



MEDIA RELEASE

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Potential Government Shutdown Effects on Department of Corrections Services

Commissioner Dean Williams announced today that the Department of Corrections is working with the Department of Law to analyze the potential effects of a government shutdown, which would occur if the legislature fails to pass a budget by July 1.

Although it is uncertain exactly which programs, services, and jobs would be affected during a full government shutdown, Commissioner Williams says any interruption in services could be detrimental to DOC institutions, rehabilitation programs, inmates, staff and communities across the state.

Shutting down offender programs or re-entry programs could lead to increased offender recidivism, an issue DOC has been working to combat. Any interruptions, delays or shutdown of inmate programming or community re-entry coalition work could create significant difficulties for re-entrants upon release. Many rely on these services to successfully transition back into Alaska communities. These programs reduce the likelihood of offender's recidivating (inside and outside the prisons), as treatment in prison enhances success upon release.

Below is a list of some programs and services potentially at risk of being shut down, delayed or interrupted if a fully funded budget is not passed before July 1:

- Victim services, which provide information and support
- Centralized electronic monitoring program oversight
- Institutional domestic violence programming
- Institutional education and vocational programming
- Institutional and community substance abuse treatment programming
- Institutional and community recidivism reduction programming
- Institutional and community re-entry services and support
- Institutional chaplaincy programming
- Inmate population research projects, which provides updated information
- Security and maintenance of Palmer Correctional Center property
- Transitional housing efforts
- System development (Pretrial, EHR, ACOMS) and automated systems development necessary for successful program implementation or continuation
- Timely responses to Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) complaints and grievances
- Timely responses to entities such as the Alaska State Human Rights Commission, Ombudsman, American Civil Liberties Union, legislature, public complaints and the media

"Any interruption in routine operations of the Department will add risk and uncertainty. While high security functions remain intact, ancillary operations of a correctional system are still important to safety and security," Commissioner Williams said.

This year's preparations for a government shutdown are different than in 2015, when the legislature had passed a partially funded budget. This year, money has not been appropriated for any government services. As a government shutdown in Alaska is unprecedented, Department of Law is examining what money could be spent to continue vital state services if the legislature has not fulfilled its constitutional obligation to pass a budget.