

The Department of Corrections has been successfully providing Faith-Based programming since 1980 through the department's Chaplaincy program. In fact, the Chaplaincy program may be the best example of a government and Faith-Based Community Initiatives partnership in this state.

From its humble beginnings in 1980, this partnership between the State of Alaska and Faith-Based organizations has grown significantly and now consists of about 500 church and religious organizations throughout Alaska. This partnership also consists of about 1,500 approved clergy and lay volunteers providing Faith-Based programming and services to prisoners within all of our pre-trial and correctional institutions and the community residential centers, as well as to ex-offenders reentering our communities. Last Fiscal year there were well over 26,000 volunteer hours provided to the Department of Corrections through the Chaplaincy program. Additionally, last fiscal year there were over 100,000 in total prisoner attendance in religious and Faith-Based programs in our institutions.

This partnership with the community Faith-Based organizations is also providing substantial private sector Faith-Based funding to augment the state resources that are being provided. The private funding has grown significantly in past years to the point that currently the ratio is about 59% state funds to 41% private funds. The private funds have helped to provide personnel and programs, and to build prison chapels. Private funds are provided from churches, religious organizations, businesses, individual donors, and the prisoner population. All private funds are provided through Alaska Correctional Ministries, a non-profit Faith-Based organization.

If it were not for this vital and impressive partnership between the Department of Corrections and Faith-Based community organizations, the department would not be able to provide the essential and effective Chaplaincy and Faith-Based programs and services it now provides.

It is the intention of this administration to build on the foundation that has been laid and to do what we can to promote even more Faith-Based programming and expand the partnership with the Faith-Based community.