



Alaska's Workforce Investment Act Title 1-B, Program Year July 1, 2012 - June 30, 2013 Annual Report



**ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF LABOR
& WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT**

Jobs are Alaska's Future



THE STATE
of **ALASKA**
GOVERNOR SEAN PARNELL

**Department of Labor and
Workforce Development**

Office of the Commissioner

Post Office Box 111149
Juneau, Alaska 99811
Main: 907.465.2700
Fax: 907.465.2784

November 12, 2013

The Honorable Thomas E. Perez
Secretary of Labor
U.S. Department of Labor
200 Constitution Avenue, N.W.
Washington DC 20210

Dear Mr. Secretary,

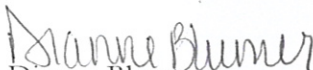
On behalf of Governor Sean Parnell, the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, and the Alaska Workforce Investment Board, I am pleased to submit Alaska's Workforce Investment Act Annual Performance Report for Program Year 2012.

This report highlights the success of Alaska's workforce development system, provides insight into benefits received by program participants, and describes how the state has focused on high-wage, high-demand occupations in its workforce development efforts. These efforts include concentrating on a dual-customer approach that reaches both workers and employers, promotes training that leads to credentials in emerging occupational sectors and industries, and uses a well-developed labor market information system as a cornerstone of program planning and design.

The state's continued priority is to revitalize Alaska's economy and streamline Alaskans' ability to obtain employment and training services they need while meeting the performance expectations of the Employment and Training Administration.

Thank you for your continued support of the people of Alaska and your consideration of this report.

Sincerely,


Dianne Blumer
Commissioner

Enclosure

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Alaska Workforce Investment Board

Mission Statement:

“To provide leadership, recommend policy, and provide direction and accountability standards to get Alaskans into jobs.”

The Alaska Workforce Investment Board (AWIB) within the Department of Labor and Workforce Development provides oversight for the planning and coordination of Alaska’s workforce development system. The board identifies priority industries for which it recommends investment of public training funds. In its role as the governor’s workforce advisory board, the AWIB has the responsibility to evaluate and recommend policy to implement the Workforce Investment Act.

The state is closely aligned with the national strategic direction through the focus on Alaska’s high growth/demand-driven job training initiative, which mirrors the United States Department of Labor, Employment Training Administration’s attention to industries that produce good paying, sustainable jobs.

The AWIB membership includes representatives from business and industry, government, organized labor and education. The board has four permanent standing committees, which are: assessment and evaluation; policy and planning; employment and placement and workforce readiness. Board members also represent the AWIB on industry partnerships such as the Gasline Training Plan, the Alaska State Energy Sector Partnership and Alaska Health Care Workforce Coalition.

THE VISION for the Alaska Workforce Investment Board is “building connections that put Alaskans into good jobs.” This comprehensive vision keeps the board focused on developing a workforce system that is useful, accessible and understandable to all of the system’s customers. Today’s customers include businesses looking for qualified workers, unemployed Alaskans looking for jobs and incumbent workers wanting to upgrade their skills in a changing work environment.

The board provides policy oversight of state and federally funded job training and vocational education programs. Board members, a majority of whom are business and industry leaders, look at employment trends and emerging occupations to ensure training is customized and Alaskans are prepared for high demand, good wage jobs. We want to connect employers with training partners, educators, and State agencies to address tough issues and help develop the workforce of tomorrow that will help drive our economy forward and provide good job opportunities for Alaskans. *Jim Lynch, Chair, AWIB*

Alaska Workforce Investment Board

Activities

The Alaska Workforce Investment Board (AWIB) and its staff have worked on several initiatives during the past year. These activities include revising the Oil and Gas Training Strategic Plan, implementing the Alaska Career and Technical Education (CTE) Plan, meeting with Regional Training Centers, implementing activities of the Disability Employment Initiative and implementation of a Renewable Energy/Energy Efficiency (RE/EE) Workforce Development Plan. AWIB activities include:

- The CTE Plan, a joint effort of the DOLWD, Department of Education and Early Development (EED), and the University of Alaska system (UA), was finalized in August 2010. PY 2012 was the second year of a state appropriation of \$625,000 to the AWIB for implementation of the state CTE Plan. Of this total, approximately \$565,000 was distributed in a competitive grant process that was available to school districts, postsecondary institutions, and non-profit educational agencies. The purpose of the grants was to enhance existing CTE programs or develop new ones, and grantees were required to align their projects with the CTE plan. All grantees were required to implement Personal Learning and Career Plans (PLCPs), a key component of the CTE plan. Fourteen projects – six school districts, three Regional Training Centers, a state correctional facility, an economic development council, and three UA programs were funded, with awards ranging from \$17,000 to the maximum of \$60,000. Healthcare, construction, public safety, culinary arts, engineering, horticulture, business, and fisheries careers were represented. Projects included upgrading CTE facilities and equipment; developing new career pathways and curricula to link secondary and postsecondary programs; developing new delivery models such as distance delivery and short-term intensive courses; and training elementary science teachers in the use of an introductory engineering curriculum and introducing their students to career planning. The projects impacted more than 3,500 students statewide.
- In 2012, the legislature appropriated \$486,000 to the AWIB in partnership with the Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development (DCCED). This is a one-time funding measure to be used through June 30, 2015 for training Alaskans and establishing Alaska workforce development programs in the film and television industry. Grants have been awarded to six entities funding seven programs for a total of \$257,350. The remaining \$228,650 is budgeted for Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) for Alaska residents to receive tuition reimbursement and help with travel funding. The DOLWD Employment Security Division (ESD) is managing the ITAs. As of August 20, 2013, 438 participants have received training. Of those participants, some may have been counted more than once if they attended multiple training courses from different training providers. Grantees have spent \$96,405 to date. Of the 438 participants, 135 have received ITA funding. A total of \$116,888 has been reimbursed to date. ITA funding was increased from \$500 to \$1,500 to cover additional costs. The travel budget remained the same. The grant provision was amended to give grantees the opportunity to receive a 25 percent advance of their total grant to help ease upfront financial costs.



- The Board, in partnership with the Employment Security Division, was awarded a Disability Employment Initiative (DEI) grant from the U.S. Department of Labor, Employment Training Administration in the amount of \$2,727,000 to improve education, training and employment opportunities and outcomes of youth and adults who are unemployed and/or receiving Social Security disability benefits. Alaska was one of nine states to receive an award under the DEI, and partner agencies include the One Stop Job Centers, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, Division of Public Assistance, and Governor's Council on Disabilities and Special Education. Training and site accessibility assessments have been conducted at Job Centers in Juneau, Anchorage Midtown & Muldoon, Ketchikan, Sitka, Kenai, Homer, Mat-Su, and Fairbanks, Kodiak, Seward, Dillingham, Barrow and Bethel.
- The State of Alaska has convened an Oil and Gas Industry Steering Committee (ISC) to develop a five year workforce development plan. Several AWIB members serve on the committee or on the Technical and Agency Advisory Committee. As a follow-up to the 2008 Alaska Gasline Inducement Act (AGIA) Training Plan, the current effort will expand its focus to incorporate oil and gas exploration, development, and distribution as well as pipeline construction. The plan is targeted for completion in late 2013 and will be forwarded to the AWIB for consideration. The ISC has reviewed the industry's current occupational profile, provided perspective on in-demand occupational classes, reviewed the State's investments in oil and gas occupations training, and examined the capacity of educational and training programs to provide a skilled workforce. Drafting of the plan, developing ISC recommendations, and gathering public input will complete the planning process this fall.
- The Alaska State Energy Sector Partnership (ASESP) concluded the final year of funding for Renewable Energy (RE) and Energy Efficiency (EE) grants. Sub-grantees continued training apprentices and journeymen in energy efficiency construction trades, weatherization technicians, industrial electricians, and solar installers in communities throughout the state. As of the end of June 2013, more than 1,300 participants completed training, to surpass the target goal of 700.
- Board meetings were held October 23 and 24, 2012 in Fairbanks; January 23 and 24, 2013 in Ketchikan and May 21 and 22, 2013 in Kenai.
- The Board reviewed and approved the 2012 Training Program Performance Report to the Legislature.
- The AWIB website continues to be updated at <http://www.labor.alaska.gov/awib/> and includes links related to the Alaska Gasline Training Plan, Registered Apprenticeship, Career and Technical Education, State Energy Sector Partnership, Employment, Training, and Grant Information, Regional Advisory Councils, Regional Training Centers, and the AWIB Newsletter.

Alaska Workforce Investment Board

Waivers

Waivers	PY 2012 Impact
<p>The AWIB received a waiver, (WIA regulations at 20 CFR 661.300(f)), to allow the Board to carry out the roles of a local board. Alaska's need to establish a single regional planning area was in response to excessive administrative costs, inconsistencies in services, and a desire to improve overall performance. In an effort to include local participation and points of view, other local elected officials from Alaska's boroughs and cities are consulted in planning efforts and invited to participate in the Regional Advisory Councils. The quality of dialogue by the AWIB has been raised with more focus on statewide strategies and their linkage to regional economic and workforce development needs.</p>	<p>The impact of functioning as a single regional planning area streamlined the process and timeliness of awarding grants by the elimination of multiple layers of administrative entities; established consistent eligibility standards across the state; and improved visibility and accountability of workforce investment programs.</p>
<p>Fund transfer limit between Adult and Dislocated Worker programs, allowing the state flexibility to respond to the particular needs of customers and labor markets by transferring up to 50 percent of a program's funding to the other program.</p>	<p>This waiver was not implemented during PY 2012.</p>
<p>Waive the requirement for a 50 percent employer contribution for customized training, enabling employer match limits for WIA participants in customized training according to the size of the business: at least 10 percent of the costs for employers with 50 or fewer employees; at least 25 percent of the costs for employers with 51-250 employees; and for employers with more than 250 employees, the current statutory requirement of 50 percent will continue to apply.</p>	<p>Because of limited WIA formula funding, this waiver was not implemented during PY 2012.</p>
<p>Increase employer reimbursement for on-the-job-training (OJT), allowing employer reimbursement for WIA participants in OJT according to the total size of the business: up to 90 percent for employers with 50 or fewer employees; up to 75 percent for employers with 51-250 employees; and for employers with more than 250 employees, the current statutory requirement of 50 percent will continue to apply.</p>	<p>This waiver facilitated the training of participants that builds the Alaska Job Center Network's capacity to engage in this critical training model. Having the ability to base employer reimbursement amount on business size, lessened the burden on smaller employers, encouraged their participant and increased the chances that providers will be able to use this important tool toward placing job seekers in permanent, high-skill employment.</p>

Account for seasonal employment in performance measures to address the challenge of serving seasonal workers. Alaska was granted a waiver of the WIA performance measure pertaining to retention in unsubsidized employment six months after entry into employment for those communities in the state with high unemployment rates in the off-season. A three-month retention performance measure for seasonal workers in locations where unemployment averages greater than eight percent from November through March each year was approved.	Application of this waiver would favorably increase the Adult Employment Retention and the Dislocated Worker Employment Retention rates.
Alaska was granted a waiver to extend the time limit on the period of initial eligibility for training providers on the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL).	Application of this waiver significantly increased the number of providers who remained on the ETPL. This, in turn, allowed participants more choices for improving their skills. The increased number of training providers had further benefit as in-state training tends to be less costly and more successful. The waiver also reduced the administrative costs associated with maintaining the ETPL.
Use of Individual Training Accounts (ITAs): Allows flexibility in provision of training services to youth by waiving prohibition for youth to receive ITAs, especially out-of-school youth who need specialized training to meet career goals.	Due to reduced federal WIA Youth allotment, implementation of the ITA waiver could not be realized. This had a negative impact on the state's ability to provide industry specific training to youth participants. Loss of the ITA resource also negatively impacts the states performance on Attainment of Degree or Certificate and Placement in Employment or Education Common Performance Measures.

Workforce Investment Act

Title 1-B Programs

The priority of the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development (department) during program year 2012 was to continue to revitalize Alaska's economy and keep Alaska on a path of economic recovery and long-term competitiveness. According to [data](#) from the department's Research and Analysis Section, as of June 2013 the total seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for Alaska was 6.5 percent, dropping almost a full percentage point from the June 2012 rate of 7.3 percent. The comparable national rate as of June 2013 was 7.8 percent.

The department is delivering services Alaskans expect in smarter, faster and better ways; identifying new ways to increase efficiency and save money; and supporting a growing economy and job creation by continuing to make labor market data more accessible. These priorities are all described in the [Alaska Integrated Workforce Development Plan for PY 2012-2016](#).

One of the department's objectives is to maintain a fully integrated system that ensures availability of workforce services to all customers, with renewed focus on veterans, military spouses, low income individuals, individuals and youth with disabilities, out-of-school youth, older workers, and ex-offenders.

To make the Alaska one-stop job center system more efficient, the department identifies high-skill/high-wage/high-demand occupations, and develops job training strategies to meet the needs of Alaska's businesses.

The department supports integration of services through a single delivery system for both businesses and individuals. This efficient use of resources includes integrating all Workforce Investment Act (WIA) programs, Wagner-Peyser, Unemployment Insurance, veterans' programs, the Senior Community Service and Employment Program, the Trade Adjustment Assistance program, and the Work Services program (employment elements in the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program). The department's vision for the one-stop job centers is to field all job seeker needs, including case management, support services, referral to target programs, and educational resources.

During PY 2012 the department focused on developing a highly-skilled Alaska workforce, putting veterans to work, and turning the unemployment system into a re-employment system. Within the department, the [Division of Business Partnerships \(DBP\)](#) is the designated state administrative agency for Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Title 1-B programs. The DBP grants WIA funds to the department's [Employment Security Division \(ESD\)](#), the state's One-Stop Operator, and to qualified youth employment and training providers recommended by the Alaska Workforce Investment Board's (AWIB) Youth Council.

The WIA provides employment and training services to program participants at three broad levels: core, intensive, and training. The programs are designed to provide customers with the level of service that most efficiently meets their needs and helps them get, or keep, a good job. Core services such as job search and placement assistance, and real-time labor market information, help workers who have marketable skills and work experience target that next job. Intensive services such as comprehensive skill assessments, career counseling, and career planning help workers who need assistance identifying their skills and developing career goals and job search strategies. Training services help workers who need to upgrade their skills to be competitive in the job market. Training services include options such as on-the-job training, skill upgrading and retraining, occupational training, and training in basic skills.

The department's workforce system delivers services to dislocated and other unemployed workers based on principles that have produced, over time, a high rate of reemployment and retention, and good earnings for participants. These principles include recognizing a dual-customer approach that serves both workers and employers, promoting training that leads to credentials in emerging occupational sectors and industries, and using well-developed labor market information as a cornerstone of program planning and design.

The department offers universal access to its services, while extending a priority to veterans, unemployment insurance claimants, long-term unemployed, under-employed, dislocated workers, low-income individuals, public assistance recipients, those with disabilities, individuals with limited English proficiency, the homeless, older workers, and ex-offenders.

To effectively serve participants, Alaska's WIA programs address the challenge of meeting employer needs and increasing job seeker competitiveness by emphasizing four strategies:

1. Increase the rate of industry-recognized credential attainment among participants who receive training;
2. Promote training strategies tailored to the unique needs of low-skilled adults;
3. Meet employer needs for skilled workers; and
4. Increase training in green jobs, energy and resource production and extraction, health care, and other high growth industries.

The department continues to focus WIA programs on transitioning workers into high-wage, high-growth, and demand-driven jobs. This is evident in Adult and Dislocated Worker (DW) programs' average earnings performance as shown in the chart below. While the state exceeded four of the six federal performance measures, and successfully met the remaining two measures, when comparing year-over-year performance from PY 2011 to PY 2012, the Employment Retention Rate and the Average Earnings Rate increased in each program. Both programs experienced similar decreases in the Employment Rate performance measure. U.S. DOL's minimum standards require that performance exceeds 80 percent of the annually negotiated goal.

	PY 2012 Negotiated Performance	80% of Negoti- ated Performance	Exceeded/Met/Not Met	PY 2012 Actual Performance	PY 2011 Actual Performance	PY 2010 Actual Performance
Adult Employment Rate	77.0%	61.6%	Exceeded	78.9%	82.6%	67.6%
Adult Employment Retention Rate	80.1%	64.1%	Exceeded	81.3%	77.4%	81.3%
Adult Average Earnings	\$17,500	\$14,000	Exceeded	\$18,621	\$17,679	\$18,200
DW Employment Rate	79.0%	63.2%	Met	73.9%	78.2%	73.0%
DW Employment Retention Rate	83.5%	66.8%	Exceeded	89.7%	82.0%	83.7%
DW Average Earning	\$22,000	\$17,600	Met	\$21,881	\$21,636	\$24,160

Alaska's WIA annual performance outcomes for PY 2012 reflect the department's commitment to continuing improvement of its coordinated and comprehensive workforce development system, and the hard work and dedication of department leadership and program staff.

Alaska will continue to expand and solidify its commitments to public/private partnerships; refine strategies and increase the responsiveness of the system; monitor, provide oversight, and technical assistance activities to improve program quality; strive for performance excellence; and make internal systemic changes as required.

Workforce Investment Act

Adult Program

The department's [WIA Adult Program](#) prepares workers, - particularly low income, disadvantaged, low-skilled, and underemployed adults, for good jobs in three ways:

1. Increases workers' incomes by assisting unemployed and underemployed workers obtain employment in industries and occupations that offer good wages and opportunities for advancement;
2. Assists workers who are in low-wage jobs or out of work find a path into middle-class jobs by matching their current skills to access better jobs or helping them improve their skills through training so they can compete for better jobs; and
3. Assists middle class workers to develop the skills they need to succeed on the job and stay employed.

As WIA Adult Program funding became 65 percent obligated, and other One-Stop partner agency funding was unavailable, the [Alaska Job Center Network \(AJCN\)](#) implemented the following service priorities within the WIA Adult program early in PY 2012 when providing participants with intensive and/or training services:

1. Veterans or eligible spouses who are low-income;
2. Individuals with disabilities who are low-income;
3. Public assistance recipients;
4. Other low-income individuals; and
5. Individuals who are not self-sufficient.

Alaska state policies ensure priority of service to veterans and covered persons. To ensure priority of service is observed, eligible veterans and covered persons are identified at the point of entry and must be notified of programs and/or services available as stated in Public Law 107-288, 20 CFR, part 1010.230(a). Point of entry includes physical locations, such as one-stop career centers, as well as web sites and other virtual service delivery resources.

Total participants in Alaska's PY 2012 WIA Adult program decreased 6 percent from 574 to 537 which is due to the decrease in WIA Adult Program funding. As Alaska's unemployment rate decreased during PY 2012 so did new registrations of Adult participants, which decreased 18 percent from 287 to 235. Program exits decreased 21 percent from 228 to 179.

Workforce Investment Act

Adult Success Story

The Local Paper (TLP) is a small newspaper company located in Ketchikan. Owners were desperate to find a suitable trainee to learn how to operate their new printing press. TLP had hired a temporary employee from Montana to operate the press while they searched for a local resident who could commit to learning the trade.

Robert Gustafson was one of three candidates being considered for the print press operator trainee position. Robert was a retired veteran and a low-income single parent who had been working in seasonal jobs and as a self-employed vendor. Robert received Wagner-Peyser core and intensive services, including resume assistance and vocational counseling. His Career Ready 101 scores were solid; indicating an aptitude for learning highly technical skills. Ultimately, Robert's confident nature coupled with his can-do attitude made him shine above his competition and he was offered the on-the-job training opportunity at The Local Paper.

The WIA adult program funded a percentage of the training and Robert received two months of free bus passes under the veteran transportation pilot project, offered by the Statewide Veteran Coordinator.



Robert earned commendable evaluations throughout his OJT period and now possesses skills for an in-demand trade in the labor market of his choice.

Robert is working full-time and earning \$15 per hour with wage increases as he continues to solidify journey level skills as a press operator.

Robert standing near the Ryobi lithographic printing press he now operates and maintains regularly.

Workforce Investment Act Dislocated Worker Program

The department's [WIA Dislocated Worker Program \(DW\)](#) meets the complementary needs of displaced workers and employers. The program offers employment and training services to individuals who have lost their jobs, including: those dislocated as a result of plant closings or mass layoffs, and who are unlikely to return to employment in their previous industries; formerly self-employed individuals; and displaced homemakers who have been dependent on the income of another family member, and are no longer supported by that income.

The efficient expenditure of WIA Adult and Dislocated Worker program funds during PY 2012 enabled innovative and effective One-Stop service delivery strategies within the Alaska Job Center Network (AJCN). The employment and training services this funding supports allowed AJCN job centers to play a vital role in Alaska's ongoing economic recovery by assisting workers, who face unprecedented challenges, with retooling skills and pursuing viable career paths.

Total participants in Alaska's PY 2012 WIA DW program decreased 9 percent from 310 to 283 which is due to the decrease in WIA DW Program funding. New registrations of dislocated workers increased 15 percent, from 126 to 141. Program exits decreased 31 percent from 147 to 102.

During May 2012, the U.S. DOL, Employment and Training Administration (ETA) invited states to apply for one-time funding to prioritize training efforts for dislocated workers who have been unemployed for 27 weeks or longer or were likely to exhaust their unemployment insurance benefits. The funding was provided through a Dislocated Worker Training-National Emergency Grant (DWT-NEG).

The department was awarded a \$1.2 million DWT-NEG on June 26, 2012 to expand training opportunities to dislocated workers. The federal funding supports on-the-job training, registered apprenticeships, and other approaches that connect dislocated workers with employers. These services are targeted to those experiencing prolonged unemployment. While economic conditions continue to improve across Alaska, hundreds of dislocated workers still face barriers in returning to work. These funds are strengthening the department's ability to deliver critical work-based learning and training to an additional 100 unemployed dislocated workers during the 2012–2014 grant period, continuing a commitment to help Alaskans become re-employed and support economic recovery.



Workforce Investment Act Dislocated Worker Success Story

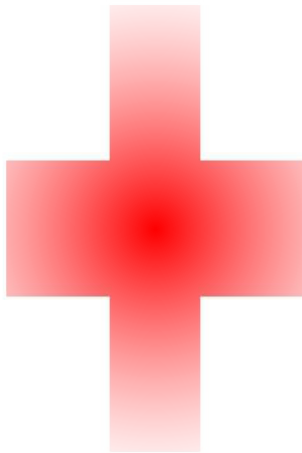


On February 18, 2013, Jeremy Hunter gained full-time employment with Central Peninsula Hospital as an operating room nurse earning \$28.78 per hour plus benefits. Jeremy came to the Kenai Job Center, Career Support and Training Services office after being laid off from his job in the timber industry, which had supported his family for more than 10 years. Jeremy was seeking assistance for training in a new and viable career and he chose a career in the healthcare industry - nursing.

Jeremy demonstrated his desire to become a nurse and his passion for helping others through excelling in his nursing pre-requisite coursework.

In addition, he provided substantial research of the growing demand for healthcare professionals.

Now, Jeremy is excited to embark on this new chapter in his life and he is thankful for the support he received during his training.



Workforce Investment Act

Youth Program

Alaska's WIA Youth program promotes economic development and stability by providing comprehensive employment, vocational, and academic services to eligible low income youth.

Grantee's for PY 2012 ranged from nonprofits to school districts and universities. Services to neediest youth continued to be a program priority along with a rejuvenated effort towards improving the literacy and numeracy performance outcomes.

In PY 2012, the department extended the existing youth grant awards and award amounts were adjusted based on the availability of funding for youth activities. Ultimately, the department granted \$1,618,219 to 11 grantees to carry out the youth program functions described in WIA section 129(c) (2). During the year the WIA Youth program provided training and supportive services to 456 eligible youth experiencing barriers to employment and academic progression; 43 percent (198) of which were out-of-school youth, and 57 percent (258) were in-school youth. The total served marks a 32 percent decrease from the number of eligible youth served in PY 2011 (671). The decrease in participants can be attributed to a reduction in funding as well as the extension of the PY 2011 grant agreements into PY 2012. Recruitment activities and participant numbers were not substantially increased as grantees continued serving youth that were already represented in their case load. In the past, the department was able to sustain greater participant numbers during periods where grant agreements were extended due to higher funding allotments.

	PY 2012 Negotiated Performance	80% of Negotiated Performance	Exceeded/ Met/Not Met	PY 2012 Actual Performance	PY 2011 Actual Performance	PY 2010 Actual Performance
Placement in Employment or Education	56.0%	44.8%	Met	52.1%	56.0%	53.0%
Attainment of Degree or Certificate	62.0%	49.6%	Not Met	48.9%	50.2%	61.0%
Literacy and Numeracy Gains	38.0%	30.4%	Not Met	26.3%	21.6%	15.0%

The department continues to focus on performance gains and has increased collaboration with the Employment and Training Administration to develop a performance improvement plan to increase positive outcomes for basic skills deficient youth. Consequently, various systems and processes have been executed. At the beginning of PY 2012, a new Individual Case Management (ICM) system was implemented, which allows for integrated reporting across systems and detailed assessments of participant information. Additionally, the state published a Workforce Advisory for improved protocols governing assessment of out-of-school youth for basic skills deficiencies to ensure youth are assessed at appropriate Test of Adult Basic Education levels and improve reporting of performance outcomes. Literacy and numeracy performance has consistently increased over the past two program years and Alaska's youth program is looking forward to ongoing gains with PY 2013 improvements. Technological advances provided by the new case management system, increased technical assistance, and policy improvements have positioned the state to experience improved performance outcomes.

The members of the Alaska Workforce Investment Board's Youth Council played an integral role in the review and selection process for the PY 2013 grant awards. Ten grantees were selected on a competitive basis to deliver youth program services. All but one are returning grant recipients, veterans of successful delivery of youth program activities.

Workforce Investment Act

Youth Success Story

The department has consistently partnered with the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services, Division of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) to provide services to juvenile offenders statewide. Each year, the partnership continues to develop service models that are improved upon and the needs of the youth are continually assessed and customized. Improvements were made in PY 2012 with the implementation of a comprehensive work readiness program developed at the DJJ, Johnson Youth Center located in Juneau.

The program provides participants an experiential learning approach to gain and maintain employment. Youth attend a mini job fair, interview for available positions, prepare resumes, complete timesheets, and receive feedback on their performance.

Youth are “hired” in on-site positions. Then, based on performance, treatment progress, and pass status, become eligible to apply for off-site positions that are extensions the of onsite training activities. The offsite positions are made available through community partnerships with the university and the healthcare system.

Youth are paid a stipend for work experience with an opportunity to earn increased the stipend amounts based on productivity. In addition, youth keep a schedule and have to request time off from their training as needed for appointments.



Training opportunities provided to youth participants through DJJ include:

- Culinary Arts program with completion of curriculum hours in the classroom, kitchen hours, and outside event catering.
- Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) online certification.
- Flagger Certification through the Vocational Training and Resource Center;
- ServSafe, (Food Handlers card).
- First Aid/CPR and Automated External Defibrillator training.
- Various work experience opportunities through community partnerships.

Transitional services staff meet with community members to identify local and general employer needs to create a customized portfolio for exiting participants. Prior to release from the Johnson Youth Center to a home community, each participant is presented with a vocation binder highlighting their individual accomplishments and work history. The binder includes a cover letter, resume, letters of reference, diploma, transcripts, awards, certificates, and pictures.

The DJJ program model is an innovative approach to serving a priority WIA Youth demographic that is often hard to serve due to institutional security measures. The work readiness model will be implemented at the largest DJJ youth center in the state, McLaughlin Youth Center, located in Anchorage in PY 2013. This will expand the available training opportunities to reach more participants in rural locations as resources and participant availability permits.

One of the many successes from the Johnson Youth Center in PY 2012 was a long-term resident who transferred to his home community to complete a 60-day step-down program at the transitional services unit. The youth had been receiving work experience in Juneau at Home Depot while in the WIA Youth program. Because of this experience, the youth was able to successfully transfer into a position at the Home Depot store located in his home community of Kenai. His portfolio included a ServSafe certificate, completed kitchen hours certificate, Food Handlers card, pictures of his culinary dishes, Adult First Aid/CPR and AED cards, letters of recommendation, and certificates. This preparation earned him the job and praise from the store hiring manager.

“As a hiring manger, this is exactly what I would look for when people come to interviews, I wish more people would have a similar binder, including myself, to present to employers.”

-Kenai Home Depot Hiring Manager



State Evaluation Activities

During PY 2012, the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Division of Business Partnerships (DBP) focused on implementing its new management information and reporting systems to better support and standardize program evaluation activities. The new data collection and reporting system provides reliable, accurate information including total enrollments, case load sizes, regional information on participants, and timeliness in service delivery initiation. This allows for a standardized program evaluation and eliminates costly custom program evaluations.

As required under Section 136 of the WIA, the DBP carries out departmental evaluations related to programs and activities authorized by Title I of the act. The goal is to identify how effectively the vision, strategies, and procedures of the U.S. DOL, Employment and Training Administration and the department are being achieved. The results of the evaluation provide the basis for making statewide and regional judgments regarding the effectiveness of the WIA programs administered within Alaska's workforce development system. This information is used to drive funding and staff training decisions.

Additionally, these on-site visits afford opportunities to: ensure participant eligibility is being determined correctly; ensure participant services are delivered appropriately; evaluate internal policies and procedures that are used; gather information from staff that perform and supervise the work; compare all information gathered; and issue a comprehensive final monitoring report to each grantee.





Adult and Dislocated Worker Programs

The DBP conducted on-site visits of job centers within Alaska's two local workforce investment areas, Anchorage/Mat-Su and Balance of State for the adult and dislocated worker program during the period of April 23-25, and June 19, 2013. Monitoring, participant file reviews, and in-person technical assistance helped identify areas of program strength and those needing improvement. A review of case files revealed that participants being served under WIA adult and dislocated worker programs within the job centers are meeting applicable state and federal program eligibility requirements. Source documentation specified for each data element is being maintained.

These visits revealed numerous best practices, including new forms and service delivery strategies, marketing and outreach to employers, and coordinating with partners. Best practices included:

- Business Connection staff at the Job Centers conduct hundreds of on-site recruitments and employers regularly use the Business Connection facilities to conduct hiring activities including job fairs, employer forums, Biz Fairs, Integrated Employer Services, business after-hour events, conferences, and trade shows.
- The creation of intake packets, containing all the necessary paperwork, which helps both the case manager and the potential participant focus during their initial meeting.
- Effective internal procedures for expenditures and payment processing, with several levels of authorization, checks and balances.
- Inserting tabs into the participant files to identify data validation element source documents for ease in locating these documents by individuals not familiar with the case file.
- Co-enrollment with the State Training and Employment Program (STEP) to better serve participants by maximizing funding from a variety of programs.
- Timesheets that document time worked for each individual funding source.
- The use of a participant success story template to ensure stories from each region contains consistent, needed data.
- The use of exit checklists by case managers prior to exiting a WIA participants to reduce data validation errors.
- Conducting staff meetings to brainstorm ideas, distributing participants to the best-matched case manager, publicizing job leads, and sharing limited resources.
- Effective leveraging of WIA resources with other partner funding such as vocational rehabilitation.

The monitoring of job centers' financial and programmatic elements disclosed no Findings of Non-Compliance and one area of Administrative Concern relating to copies of invoices being kept in participant files. Overall, this monitor concluded that the grant recipient is in compliance with federal and state laws and regulations, grant agreements, division policies and procedures for the WIA adult and dislocated worker programs, and is providing the training and services specified under WIA.

The formal monitoring report, issued July 24, 2013, provides constructive feedback, and encourages open lines of communication. It further identifies and plans for technical guidance, assistance, training, and corrective actions. This will lead to timely, individualized, and specific staff training; opportunities to fine-tune processes and procedures; sufficient time for corrective action to be accomplished in PY 2013; and to conduct follow-up monitoring to ensure corrective action is completed.



Youth Program

DBP staff conducted on-site monitors of 11 WIA Youth grantees in the second quarter of PY 2012, October and November 2012. Monitors consisted of a review of both program and fiscal administration of youth program activities. The financial monitor included reviewing the grant recipient's policies and procedures in administering its grant funds. Comparison of expenditures with the grant budget, quarterly financial reporting, and reimbursement requests was also completed. The program monitor consisted of reviewing participant files, program reports, staff interviews, Equal Employment Opportunity practices, and assessing how well the grant recipient was performing relative to its negotiated targets.

During each monitor, the division provides technical assistance based on requests made by grant recipients or suggested best practices that could improve a current process already in place. In PY 2012, technical assistance was focused on increasing literacy/numeracy performance and accountability, the competitive process for the selection of Program Year 2013 grantees, and ongoing training on the newly implemented case management system.

Monitor outcomes established that all youth programs were in compliance with federal and state guidelines; however administrative concerns were noted for three youth programs. These concerns do not require a formal corrective action plan. One youth program, in its second year of delivering WIA Youth services, had findings with its case management practices and required the submission of a formal corrective action plan to the division.

Best practices noted during monitors were:

- The isolation of services to in-house operations.
- Designated areas with computers for job searching and other skill development and employment tasks that are arranged in a youth friendly environment.
- Increased collaboration between youth providers serving the same local area, capitalizing on the individual strengths of individual programs to provide a systematic and comprehensive system within the area.
- Youth program providers using the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) assessment, ACT Work Keys® and other tools to assess a participant basic skills, aptitudes and employment interests and experience.
- Expanded partnerships to leverage limited resources while services to youth are increased.
- Strong community presence resulting in participants being served based on word of mouth referral from other youth who have received quality services.



Veteran's Services

Alaska state policies ensure priority of service to veterans and covered persons. To ensure priority of service is observed, eligible veterans and covered persons are identified at the point of entry and are notified of programs and/or services available as stated in Public Law 107-288, 20 CFR, part 1010.230(a). Point of entry includes physical locations, such as one-stop career centers, as well as Web sites and other virtual service delivery resources.

All job center staff receive training on the Jobs for Veterans Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Gold Card initiative, and other legislation that affects veteran priority, preference, and employability.

The one-stop and veterans' staff use a needs-based approach to identify veterans with special needs — such as disabled veterans and recently separated veterans — and refers them to appropriate services. All veterans and covered persons pursuing employment are registered in the state's labor exchange system, ALEXsys. Veterans with barriers to employment are provided with the necessary initial assessment and the required documented intensive case management services by Disabled Veterans Outreach Programs (DVOP) staff. If DVOP services are not available, referrals are made to appropriate partner services such as vocational rehabilitation.

The DVOP specialists are located in job centers in areas with the highest veteran populations. The DVOP specialists are available to serve the more intensive needs of veterans and include:

- Comprehensive assessment of education, skills, and abilities.
- In-depth interviewing and evaluation to identify employment barriers and appropriate employment goals.
- Group and individual career coaching.
- Short-term, pre-vocational services that may include development of learning and communication skills, interviewing skills, personal maintenance skills, and professional conduct to prepare individuals for career goals.
- Development of an individual employment plan that identifies employment goals, interim objectives, and appropriate services that will enable the veteran to meet his or her employment goals.
- Outreach to locate veterans for intensive services in places such as:
 - VA medical centers and vet centers
 - Homeless shelters
 - Civic and service organizations
 - Community stand downs
 - Military installations
 - WIA partners
 - State vocational rehabilitation services
- Outreach to employers, and in conjunction with employers, provides veterans with full range of employment, training, and placement services. This includes promoting veterans who have highly marketable skills and experience.



Furthermore, veterans have access to information and services via the enhanced AJCN Veterans' Web page. This Web site is especially useful in remote areas not serviced by a job center, and in expeditiously connecting veterans directly to a veterans' representative or supportive service.

During PY 2012, 537 individuals were registered in the WIA Adult program, ten percent were veterans. Additionally, 283 individuals were registered in the WIA Dislocated Worker Program, 25 percent were veterans.

Alaska continues to work with all Workforce Investment Act and Wagner-Peyser staff, supervisors, and managers to ensure a priority of service where there are no veterans' representatives in the job center.



Photo Courtesy of the Alaska National Guard. Photo by Bernie Kale.

Customer Satisfaction

The department launched a customer satisfaction tool in PY 2012 for all WIA adult, dislocated worker, and youth participants. The customer satisfaction survey is a set of eight questions that gauge the level of satisfaction with the employment and training services received by participants. The survey is broken into two parts, the first measures satisfaction with services such as assessments and support services and remaining questions are training specific. Along with the standard questions, participants are encouraged to submit feedback on the services received and provide ideas on how they can be improved.

The survey is emailed to all WIA participants at the time of exit. The participant may either reply to the email with the survey answers or they have an option of utilizing Survey Monkey via a link embedded in the email.

The following is the email and survey questions that are sent to the participant:

Dear *Participant Name*;

On *exit date* you completed a program provided by *business unit* delivering program services. This program may have included services such as training, vocational counseling or financial assistance while involved in training or education and job search or relocation assistance. You may have received assistance obtaining your GED, college degree, necessary license or a certificate. We sincerely hope your experience was productive and pleasurable while proving beneficial in your career endeavors.

Below you will see two sets of survey questions regarding the program you have just completed. The first set of three questions is in regards to any program services, including customer service you received and the second set of five questions is specifically about any training you may have participated in. There is also a comment section at the end of the survey where you can add any comments regarding the services and/or training you received.

We ask you to be open and honest in your responses. Not only does this information assist us in improving our programs, it also helps us to secure additional funding to continue providing services to other Alaskans like you.

We look forward to your participation in the survey. We also ask that you keep your phone number and address current with *business unit*.

Thank you.

The Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development

You have two options to respond to this survey.

You can utilize an on-line survey tool: Survey Monkey by [clicking here](#) or reply by email.

To answer the survey by email, please choose to reply to this e-mail then enter your answers in the indicated areas below each question. When you have completed all of the questions, please send the e-mail.

All questions require a numerical response, please rate them accordingly:

Strongly Disagree	1
Disagree	2
Neither agree nor disagree	3
Agree	4
Strongly agree	5

Complete the Services section only if you received services: Services may include assessment of skill level, workforce readiness, career counseling, GED preparation, work experience, childcare assistance, transportation, accommodations during training, meals during training, tuition assistance, and job search and placement assistance.

Select only one answer:

1. I am satisfied with the overall services I received from the organization.

1= strongly disagree 2=disagree 3=neither agree or disagree 4=agree 5=strongly agree

Answer:

2. The services met my expectations.

1= strongly disagree 2=disagree 3=neither agree or disagree 4=agree 5=strongly agree

Answer:

3. The services provided were ideal for my current needs.

1= strongly disagree 2=disagree 3=neither agree or disagree 4=agree 5=strongly agree

Answer:

Please provide any additional comments to services received:

Complete the training section if you received training: Training may include job-readiness, skill upgrading and retraining, occupational skills training, entrepreneurial training, customized training, classroom learning, hands-on- learning, on-the- job learning, or online courses.

Select only one answer:

1. Overall, the training met my expectations.

1= strongly disagree 2=disagree 3=neither agree or disagree 4=agree 5=strongly agree

Answer:

2. The amount of time provided for the training was adequate.

1= strongly disagree 2=disagree 3=neither agree or disagree 4=agree 5=strongly agree

Answer:

3. I received adequate support from the training organization before, during, and after training.

1= strongly disagree 2=disagree 3=neither agree or disagree 4=agree 5=strongly agree

Answer:

4. I have confidence the training provided has or will increase my ability to obtain or maintain employment.

1= strongly disagree 2=disagree 3=neither agree or disagree 4=agree 5=strongly agree

Answer:

5. I would recommend this training to others.

1= strongly disagree 2=disagree 3=neither agree or disagree 4=agree 5=strongly agree

Answer:

Please provide any additional comments regarding your training experience:

This electronic survey was launched in June of PY 2012 and out of 72 surveys that were sent to participants, 22 were returned; a 31 percent response rate. Survey results showed that 86 percent of respondents strongly agreed that they were satisfied with the services that were provided.

Results of the customer satisfaction survey will be reported in the WIA Annual Report, and annually to the AWIB and the Alaska Legislature.

WIA Title 1-B Expenditures

Funding Breakouts	Available	Expended/Obligated	Percent Expended	Remaining Balance
Adult Program	1,643,488	1,249,385	76.02%	394,103
Adult Carry In	519,500	284,552	54.77%	234,949
Dislocated Worker Program	1,251,819	960,532	76.3%	291,287
Dislocated Worker Carry In	669,741	477,357	71.27%	192,384
Youth Program Funds	1,731,219	1,288,689	74.44%	442,530
Youth Program Carry In	455,087	394,987	86.79%	60,100
Local Admin	514,059	285,413	55.52%	228,646
Local Admin Carry In	175,905	175,905	100.00%	0
Rapid Response (RR)	145,561	103,221	70.91%	42,340
RR Carry In	122,919.33	9,079.32	7.39%	113,840
Statewide (STW) Activities	278,219	41,212	14.81%	237,007
STW Activities Carry In	1,221,134	958,672	78.51%	262,462
ALL FUND SOURCES	8,728,651.48	6,229,005.67	71.36%	2,499,646

Source: Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Division of Business Partnerships

WIA Title 1-B Participants	Participants	Costs	Cost Per Participant
Adult PY12	537	1,533,937	2,856
Dislocated Worker PY12	283	1,437,889	5,081
Youth PY12	456	1,683,677	3,692

Source: Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Division of Business Partnerships

Cost Effectiveness Analysis

During PY 2012, the department continued its efforts to prepare WIA participants for employment in high-growth industry opportunities. These jobs require a higher degree of skill and training, aggressive planning, and investment. They also require more intensive participant preparation.

Even though declining WIA funds and the loss of the statewide activities have adversely impacted the number of participants served, the department is committed to program accountability and the efficient use of training funds. The department continues to increase co-enrollments and expand partnerships to leverage federal workforce development resources with state funded investments. However, this unfortunately is not sustainable.

The table below demonstrates the continued decrease in federal funding with the exception of American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funding in PY 2009. Consequently, the total participants served declined by more than 30 percent over the past three program years. The table below indicates that both variables are declining such that the ratio of investment is consistent and the C-E ratio is relatively stable.

Without additional revenue, Alaska's workforce investment system faces an immediate need to prioritize services, including the likelihood of limiting services available to all participants. The state needs a reliable and predictable level of funding that is not at constant risk of rescission and reduction. Reauthorization of WIA or new job training legislation may solve this problem for states with small populations.

Program Year	Participants	Costs	C-E Ratio
2012	1,276	\$4,655,502	\$3,649
2011	1,555	\$5,844,543	\$3,758
2010	1,977	\$8,597,693	\$4,347
2009	4,040	\$12,337,804	\$3,054
2008	2,814	\$9,477,882	\$3,368
PY 2008-2012 C/E Average	11,662	\$40,913,424	\$3,508

Assurances

The department assures that all required elements for the WIA Annual report are reported uniformly.