Alaska Homeless Information Management System

- a. Strategy:** Strengthen and enhance long-term services to support rural and remote regions of the state.
- b. Strategy:** Provide transition and housing services to enable individuals to live in the least restrictive housing option of their choosing.
- c. Strategy:** Provide training to housing professionals on fair housing laws to reduce discrimination.
- d. Strategy:** Leverage state and federal funding to provide sufficient affordable housing.
- e. Strategy:** Improve long-term tenancy through pre-tenancy training, including a full understanding of tenant responsibilities.

3.2 Objective: Ensure that competitive and integrated employment at part-time or full-time jobs pays minimum wage or above in integrated, typical work settings.

- a. Strategy:** Establish a formal “Employment First” taskforce or commission that includes other departments in cross-agency collaboration to fully implement Alaska’s Employment First statute.
- b. Strategy:** Increase coordination between programs providing employment and education services to Trust beneficiaries to reduce service gaps.
- c. Strategy:** Enhance the home- and community-based services system, especially with respect to the provision of supported employment services to beneficiaries.
- d. Strategy:** Enhance vocational training and placement that supports beneficiaries to obtain meaningful and productive employment.

TENANCY: the possession or occupancy of something (such as a house) that belongs to the individual or another

LEAST RESTRICTIVE: an environment or level of care that enables an individual to function with as much choice and self-direction as safely appropriate

3.3 Objective: Expand resources that promote successful, long-term employment for Trust beneficiaries.

- a. Strategy:** Create an attractive career path with stair-step opportunities for those entering or returning to the workforce.
- b. Strategy:** Increase understanding of the impact of employment on availability of and qualification for benefits.
- c. Strategy:** Provide training and information to promote financial literacy for all ages.

- d. Strategy:** Increase awareness of Alaska’s Achieving a Better Life Experience (ABLE) accounts, which allow for saving money without risking loss of Medicaid and Social Security benefits due to asset limits.
- e. Strategy:** Increase awareness of basic needs programs for those who want to work and need to retain vital benefits.
- f. Strategy:** Provide connection with benefits advisement and counseling resources.

3.4 Objective: Enhance timely access to basic needs services.

- a. Strategy:** Strengthen core basic needs programs.
- b. Strategy:** Improve access to food security across all geographic regions.
- c. Strategy:** Collaborate across agencies to improve transportation infrastructure.
- d. Strategy:** Support a streamlined database that efficiently aids in the processing of requests for services.

BASIC NEEDS: things that are necessary to sustain life and can consist of adequate food, shelter, and clothing plus some household equipment and furniture²

FOOD SECURITY: all people, at all times, have physical, social, and economic access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food that meets their food preferences and dietary needs for an active and healthy life³

ENDNOTES

Robert Rosenheck et al., “Cost-Effectiveness of Supported Housing for Homeless Persons with Mental Illness,” *Archives of General Psychiatry*, September 2003, Vol. 60, No. 9, pp. 940-951.

Laura S. Sadowski et al., “Effect of a Housing and Case Management Program on Emergency Department Visits and Hospitalizations Among Chronically Ill Homeless Adults,” *Journal of the American Medical Association*, May 2009, Vol. 301, No. 17, pp. 1771-1778.

Dennis P. Culhane, Stephen Metraux, and Trevor Hadley, “Public Service Reductions Associated with Placement of Homeless Persons with Severe Mental Illness in Supportive Housing,” *Housing Policy Debate*, 2002, Vol. 13, Issue 1, pp. 107-163.

¹ 2017 Annual Disability Statistics Compendium: https://disabilitycompendium.org/sites/default/files/user-uploads/Compendium_2017_Final.pdf

² <https://definitions.uslegal.com/b/basic-needs/>

³ <https://www.ifpri.org/topic/food-security>