



# Alaska Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Combined Plan

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# WIOA State Combined Plan for the State of Alaska

## Overview

Under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), the Governor of each State must submit a Unified or Combined State Plan to the U.S. Secretary of Labor that outlines a four-year workforce development strategy for the State's workforce development system. The publicly-funded workforce system is a national network of Federal, State, regional, and local agencies and organizations that provide a range of employment, education, training, and related services and supports to help all jobseekers secure good jobs while providing businesses with the skilled workers they need to compete in the global economy. States must have approved Unified or Combined State Plans in place to receive funding for core programs. WIOA reforms planning requirements, previously governed by the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA), to foster better alignment of Federal investments in job training, to integrate service delivery across programs and improve efficiency in service delivery, and to ensure that the workforce system is job-driven and matches employers with skilled individuals. One of WIOA's principal areas of reform is to require States to plan across core programs and include this planning process in the Unified or Combined State Plans. This reform promotes a shared understanding of the workforce needs within each State and fosters development of more comprehensive and integrated approaches, such as career pathways and sector strategies, for addressing the needs of businesses and workers. Successful implementation of many of these approaches called for within WIOA requires robust relationships across programs. WIOA requires States and local areas to enhance coordination and partnerships with local entities and supportive service agencies for strengthened service delivery, including through Unified or Combined State Plans.

### Options for Submitting a State Plan

A State has two options for submitting a State Plan — a Unified State Plan or a Combined State Plan. At a minimum, a State must submit a Unified State Plan that meets the requirements described in this document and outlines a four-year strategy for the core programs. The six core programs are—

- the Adult Program (Title I of WIOA),
- the Dislocated Worker Program (Title I),
- the Youth Program (Title I),
- the Adult Education and Literacy Program (Title II),
- the Wagner-Peyser Act Program (Wagner-Peyser Act, as amended by title III), and
- the Vocational Rehabilitation Program (Title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by Title IV).

Alternatively, a State may submit a Combined State Plan that meets the requirements described in this document and outlines a four-year strategy for WIOA's core programs plus one or more of the Combined Plan partner programs. When a State includes a Combined State Plan partner program in its Combined State Plan, it need not submit a separate plan or application for that particular program. If included, Combined State Plan partner programs are subject to the "common planning elements" (Sections II and III of this document) where specified, as well as the program-specific requirements for that program. The Combined State Plan partner programs are—

- Career and technical education programs authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 (20 U.S.C. 2301 et seq.)
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Program (42 U.S.C. 601 et seq.)
- Employment and Training Programs under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (Programs authorized under section 6(d)(4) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2015(d)(4)))
- Work programs authorized under section 6(o) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2015(o))
- Trade Adjustment Assistance for Workers Programs (Activities authorized under chapter 2 of Title II of the Trade Act of 1974 (19 U.S.C. 2271 et seq.))
- Jobs for Veterans State Grants Program (Programs authorized under 38, U.S.C. 4100 et. seq.)

- Unemployment Insurance Programs (Programs authorized under State unemployment compensation laws in accordance with applicable Federal law)
- Senior Community Service Employment Program (Programs authorized under Title V of the Older Americans Act of 1965 (42 U.S.C. 3056 et seq.))
- Employment and training activities carried out by the Department of Housing and Urban Development
- Community Services Block Grant Program (Employment and training activities carried out under the Community Services Block Grant Act (42 U.S.C. 9901 et seq.))\*
- Reintegration of Ex-Offenders Program (Programs authorized under section 212 of the Second Chance Act of 2007 (42 U.S.C. 17532))

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\* States that elect to include employment and training activities carried out under the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) Act (42 U.S.C. 9901 et seq.) under a Combined State Plan would submit all other required elements of a complete CSBG State Plan directly to the Federal agency that administers the program. Similarly, States that elect to include employment and training activities carried by the Department of Housing and Urban Development and programs authorized under section 6(d)(4) and 6(o) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 that are included would submit all other required elements of a complete State Plan for those programs directly to the Federal agency that administers the program.

### How State Plan Requirements Are Organized

The major content areas of the Unified or Combined State Plan include strategic and operational planning elements. WIOA separates the strategic and operational elements to facilitate cross-program strategic planning.

- The **Strategic Planning Elements** section includes analyses of the State’s economic conditions, workforce characteristics, and workforce development activities. These analyses drive the required vision and goals for the State’s workforce development system and alignment strategies for workforce development programs to support economic growth.
- The **Operational Planning Elements** section identifies the State’s efforts to support the State’s strategic vision and goals as identified in the Strategic Planning Elements section. This section ensures that the State has the necessary infrastructure, policies, and activities to meet its strategic goals, implement its alignment strategy, and support ongoing program development and coordination. Operational planning elements include:
  - State Strategy Implementation,
  - State Operating Systems and Policies,
  - Assurances, and
  - Program-Specific Requirements for the Core Programs, and
  - Program-Specific Requirements for the Combined State Plan partner programs.

When responding to Unified or Combined State Plan requirements, States must identify specific strategies for coordinating programs and services for target populations.\* While discussion of and strategies for every target population is not expected, States must address as many as are applicable to their State’s population and look beyond strategies for the general population.

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\* Target populations include individuals with barriers to employment, as defined in WIOA Sec. 3, as well as veterans, unemployed workers, and youth.

# Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Plan

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) is the federal program that funds state and local workforce initiatives and provides a variety of job training services for adults and youth. WIOA modernizes and streamlines the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 and was created to allow states more flexibility in collaborating across systems to better address the employment and skills needs of employees, jobseekers, and employers. WIOA stresses the importance of education, training, credentials, and skills; helping people with barriers to employment; meeting the needs of employers; increasing the success and economic self-sufficiency of workers; and aligning workforce development with education and economic development. In Alaska, the Department of Labor and Workforce Development (DOLWD) is the state agency designated to receive WIOA funds and implement its provisions.

The hallmarks of the WIOA legislation are:

- The needs of businesses and workers drive workforce solutions, and local boards are accountable to the communities in which they are located;
- Job Centers provide excellent customer service to jobseekers and employers by focusing on continuous improvement; and
- The workforce system supports strong regional economies and plays an active role in community and workforce development.

## Alaska's Four-year Plan

WIOA requires states to submit a four-year workforce plan to the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL). The writing of a new strategic workforce development plan is a major opportunity for Alaska. WIOA emphasizes sector partnerships, career pathways, cross-program data and measurement, and job-driven investments. The Alaska Combined Plan describes the workforce development system that Alaskans want and explains how Alaska will use WIOA and other state and federal programs to achieve its vision of providing multiple pathways to high skill, high wage jobs and careers, and access to the education, training, and support services needed to prepare for and participate in high-demand occupations that pay family-sustaining wages.

Realizing the state's vision requires the active participation of partners, including economic development agencies, employers, workers and job seekers, non-profit organizations, youth and adult service providers, secondary and postsecondary education institutions, training providers, state agencies, industry sector groups, and Alaska Native organizations and training providers.

## Stakeholder Input

Since the passage of the WIOA legislation in 2014, the Alaska Workforce Investment Board (AWIB) and DOLWD have been involved in an extensive planning process, both internally and externally. DOLWD has been collaborating across the core programs covered in WIOA - Adult, Youth, and Dislocated Worker; Adult Basic Education and Family Literacy; Vocational Rehabilitation; and Wagner-Peyser Employment Services; and the partner program - the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP). The AWIB, which acts as both the state board and the local board, held public meetings in October 2014, February, May, and October 2015, and January 2016. Each meeting included board discussion of the WIOA plan as well as the opportunity for members of the public to provide comments in person or via teleconference.

Through a multi-step process, DOLWD reached out to the public to solicit comments and suggestions for improving the workforce system in Alaska. Steps to solicit WIOA-related feedback include:

## **Stakeholder meetings**

DOLWD held three public meetings in November 2015 to provide information on WIOA and gather public input to inform the state's workforce planning efforts. Meetings in Juneau, Fairbanks, and Anchorage were attended by more than 100 participants in total, representing Alaska Native training and service providers, AWIB, economic development organizations, industry, secondary and postsecondary education and training institutions, state workforce agencies, the university system, and WIOA service providers. Additionally, DOLWD hosted an Apprenticeship Conference and a Gasline Training Plan Stakeholder meeting as well as participating in a variety of meetings and conferences at which input was gathered to inform the WIOA Plan.

## **Stakeholder survey**

Following the stakeholder meetings, a web-based survey was released to gather additional input. The survey, which was open for five weeks in November and December 2015, focused on workforce needs and program gaps as well as current and expected regional economic trends. Over 55 stakeholders completed the survey. Stakeholder groups that participated include education and training providers, economic developers, employers, and WIOA service providers and recipients from public, private, Alaska Native, and faith-based institutions.

## **Public comment period**

The draft plan was presented for public comment from January 22, 2016 to February 23, 2016 on the DOLWD WIOA page ([labor.state.ak.us/wioa/home](http://labor.state.ak.us/wioa/home)). Announcement of the public comment period was made through the state's online public notices system. Public comments were collected via a dedicated email address and through a web-based form. Stakeholder groups that provided public comment include Alaska Native organizations, chief elected officials, businesses, labor organizations, economic development entities, community-based organizations, adult and youth education and workforce development providers, institutions of higher education, disability service entities, youth-serving programs, veterans' service organizations, juvenile justice specialists, senior employment programs, individuals with disabilities, and the public.

## **Combined Plan**

The Alaska Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Combined Plan that follows is the culmination of this public and private input process.

The plan's Strategic Elements section provides the current and projected workforce picture, as well as the state's workforce vision and goals. The Operational Planning Elements section clarifies implementation of the strategic elements in day-to-day operations, followed by sections specific to each core and partner program. The WIOA plan follows the question and answer format recommended by the U.S. Departments of Labor and Education.

At the end of the entire narrative portion of the plan, Appendix 1 shows the Performance Goals for the Core Programs and the Partner Program (Senior Community Service Employment Program - SCSEP). Appendix 2.1 contains a list of acronyms used in the plan; and Appendix 2.2 lists Alaska's One-Stop partners.

# I. WIOA State Plan Type

**Unified or Combined State Plan.** Select whether the State is submitting a Unified or Combined State Plan. At a minimum, a State must submit a Unified State Plan that covers the six core programs.

**Unified State Plan.** This plan includes the Adult Program, Dislocated Worker Program, Youth Program, Wagner-Peyser Act Program, Adult Education and Family Literacy Act Program, and Vocational Rehabilitation Program. **No**

**Combined State Plan.** This plan includes the Adult Worker Program, Dislocated Worker Program, Youth Program, Wagner-Peyser Act Program, Adult Education and Family Literacy Act Program, and Vocational Rehabilitation Program as well as one or more of the optional combined State Plan partner programs identified below. **Yes**

## Combined Plan partner program(s)

Indicate which Combined Plan partner program(s) the state is electing to include in the plan.

- Career and technical education programs authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 (20 U.S.C. 2301 et seq.) **No**
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Program (42 U.S.C. 601 et seq.) **No**
- Employment and Training Programs under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (Programs authorized under section 6(d)(4) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2015(d)(4))) **No**
- Work programs authorized under section 6(o) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2015(o)) **No**
- Trade Adjustment Assistance for Workers Programs (Activities authorized under chapter 2 of title II of the Trade Act of 1974 (19 U.S.C. 2271 et seq.)) **No**
- Jobs for Veterans State Grants Program (programs authorized under 38, U.S.C. 4100 et. seq.) **No**
- Unemployment Insurance Programs (Programs authorized under State unemployment compensation laws in accordance with applicable Federal law) **No**
- Senior Community Service Employment Program (Programs authorized under title V of the Older Americans Act of 1965 (42 U.S.C. 3056 et seq.)) **Yes**
- Employment and training activities carried out by the Department of Housing and Urban Development **No**
- Community Services Block Grant Program (Employment and training activities carried out under the Community Services Block Grant Act (42 U.S.C. 9901 et seq.)) **No**
- Reintegration of Ex-Offenders Program (Programs authorized under section 212 of the Second Chance Act of 2007 (42 U.S.C. 17532)) **No**

## II. Strategic Elements

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include a Strategic Planning Elements section that analyzes the State's current economic environment and identifies the State's overall vision for its workforce development system. The required elements in this section allow the State to develop data-driven goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce and to identify successful strategies for aligning workforce development programs. Unless otherwise noted, all Strategic Planning Elements apply to Combined State Plan partner programs included in the plan as well as to core programs.

### a. Economic, Workforce, and Workforce Development Activities Analysis

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include an analysis of the economic conditions, economic development strategies, and labor market in which the State's workforce system and programs will operate.

#### 1. Economic and Workforce Analysis

##### A. Economic Analysis

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include an analysis of the economic conditions and trends in the State, including sub-State regions and any specific economic areas identified by the State. This must include--;

##### i. Existing Demand Industry Sectors and Occupations

Provide an analysis of the industries and occupations for which there is existing demand.

##### ii. Emerging Industry Sectors and Occupation

Provide an analysis of the industries and occupations for which demand is emerging.

##### iii. Employers' Employment Needs

With regard to the industry sectors and occupations identified in 1 and 2 above, provide an assessment of the employment needs of employers, including a description of the knowledge, skills, and abilities required, including credentials and licenses.

### Economic Analysis

#### Alaska's Economic Regions

While Alaska ranks 48th among states by population, it is the largest geographically. The state's 570,641 square miles account for 16 percent of the total land mass of the United States. Within the United States, as a whole, there are 89.5 people per square mile; in Alaska, there are 1.3 people per square mile. In July 2014, Alaska's population totaled 735,601.

In 2014, Alaska's current-dollar Gross Domestic Product (GDP) was \$5.6 billion and ranked 43rd in the United States. The 2004-2014 compound annual growth rate for Alaska real GDP was -0.8 percent while the compound annual growth rate for the nation was 4.1 percent.

Alaska's economy is heavily dependent on resource extraction industries - oil, gas, and mining - as well as federal government spending and jobs, which include a substantial number of military bases and installations (Army, Air Force, and

Coast Guard, in particular). Alaska has more veterans per capita than any other state: 9.6 out of every 100 Alaskans are veterans compared to 6.7 for the nation as a whole.

Alaska has especially high concentrations of employment in natural resources and mining, more than four times the national average, with slightly higher concentrations in construction, utilities, maritime, transportation, and warehousing industries. The state has a lower-than-national-average employment concentration in manufacturing and financial activities, as well as professional and business services.

Other important basic sector industries that bring money into the state by providing goods or services to the local, regional, national, and global economies are fishing, tourism, air cargo, and to a much-reduced degree, timber.

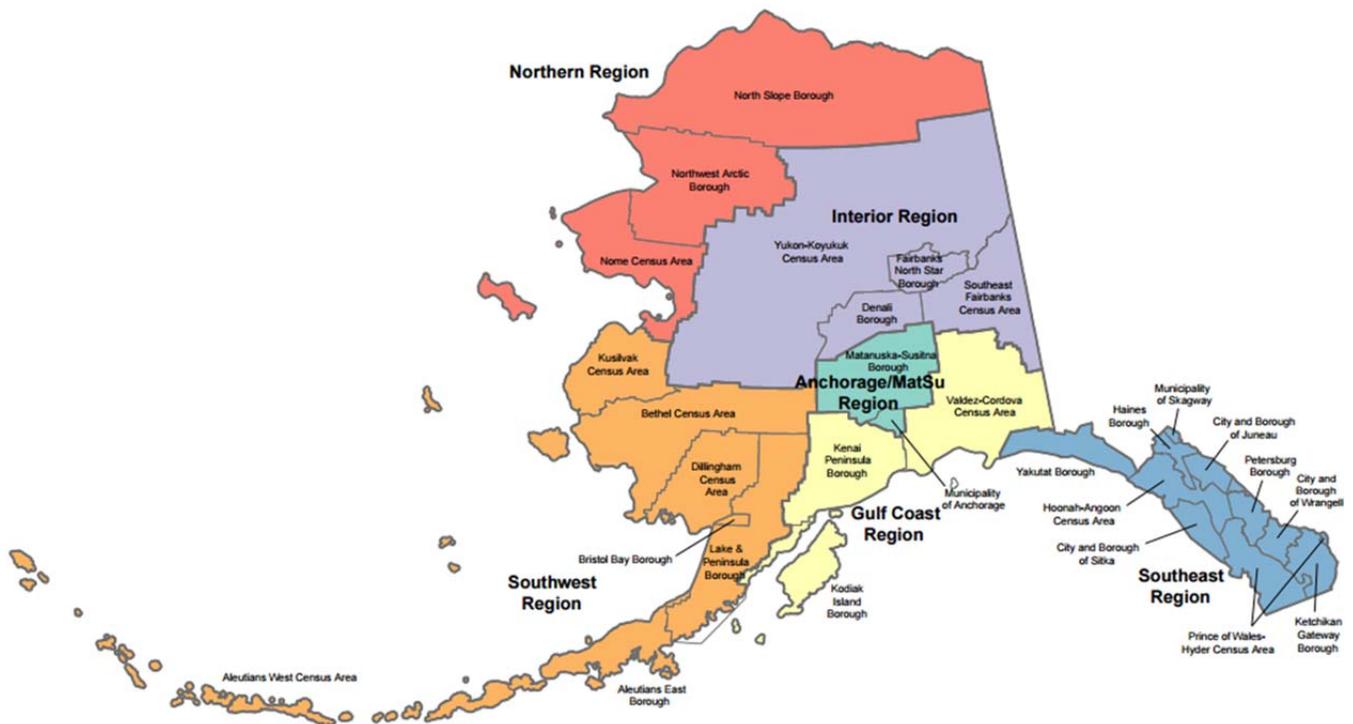
### WIOA Area and Planning Region

Alaska has one local WIOA area, encompassing the entire state. Under WIOA definition, therefore, the state is a single planning region. Operationally, however, Alaska includes six state-defined economic regions, which the state uses to collect and analyze labor market information and to inform planning. These economic regions are Anchorage/Mat-Su, Gulf Coast, Interior, Northern, Southeast, and Southwest (See Figure 1. Alaska Economic Regions Map.)

Alaska does not produce regional long-term occupational projections, but the following broad conclusions can be drawn based on regional data, including current and historical job numbers by industries.

Anticipated job growth for the Anchorage/Mat-Su, Gulf Coast, and Southeast Regions roughly mirrors the statewide pattern. Fairbanks, the largest part of the Interior Region, by population and job counts, is anticipated to have a mix of current and projected employment that resembles the state as a whole.

**Figure 1: Alaska Economic Regions Map**



## **Anchorage/Mat-Su Region**

The Anchorage/Mat-Su Region has had the state's strongest growth for years and is the population center of state. The mix of employment and industries in the region is reflective of those across the state. The region has 35,000 government jobs, which is about 20 percent of the total number of jobs in the region. The impact of current and expected state government cutbacks will be felt strongly in this region.

## **Gulf Coast and Southeast Regions**

Although parts of the Gulf Coast and Southeast Regions are isolated and rural, they contain a mix of jobs that are not dramatically different from the statewide pattern. Coastal areas have more opportunities in the maritime industry - fishing and fishing-support sectors, for example - but strong health care growth is noted wherever there are stable or growing populations. Similarly, the mix of government and private sector support jobs in retail, hospitality, construction, and transportation does not differ markedly among areas with population centers of 10,000 or more.

## **Interior Region**

The Interior Region has a mix of resource industries — large coal and gold mines, for example — and is home to Denali National Park, which generates a significant number of seasonal jobs and a handful of year-round jobs. Fairbanks, with a borough population of nearly 100,000, depends heavily on the military and the University of Alaska Fairbanks. Fort Wainwright, an Army post, and Eielson Air Force Base are home to 8,600 active duty military personnel and an additional 1,400 dependents. The University of Alaska Fairbanks has a student enrollment of nearly 10,000, 88 percent of whom are undergraduates. Both the military and the University produce a number of jobs specific to national defense and education, but also create significant demand for goods and services in the community and state. At both the industry and occupational levels, demand is similar to the statewide pattern, with especially high need for health care workers and across the rest of the industrial and occupational spectrum that is similar to population trends.

## **Northern Region**

The Northern Region is home to most of the state's large oil and gas industry and includes the Red Dog Mine, one of the world's largest zinc mines. As a result, this region benefits from oil, gas and mining industry jobs, as well as the significant portion of construction and transportation jobs that support these industries. Because North Slope workers typically work schedules of two weeks on-two weeks off, or some variation thereof, a substantial number of food services, health care, and custodial jobs are generated when oil and gas activity increases, and a corresponding reduction occurs in those jobs when it lessens. There is little in the way of permanent population centers in close proximity to the oil and gas fields, however. The Northern Region's largest city is Barrow with a population of approximately 4,500, which is 200 miles away from the center of oil field activity, and not connected by roadway.

## **Southwest Region**

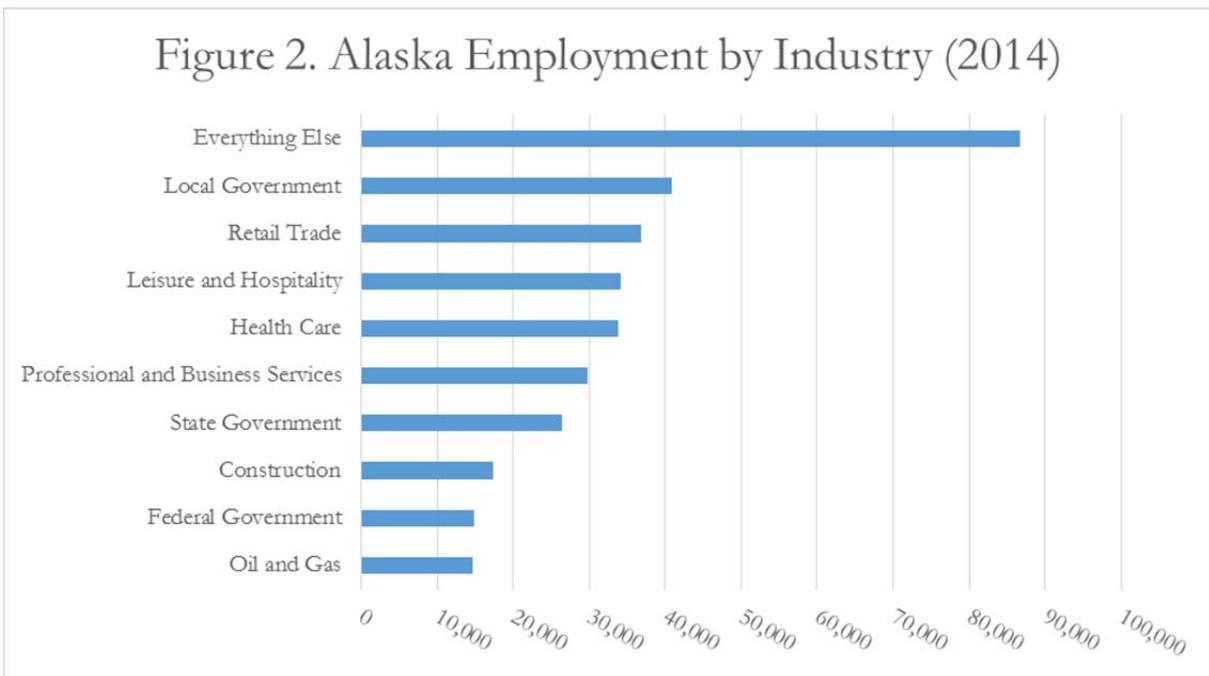
The Southwest Region of the state is heavily dependent on fishing. The region supplies a large percentage of the nation's total commercial fish harvest by both poundage and value. Bristol Bay sockeye salmon, Bering Sea crab, and pollock caught in the region represent some of the largest salmon, crab, and whitefish fisheries in the world. Much of the maritime activity is not captured in wage and hourly employment data because both permit holders and their crews are considered self-employed, and therefore not generally subject to state unemployment insurance coverage and the mandatory reporting from which the most reliable employment data are collected. The employment data do show, however, a large number of seafood processing jobs and a typical mix of government, health care, retail, construction, and hospitality employment that result from economic base industries associated with the area's fisheries.

The northern two census areas in the region have had some of the state's and nation's highest unemployment rates among counties or county equivalents. The Bethel Census Area's average monthly unemployment rate was 13.8 percent in 2014

and 15.6 percent in 2013. Rates were even higher in the Kusiivak Census Area (formerly the Wade Hampton Census Area) at 20.8 percent in 2014 and 22.8 percent in 2013. Jobs in these areas are primarily connected to local government and to the general supports that exist wherever populations cluster, including health care, retail, construction, and transportation jobs. Unlike the southern parts of the region, the northern boundaries of the Southwest Region do not profit substantially from commercial fishing harvests.

**Employment by Industry**

See Figure 2. Alaska Employment by Industry (2014) for a snapshot of statewide employment by industry. Maritime and mining are two important sectors of Alaska’s economy that do not show up on a chart like this that uses standard government categories for employment. Though the numbers are not strictly comparable, Alaska’s maritime sector has an estimated workforce of more than 70,000. Mining employment in Alaska, dominated by the state’s six major producing mines, has been estimated at 4,600 direct jobs, which support thousands of additional indirect jobs.



**(i) Existing Demand Industry Sectors and Occupations**

**Overall Growth**

Alaska is projected to gain 36,113 jobs between 2012 and 2022 for a growth rate of 10.8 percent. The health care and social assistance sector will grow the most at 25 percent, followed closely by mining — minus oil and gas — at 24.8 percent. Professional and business services are likely to grow at a rate faster than the economy overall. The construction and information industries are projected to grow at lower rates, 6.6 percent and 2.9 percent respectively. The government sector is projected to be the sole area to lose jobs within this ten-year period, with federal jobs reduced by 9 percent.

## **Oil and Gas**

While the projected number of oil and gas jobs is expected to grow over the next few years, the recent severe downturn in the commodity prices (-60 percent) is resulting in industry job losses. Today, oil and gas extraction jobs account for 33 percent of all industry employment. Low oil prices have significantly reduced state revenue, resulting in large reductions in operating and capital budgets for state and local government. As a result, Alaska is beginning to experience more job losses among public sector employees. This is a major challenge for the overall economy, businesses, employers, and workforce entities especially because, in sharp contrast, the oil and gas industry, along with the state, are planning to build America's largest energy project, the Alaska Natural Gas Pipeline. This \$45-60 billion investment, if realized, will require several thousand new skilled workers beginning in 2020.

## **Health Care**

Health care growth is a continuation of a long-running growth trend and tied to the demographic shift underway in Alaska as the 65+ population grows. From 2012 to 2022, the state's overall population is expected to grow by 10 percent; however, during this same period, the number of Alaskans 65 or older is expected to increase by 79 percent. The difference is attributable to the state having a relatively small 65 or older population now and a large "baby boomer" population aging into this cohort.

## **Metal Ore Mining**

Metal ore mining jobs — the largest mining subcategory — more than doubled between 2001 and 2013. Mining employment is expected to grow by 25 percent from 2012 to 2022, more than twice the statewide average. This upward trend is expected to continue with growth in existing mines and the continuation of work toward identifying prospective mines.

## **Construction**

Construction is expected to grow, particularly residential and nonresidential sectors, with increases of 14.9 percent and 14.5 percent, respectively, due to population increases and replacement of Alaska's aging housing stock. The overall growth in construction is expected to slow with the construction phase of the Chugach Electric and Municipal Light and Power Plant nearing completion. This reduces overall growth projections for the industry from 9.5 percent to 6.6 percent.

## **Other Industries**

Other key industries, such as maritime, encompass a range of occupations and sectors, making a single estimate for projected growth difficult to interpret. Despite this, the maritime sector represents Alaska's largest private employer and is a significant economic force in the state, including more than 500 firms statewide. Alaska harvests more than 60 percent of the nation's seafood. Goods, services, and passengers are dependent on water transport. The Alaska Marine Highway System carries an average of 312,000 passengers and 98,000 vehicles annually. The industry is particularly vulnerable to the "graying" workforce, and the number of Alaskans who have the necessary skills to fill these positions is too low to meet the demand.

See Figure 3. Sample of Statewide Industry Sector Projections (2012-2022) for industry growth in Alaska. Overall, the table illustrates significant growth in health care services and social care supports, followed by mining (except oil and gas).

**Figure 3. Sample of Statewide Industry Sector Projections (2012-2022)**

Industry	Percentage
Ambulatory Health Care Services	28.5%
Health Care and Social Assistance, All Other	25.5%
Mining (Except Oil and Gas)	24.8%
Support Activities for Mining	20.2%
Hospitals	20.1%
Management of Companies and Enterprises	19.9%
Water Transportation	19.7%
Truck Transportation	16.9%
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	16.3%
Wholesale Trade	14.8%

See Figure 4. Sample of Statewide Occupational Projections (2012-2022) for occupational growth in Alaska. Overall, the table shows significant growth in health care, such as personal aides and social supports, followed by jobs in the mining industry.

**Figure 4. Sample of Statewide Occupational Projections (2012-2022)**

Occupation	Percentage
Opticians, Dispensing	29.7%
Dental Hygienists	27.8%
Dental Assistants	27.0%
Home Health Aides	26.0%
Personal Care Aides	26.0%
Medical Assistants	25.7%
Physician Assistants	25.5%
Mental Health and Substance Abuse Social Workers	25.0%
Continuous Mining Machine Operators	25.0%
Dentists, General	24.6%

**In-demand Sectors and Occupations**

In-demand industry sectors and occupations in Alaska span several key areas: health care, mining, oil and gas, maritime, construction, and renewable energy and energy efficiency. Four of these industries have current workforce development plans in which priority occupations are identified. Each plan uses a different methodology to identify priority occupations.

**Health Care**

The **2010 Alaska Health Workforce Plan** identifies occupational priorities in 15 groupings. In 2013, labor market research showed that of the top fifty occupations in demand in Alaska, forty-seven were in the health care industry. The Alaska Health Workforce Coalition and the Department of Labor and Workforce Development (DOLWD) Research and Analysis Section created the *Alaska Hot Health Jobs* report that identified the high growth, high-demand jobs in the industry. Some of in-demand health care occupations are behavioral health workers; dentists and dental assistants; human services workers; case managers; clinical services and care coordinators; medical assistants; social workers; pharmacists and

pharmacy technicians; registered nurses; critical care nurses; certified nurse assistants; administrative services and coding/billing specialists; health information technicians; community health aides; psychiatrists and psychiatric nurse assistants; physical therapists; physician assistants; occupational therapists; family physicians; health educators; medical laboratory technicians; and radiographic technologists.

Sources: [http://labor.state.ak.us/awib/forms/Healthcare\\_Workforce\\_Plan.pdf](http://labor.state.ak.us/awib/forms/Healthcare_Workforce_Plan.pdf) and <http://jobs.alaska.gov/hotjobs/healthcare.pdf>

## **Mining**

The **2014 Alaska Mining Workforce Development Plan** identifies priority occupations and in-demand jobs through an industry workforce assessment survey. Priority occupations include underground miners; mill operators; drillers and blasters; haul truck drivers; mining engineers; maintenance technicians; geologists; millwrights; metallurgists; diesel and heavy mechanics; chemical, geological, and environmental technicians; occupational health and environmental safety technicians; electricians; and instrumentation technicians.

Source: <http://www.alaska.edu/research/wp/plans/mining/AMiningWP-2014-Final.pdf>

## **Oil and Gas**

The **2014 Alaska Oil and Gas Workforce Development Plan** identifies 68 in-demand occupations. Among these are operating engineers; construction equipment operators; civil, mechanical, petroleum, and electronic engineers; environmental scientists and specialists; geological and petroleum technicians; machinists; industrial engineers; remote sensing technicians; oil, gas, construction, transportation, health and environmental compliance and safety specialists; construction and building inspectors; welders, both structural and pipeline; environmental engineering technicians; truck drivers; laborers and material handlers; electricians and utility operators; crane operators; facility operation technicians; and cooks and support staff for housing the workforce.

Source: <http://www.alaska.edu/research/wp/plans/oil-and-gas/OilGasPlan.pdf>

## **Maritime**

The **2014 Alaska Maritime Workforce Development Plan** identifies 23 priority occupations to increase the number of Alaskans employed in the maritime sector. The in-demand occupations for this sector include trades and crafts for ship building, maintenance, and repair; crane operators; heavy equipment operators; fisheries scientists and technicians; hatchery managers; machinists; laborers and plant managers; seafood harvesters; biometricians; fish and wildlife technicians; shellfish farmers; fishery biologists; seafood plant and floating processor managers and engineers; fish and game coordinators; refrigeration engineers and technicians; fisheries economists; seafood production managers; electricians; hatchery managers; can machinists; quality control and assurance managers and technicians; Baader technicians; and vessel operators, deckhands, engineers, and captains.

Source: [http://www.alaska.edu/files/fsmi/AK-Maritime-Workforce-Dev-Plan\\_Low-Res\\_5-22-14.pdf](http://www.alaska.edu/files/fsmi/AK-Maritime-Workforce-Dev-Plan_Low-Res_5-22-14.pdf)

## **Alternative and Renewable Energy Sector**

According to Renewable Energy Alaska Project (REAP), this sector provides high paying and long-term jobs today and will likely be even more important in the future, especially in rural Alaska. Clean energy, a \$250 billion industry, is one of the fastest growing in the world. Energy efficiency in Alaska is predicted to create 2,600 permanent, annual jobs for the next 30 years. Wind-diesel hybrid microgrids in remote villages require middle-skill employees that can work well with an individual's rural or subsistence lifestyle. Since 2008, the State of Alaska has invested over \$850 million in clean energy programs, including \$259 million in the Renewable Energy Fund (REF). Local workers are needed to operate and maintain

the projects that have been built through the REF. As new and more efficient ways to store and control energy are developed, there will be continued need to train the state's workforce for those jobs.

REAP is currently working on a project called "Clean Energy Vocational Training for Alaska's Future," which will bring together a network of energy education stakeholders to build a workforce development plan with strategies that will connect K-12 education with secondary and postsecondary career and technical education. In development of the plan, the status of energy-related education programs in the state will be examined, gaps will be identified, and career pathway curricula and training will be developed and implemented, including industry-recognized certifications where possible. The project is focused on the clean energy workforce and training needs of employers and residents of rural Alaska, especially the unemployed and underemployed who may live in remote Alaskan villages. For more information:

Renewable Energy Alaska Project (REAP) website - <http://alaskarenewableenergy.org/>.

## **(ii) Emerging Demand Industry Sectors and Occupations**

Emerging industry sectors and occupations in Alaska are generally connected to the state's primary economic bases and share common sets of skills and technology. State economists and analysts conduct dozens of presentations a year, many of them to industry groups with whom they discuss developing patterns and industry needs. DOLWD maintains close contact with industry sector employers to identify emerging occupations and assess possible related training needs.

Based on the in-demand occupations and the industries in which they are concentrated, the following industries indicate emerging demand:

### **Sectors**

*Health Care* - Health care is Alaska's largest and fastest growing sector, which is expected to account for 33 percent of the state's total projected employment growth by 2020. Medicaid expansion, an aging demography, and continued growth in health care will translate into new jobs and occupational needs across the state. Medicaid expansion, for example, is expected to require 4,000 new jobs. Emerging demands within the health care sector are likely and will be tracked in coordination with industry representatives.

*Mining* - Jobs in the mining industry more than doubled between 2001 and 2013 due to increases in gold mining. Between 2002 and 2011, wages grew 22 percent compared with an 8 percent growth during the same period for all private sector wages. Presently, there are eight advanced exploration projects across Alaska. The timeline from exploration to production, volatility in commodity pricing and financing, along with environmental regulations, make it difficult to predict emerging demand in terms of jobs. Mining, however, is anticipated to present a unique opportunity for new occupations.

*Alternative and Renewable Energy* - Alaska has access to renewable energy resources including biomass, hydropower, geothermal, wind, ocean, and solar power, plus unique energy needs because of its geography and climate. This industry may create as many as 2,600 permanent, annual jobs for the next 30 years.

## **(iii) Employers' Employment Needs**

### **Employability Skills**

Employers primarily need workers with a strong work ethic, the discipline to be drug-free, and employability (soft) skills including communications and problem solving, as well as interpersonal skills and adaptability. In order to bolster employability skills, employers and the state must update and revise the skill sets and standards now applied in secondary and postsecondary education. One example is current work by the Alaska Process Industry Careers Consortium (APICC) - Cross Industry Common Priority Occupations Initiative to identify and address cross-industry skills as part of a multi-industry workforce development effort.

## **Health Care in High Demand**

The other pattern that emerges from long-term industry and occupational projections is that health care workers are going to be in especially high-demand. Many of these workers will not need extensive formal education, but will require technical training and skill set development. Some health care occupations will require substantial training and formal education. Psychiatrists, dentists, pediatricians, physicians, nurses, and speech-language pathologists are a few of the in-demand occupations that require very specific training. Without some of the professional schools that other states have to train these workers, Alaska will require interstate strategies to assist employers in meeting this demand.

## **Common Skill Sets**

The 2015 draft report titled *Cross-Industry Common Priority Occupations: Opportunities for Workforce Development Collaborations*, prepared for APICC by the McDowell Group, identified five skill sets required by the construction oil and gas, mining, and maritime industries. These include:

### **Process Technology Occupations**

Process technology occupations require skills to use and control mechanical, physical, or chemical processes to produce a final product. These well-paying jobs require an understanding of how to operate and troubleshoot various types of equipment typically by using advanced instrumentation and controls, in order to process materials in a mill, lab, or other facility. Key industry sectors in need of process technology workers include oil and gas production, chemical manufacturing, petroleum refining, mining and milling, wastewater treatment, and food processing industries including seafood.

### **Heavy Equipment Operators**

Heavy equipment operators use cranes, bulldozers, front-end loaders, backhoes, graders, dredges, hoists, drills, pumps, and heavy trucks, often in challenging conditions. These jobs are in-demand in the mining, oil and gas, construction and transportation industries. Maintenance of heavy equipment is an essential task, and while generally handled by separate workers, there is significant overlap between operations and maintenance skills and knowledge. Equipment and diesel engine maintenance workers are also in high-demand in the maritime industry.

### **Engineering and Technology Jobs**

Engineering and technology jobs involve the application of empirical evidence and mathematics, as well as practical and scientific knowledge, to invent, design, build, maintain, and improve machines, structures, tools, engines, and public works processes and systems. The main branches of engineering are chemical, civil, electrical, and mechanical. Engineering and technology occupations are well paid and in high-demand in Alaska. A bachelor's degree is required for full professional level occupations, and many require post-graduate training. However, many engineering and technician level jobs require less than a four-year degree and pay good wages.

### **Building, Maintenance, Installation, and Repair Trades**

Maintenance, installation, and repair functions tend to be specific to particular trades. While there is less overlap between these occupations, specific skills are often transferable between industries. For example, carpenters, electricians, and machinists can find work in many industries, including mining, oil and gas, maritime, and construction.

### **Marine Operations**

Many marine-sector jobs involve skill sets that apply well across other industries. Alaska is one of the most challenging places in the world to conduct marine operations, which include transferring passengers and cargo; commercial fishing and processing; vessel salvage, construction and repair; and other tasks. This includes use of radar, electronic charts, Global

Positioning Systems (GPS), radio, and other electronic navigation and communication equipment, as well as trades and crafts for building, repairing, and maintaining vessels.

### **Graying Workforce**

A graying workforce has been identified as challenging across most industries. Timely replacement of workers is required to ensure adequate knowledge transfer and to prevent interruption of services or industry growth.

### **B. Workforce Analysis**

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include an analysis of the current workforce, including individuals with barriers to employment, as defined in section 3 of WIOA.\* This population must include individuals with disabilities among other groups\*\* in the State and across regions identified by the State. This includes: Individuals with barriers to employment include displaced homemakers; low-income individuals; Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians; individuals with disabilities, including youth who are individuals with disabilities; older individuals; ex-offenders; homeless individuals, or homeless children and youths; youth who are in or have aged out of the foster care system; individuals who are English language learners, individuals who have low levels of literacy, and individuals facing substantial cultural barriers; farmworkers (as defined at section 167(i) of WIOA and Training and Employment Guidance Letter No. 35-14); individuals within 2 years of exhausting lifetime eligibility under the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program; single parents (including single pregnant women); and long-term unemployed individuals.

\* Individuals with barriers to employment include displaced homemakers; low-income individuals; Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians; individuals with disabilities, including youth who are individuals with disabilities; older individuals; ex-offenders; homeless individuals, or homeless children and youths; youth who are in or have aged out of the foster care system; individuals who are English language learners, individuals who have low levels of literacy, and individuals facing substantial cultural barriers; farmworkers (as defined at section 167(i) of WIOA and Training and Employment Guidance Letter No. 35-14); individuals within 2 years of exhausting lifetime eligibility under the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program; single parents (including single pregnant women); and long-term unemployed individuals.

\*\* Veterans, unemployed workers, and youth, and others that the State may identify.

#### **i. Employment and Unemployment**

Provide an analysis of current employment and unemployment data, including labor force participation rates, and trends in the State.

#### **ii. Labor Market Trends**

Provide an analysis of key labor market trends, including across existing industries and occupations.

#### **iii. Education and Skill Levels of the Workforce**

Provide an analysis of the educational and skill levels of the workforce.

#### **iv. Skill Gaps**

Describe apparent 'skill gaps'.

## Workforce Analysis

### (i) Employment and Unemployment

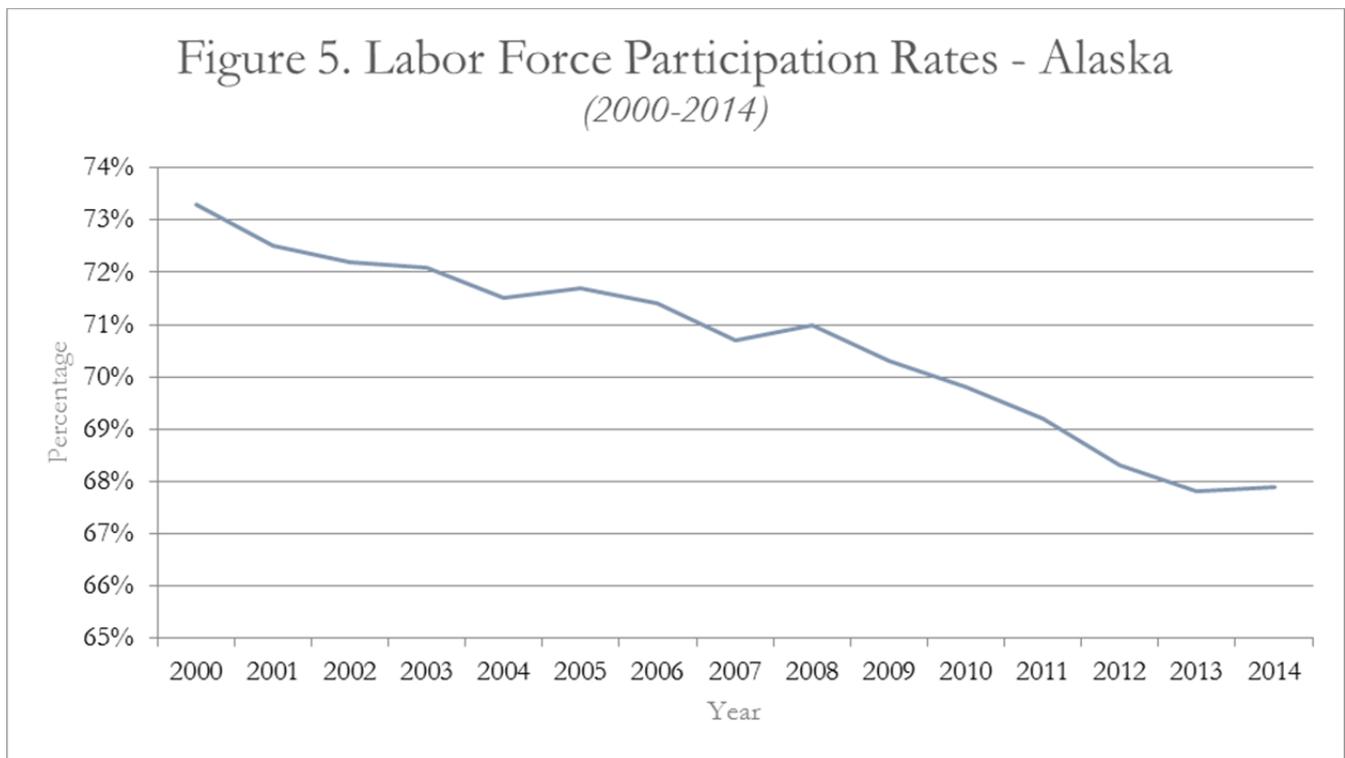
#### Labor Force Participation

At the state level, Alaska's labor force participation rates tend to be at least two percentage points higher than national rates. The main reason is the state's younger population. Because Alaska has smaller percentages of older people, who are less likely to be either working or actively seeking work, it has higher than average labor force participation rates.

The state's labor force participation rates are declining, as they are for the U.S., as a result primarily of the very large Baby Boomer population cohort — those born from 1946 to 1964 — reaching retirement age and leaving the labor force.

Although the state as a whole has labor force participation rates above the national average, parts of the state have low participation rates as a result of limited and very seasonal job opportunities. The Kusilvak Census Area, for example (formerly known as the Wade Hampton Census Area until a 2015 name change) had a labor force participation rate of just 58.2 percent over the most recent time period (2010-2014, American Community Survey).

Figure 5 illustrates the declining trend in labor force participation rates.



In 2014, Alaska's total wage and salary job count continued to grow for 25 of the last 26 years, a remarkably steady performance for a state that has earned a reputation as a boom and bust economy. The last significant downturn in the state's economy was in 1986-87. Thanks to a number of factors, the state registered only mild job losses in 2009 (-0.3 percent) in the midst of the deep national recession in which job counts fell by 5 percent. Specifically, three factors aided the state during this period: 1) a stable housing market (including a smaller percentage of sub-prime lending and relatively little speculative building); 2) fewer manufacturing jobs that were hard hit elsewhere; and 3) steady performance by the oil and gas sector, resulting in oil-related revenue that supported government operations.

## Job Growth

Job growth has been lower in recent years, though, and Alaska ranked 47<sup>th</sup> among states, in 2014, with an increase of 0.4 percent. The trend in the state’s job numbers since the early 1990s has seen less robust gains than the nation as a whole when the U.S. economy grows, and fewer losses (or even continued modest growth) when the national economy slows or recedes. The biggest job losses over the past ten years have been in the federal government sector. State and local governments are expected to retract in coming years. Construction jobs are down from ten years ago, largely due to the completion of large infrastructure projects, while all of the other major industries are up.

Due to lower oil prices and declining production, the state’s short-term future is somewhat murky. On one hand, the state has built up significant balances in its “rainy-day” accounts, including over \$50 billion in its Permanent Fund. On the other hand, Alaska faces difficult choices as it adjusts to a future in which oil tax revenue is no longer expected to sufficiently cover the cost of government. However, concurrent with this are efforts to develop and build a long-awaited natural gas pipeline, which would both stimulate the economy and create a new source of state tax revenue.

Unemployment rates in the state typically run at two percentage points higher than national rates. That relationship was reversed from 2009-2013 because of national rates rising as high as 10 percent and Alaska’s rates rising only moderately. In early 2014, the national unemployment rates dropped below Alaska’s, which had been mostly stable and holding at the mid-six percent range for much of the last three years.

## Regional Employment

Regionally, unemployment rates are one to two percentage points lower than the statewide average in Anchorage, Fairbanks, and Juneau, but significantly higher in many rural parts of the state. The labor force participation rates can be especially low in rural Alaska during winter months, when those actively seeking employment — the requirement to be counted as unemployed — face seasonal variations in jobs, and commuting is not a viable option. Figure 6 presents Unemployment Rates, Alaska and the U.S. from January 2005 to October 2015.

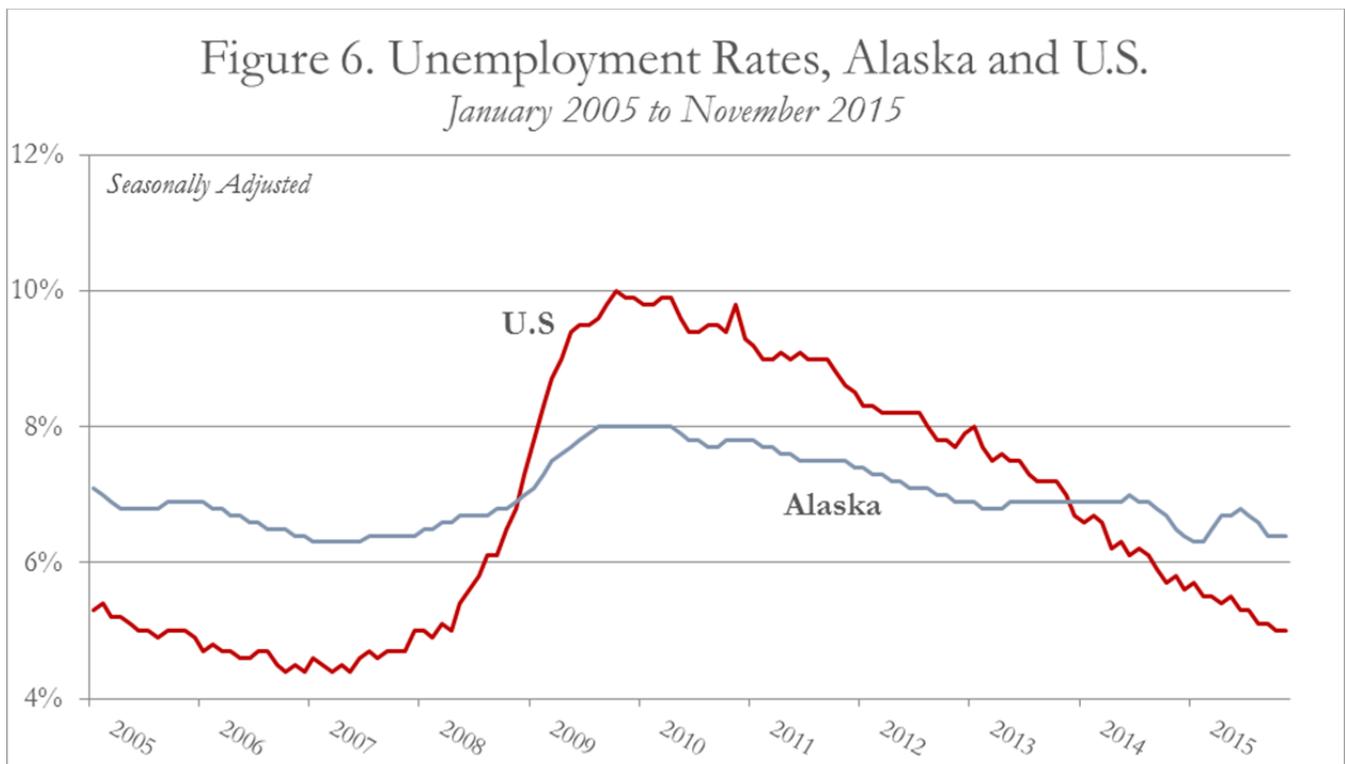
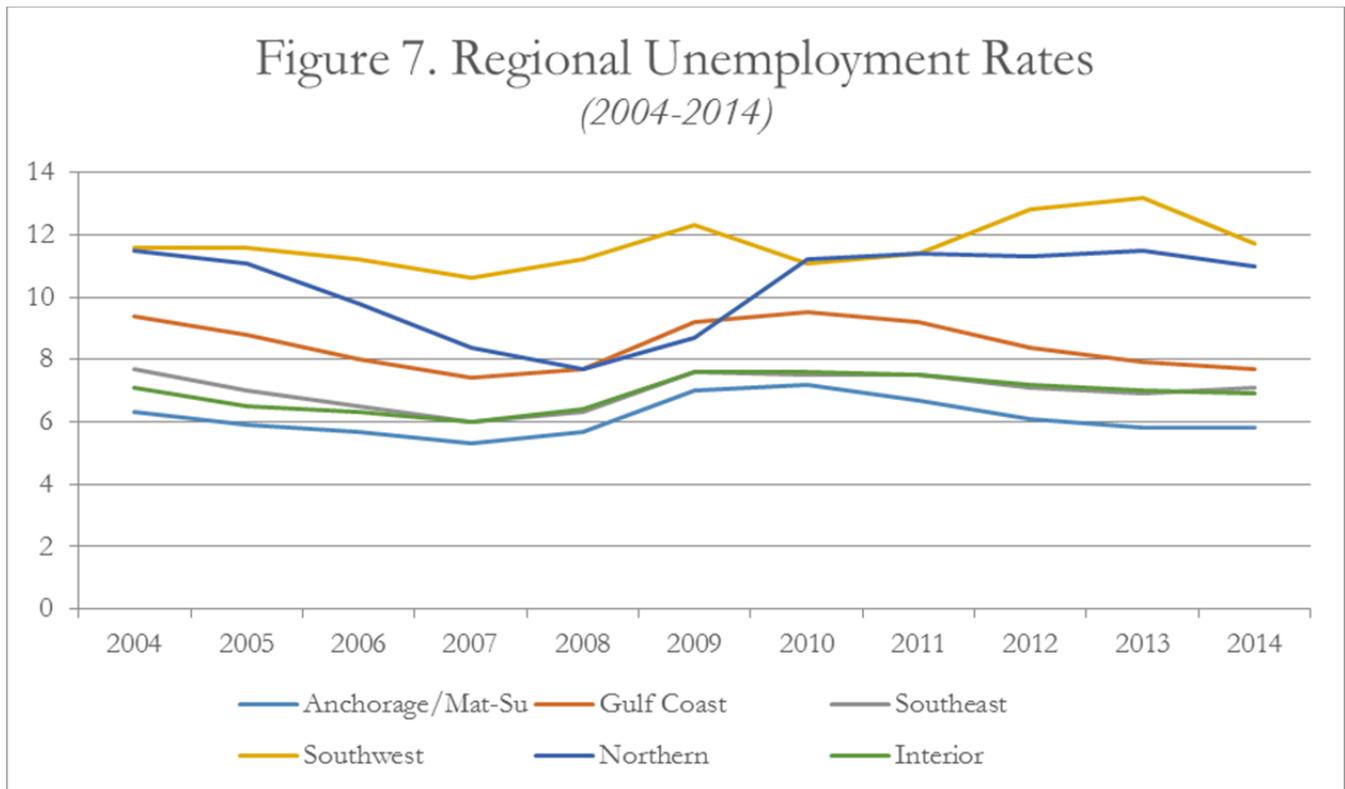


Figure 7 presents Regional Unemployment Rates from 2004-2014.



After starting the 2004-2014 period with job losses, the Gulf Coast Region has consistently generated moderate job growth, up 13 percent between 2005 and 2014. The region benefits from having a diversity of economic drivers: a large Coast Guard installation; missile defense facilities in Kodiak; strong fisheries; tourism revenue and employment; and smaller scale oil and gas employment in the Cook Inlet. The Gulf Coast is well-connected by road, water, and air transport and benefits from its proximity to Anchorage.

Within the Southeast Region, the overall job count is up by approximately 1,000 jobs over the 2004-2014 period; however, jobs have been down slightly in the last two years with budgetary pressure, and the state government sector is expected to drop further in the next several years. Tourism numbers are relatively strong, mining jobs remain stable, and maritime employment continues a trend of stable, slow growth.

Similar to the statewide pattern, the Anchorage / Mat-Su Region has demonstrated slow-to-moderate job growth over the last 10 years, with the exception of very small losses in 2009. Overall, the region’s job market was stable during the deep national recession. Mat-Su, in particular, has experienced strong population growth for more than a decade, which has helped generate construction and service jobs, with a high percentage of Mat-Su residents commuting to Anchorage for work.

The Interior Region’s job count grew from 2004 to 2006, but has fluctuated slightly and, in 2014, had gained 100 jobs over 2006 data. The region is home to Denali National Park and a handful of mines, which softened the impact of cost-cutting at the University of Alaska Fairbanks and job losses related to oil and gas support work on the North Slope oil fields. This region depends heavily on its two military installations to support the economy and, unless they are threatened, should provide stability during an expected rocky period as state government adjusts to dramatically less oil tax revenue.

In the Northern Region, job growth was strong from 2004 to 2008 as high oil prices stimulated activity in the North Slope oil fields, but growth slowed in 2009 and is down slightly in preliminary 2015 figures. With oil prices settling at low levels, oil and gas employment, and all of the activity it stimulates, are expected to fall at least moderately in the next several years. In the longer term, Alaska has significant oil, gas, and other mineral resources in the region and these jobs will continue to be the mainstay of the region's economy.

Growth has averaged about half a percent a year in the Southwest Region during the 2004-2014 period. Seafood processing jobs, though heavily seasonal, have shown strong growth during this period, jumping from an average monthly count of 4,700 jobs in 2004, to 5,600 jobs in 2014. This activity supports local employment opportunities, to some degree, in retail, health care, local government (via fishing-related tax revenues), and transportation. However, the benefit of maritime activities to the region is reduced by the high percentage of nonresidents who work seasonally.

## **(ii) Labor Market Trends**

### **Main Trends**

The most visible labor market trend over the last decade has been the strong growth in health care employment. Oil and gas and mining jobs also registered strong growth until the last few years, although they remain steady at high levels through late 2015.

Government jobs have not contributed to job growth for the state's economy since 2010. Federal government jobs have been falling for more than a decade before leveling off in 2015. State government jobs were down by more than 5 percent in late 2015. Local government jobs have been flat in recent years, though down slightly over the mid-term.

Between 2010 and 2014, the number of Alaskans 65 and older increased by more than 29 percent, the fastest growth rate for this population of any other state. Nearly all of Alaska's industry workforce plans discuss this as an emerging issue for their sectors in terms of training and recruitment needs. While the growth of Alaska's seniors and a consequent reduction in the number of experienced workers is on the radar for Alaskan employers, Alaska seniors are also choosing to remain in the workforce longer than they have in the past. The health care workforce is in the same situation but, as noted above, the aging population is also increasing service provision demands within that industry. The combination of these two factors amplifies the training, recruitment, and retention needs of all of Alaska's industries, especially health care, to address labor demand.

## **(iii) Education and Skill Levels of the Workforce**

### **High School Graduation Rate**

Ninety-two percent of Alaska's population have a high school diploma, or higher, according to the American Community Survey, compared to 86 percent for the nation. Alaska's high graduation rate shows that the state's youth have an education foundation to meet many new and replacement jobs, allowing workforce developers to concentrate on priority in-demand occupations where education and training gaps exist.

### **Alaska Natives**

Alaska Natives, a WIOA-identified targeted population, represent about 14 percent of the state's population. Of the state's more than 100,000 Alaska Natives, nearly half live in eight rural boroughs and census areas where Natives make up more than 50 percent of the population. Some of these areas have the highest unemployment rates in the state. Eighty-one percent of Alaska Natives age 25 and up have a high school diploma or equivalent, compared to 92 percent for Alaska's total population age 25 and up; and only eight percent of Alaska Natives age 25 or more have a bachelor's degree or more, compared to 28 percent for Alaska's total population in that same age range. At 23 percent, the poverty rate among Alaska

Natives is over twice the state average of 10 percent. Geographic, cultural, and economic barriers hinder access to training, education, and employment for many Alaska Natives.

### Immigrants

More than 7 percent (over 50,000) of Alaska’s population is foreign-born, coming to the state as immigrants, asylum seekers, or refugees looking for a new start. Fifty-five percent of immigrants were born in Asia, with the Philippines by far the largest country of birth for immigrants in Alaska. Over half (55 percent) of Alaska’s foreign-born population lives in Anchorage, which is home to about 41 percent of the state’s population.

Significant barriers to success for this population include learning English and receiving recognition for the education they may have received in their home country. Four out of five immigrants in Alaska have at least a high school diploma, in contrast to 69 percent nationwide, and slightly more than half of Alaskan immigrants attended college. Twenty-four percent have college degrees compared to 28 percent nationally. In terms of English language proficiency, about four out of five immigrants over the age of five speak a language other than English at home, which represents more than 40,000 people statewide. Of this group, about 60 percent speak an Asian or Pacific Island language and around 18 percent speak Spanish.

### High School and Postsecondary Degrees

Of Alaska’s 18-24 year olds, 18 percent are not high school graduates, compared to 16 percent nationwide. For the state’s 25 and over population, Alaska has a higher percentage of people with some college, but no degree (29 percent) than the nation (21 percent). Eighteen percent of both Alaska and the U.S. population have bachelor’s degrees and Alaska has a slightly smaller percentage with graduate or professional degrees, at 10 percent versus 11 percent nationally.

See the following figures: Figure 8 - Percent of Population with High School Degree; Figure 9 - Percent of Population with Some College but no Degree; and Figure 10 - Percent of Population with a Bachelor’s Degree.

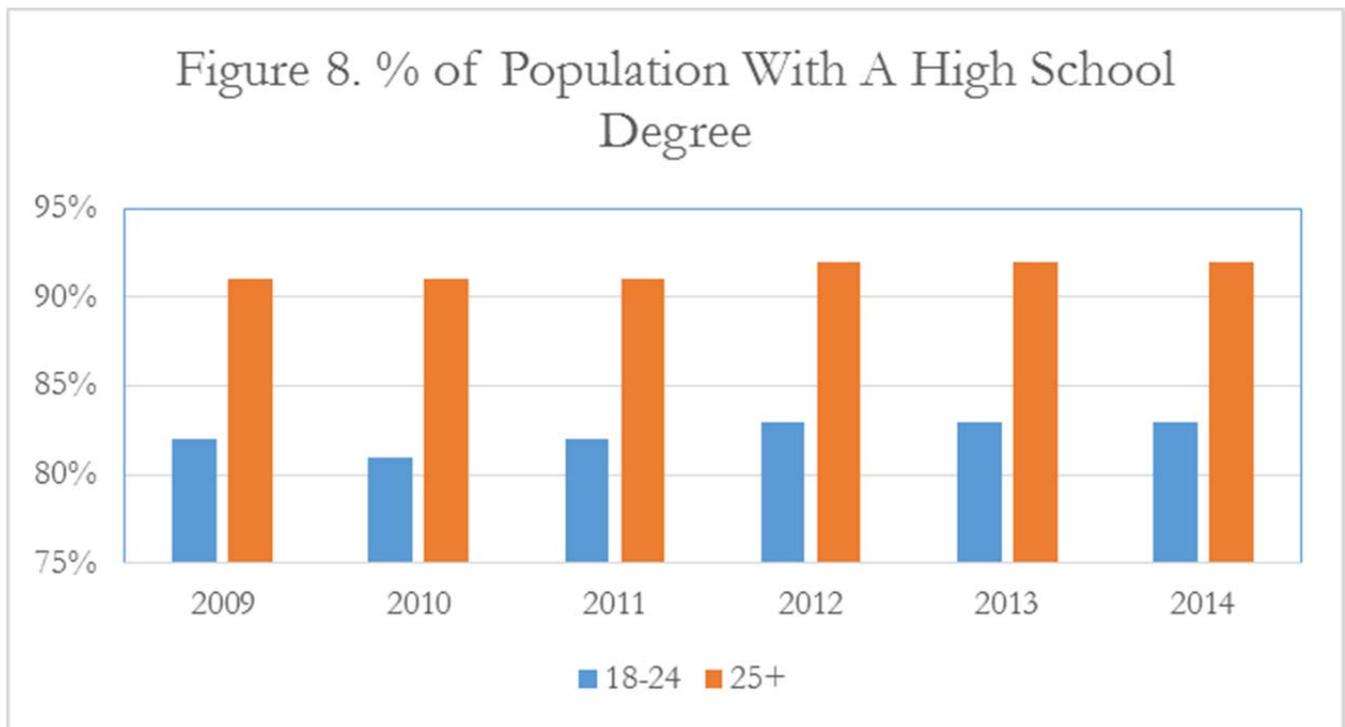


Figure 9. % of Population With College But No Degree

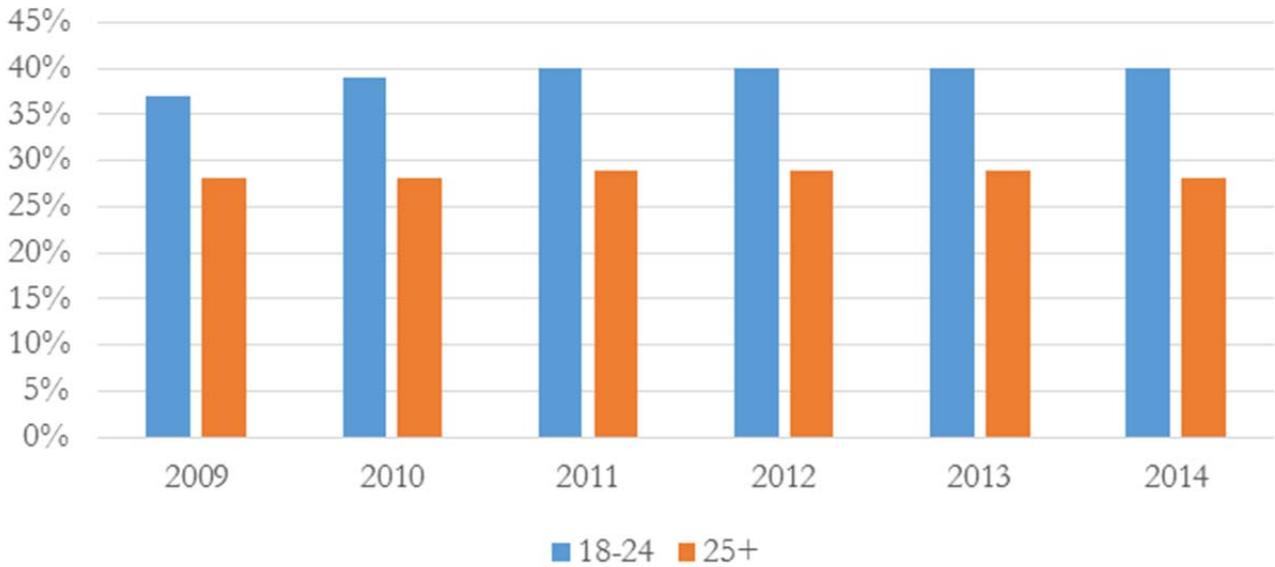
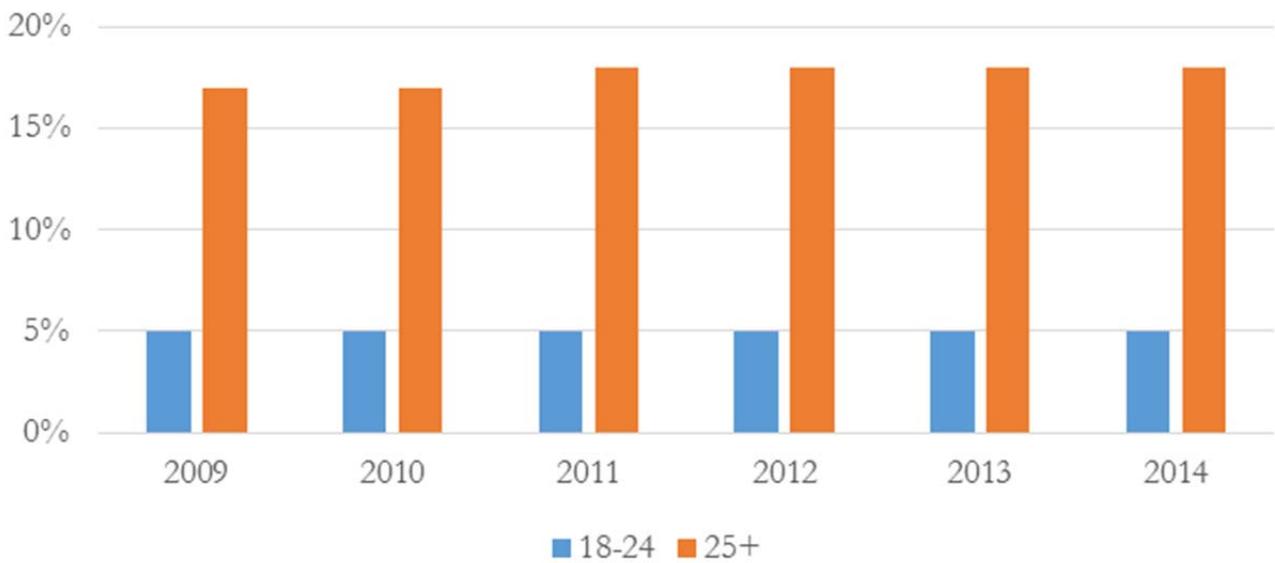


Figure 10. % of Population with Bachelor's Degree by Year



The percent of the population with a graduate or professional degree has held steady at ten percent from 2009 to 2014. Data are only collected for those 25 years and older.

The lower-than-average percentage of 18-to-24 year olds in Alaska who are high school graduates suggests a skill/education gap. According to the *2010 Alaska Career and Technical Education Plan*, every year approximately 8,000 Alaskan students graduate from high school. Several thousand more exit school without securing a high school diploma. Of the graduates, less than half transition into college and only 18.5 percent will still be in school by age 19. Alaska ranks fifth in the nation for teens not in school and not working.

#### **(iv) Skill Gaps**

##### **Alaska's Data Sets**

Alaska has two unique data sets that assess where employers are having difficulty finding the workers they need for the state's labor market. First, Alaska can identify residents and nonresidents working in the state thanks to the Permanent Fund Dividend program, which distributes a share of oil-related investment earnings to Alaskans each year. Alaskans who have lived in the state for the previous full calendar year are eligible, and nearly all who are eligible apply. Secondly, Alaska has long been the only state that requires employers to report the occupations of their workers as part of mandatory unemployment insurance reporting. The detailed, reported occupational data from employers and the information on the residency of individual workers allows Alaska to produce a report each year showing the industries and occupations with the highest percent of nonresident hires. The reliance on nonresident workers in priority industries and in-demand occupations indicates a skill gap.

##### **Nonresident Employment**

The largest driver of nonresident employment in Alaska is seasonal work. In 2014, there were 422,516 total workers employed in Alaska. Of these, 87,888 (20.8 percent) were "nonresident workers" based upon the criteria for eligibility to receive an Alaska Permanent Fund Dividend, illustrating Alaska's historical dependence upon out-of-state workers to fill job openings. Those workers primarily filled seafood processing and tourism positions that are very difficult to fill with residents during the busy summer. For example, in 2014, seafood processing employed 17,792 nonresident workers and 6,165 residents. These jobs pay well but are short-term.

Nonresident worker percentages were also high in the trade, transportation, utilities, and leisure/hospitality industries. The nonresident workforce for these industries accounted for more than half, or 54.3 percent, of all nonresident workers in 2014. Other industries with high percentages of nonresidents include oil and gas, construction, metal mining, and other visitor-related industries. These industries generally have one or more of the following characteristics: high seasonal variation, a need for workers with specialized skills, or work sites in remote locations.

The health care industry was one of the largest in Alaska in 2014 and has grown considerably over the last decade. Some rapidly expanding industries have hired more nonresidents, but there is little evidence of this in health care. Despite a 29.5 percent increase in the number of health care workers in Alaska over the last 10 years, reaching 38,444 in 2014, the percentage of nonresident workers has remained largely consistent. Oil industry jobs are Alaska's top paying jobs, 2.8 times higher than average. In 2014, the nonresident workforce held 35 percent of industry jobs and earned 32.1 percent of total wages in the industry.

Figure 11 shows the thirteen-year trend of resident to nonresident workers employed in Alaska.

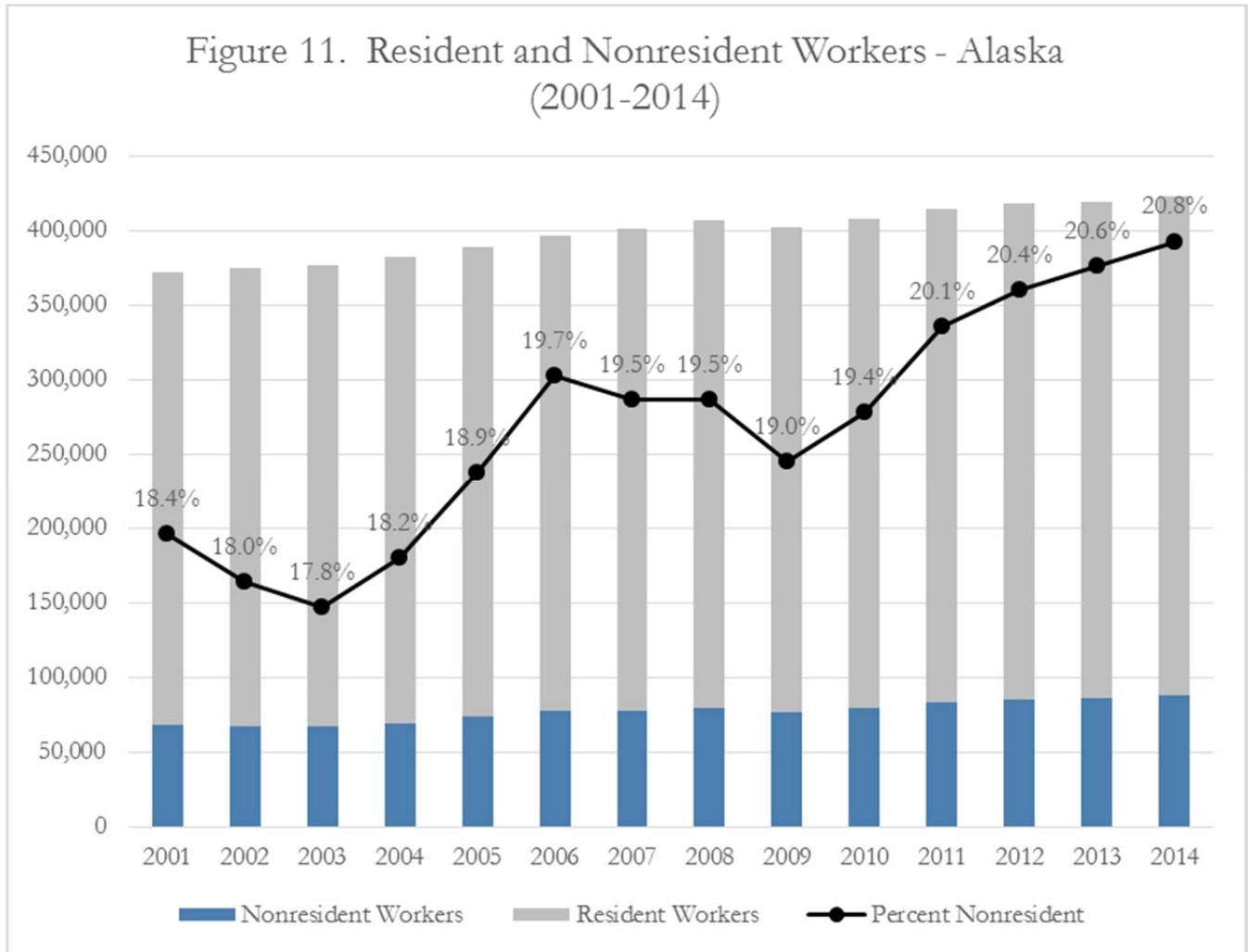
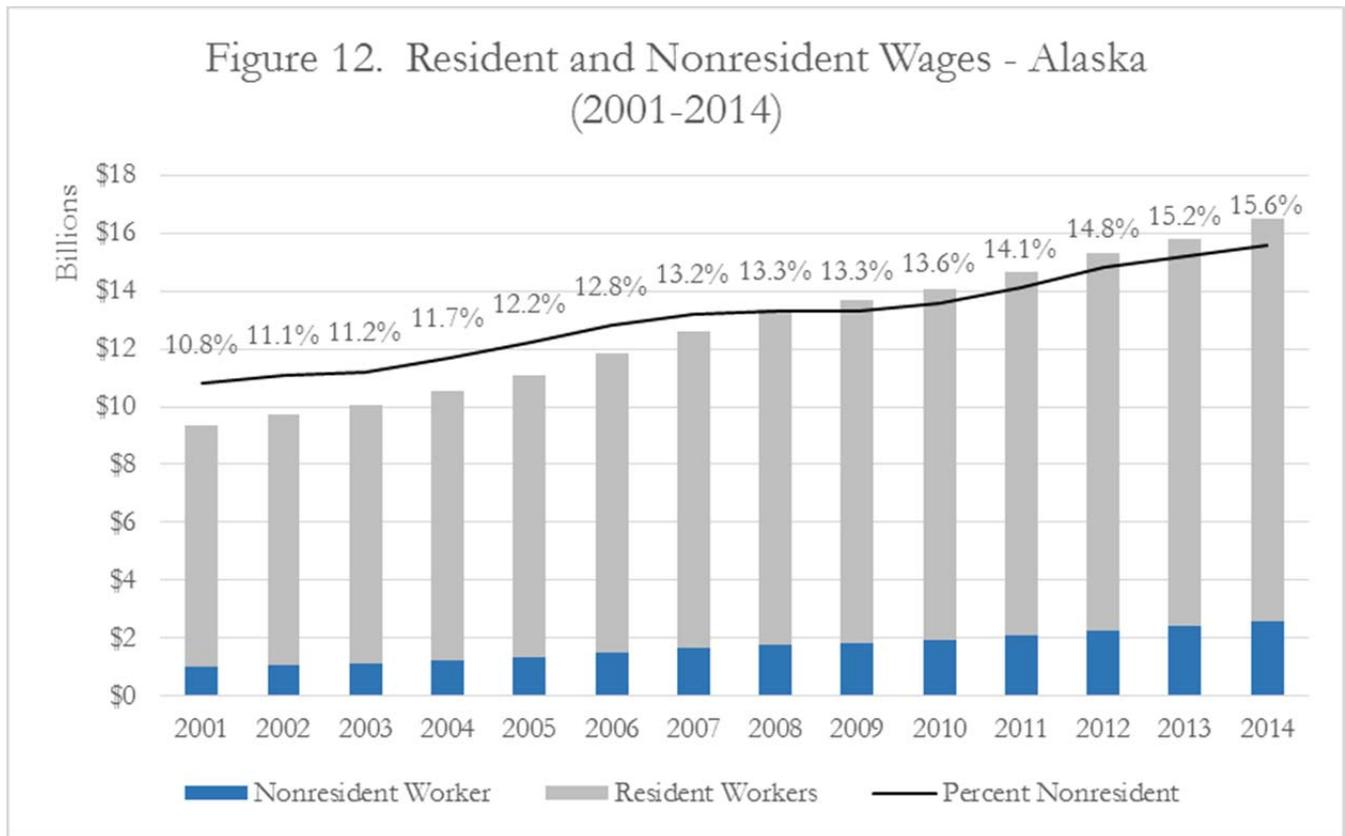


Figure 12 shows the wages for residents and nonresidents during that same time. As the chart illustrates, in 2014, the Alaska workforce earned \$16.5 billion. Resident workers earned \$13.9 billion (84.4 percent of total earnings) and nonresidents earned \$2.6 billion, or 15.6 percent of total payroll.



Looking at Alaska’s economic regions gives another view to understand the impact of resident and nonresident workers in terms of jobs and earnings and where seasonal employment is a large factor. Alaska’s Northern Region provides thousands of high paying jobs and good careers in Alaska’s vital industries such as oil, gas, and mining, where about one-third of the workforce is nonresident. In the less populated Interior and Western Regions, there are fewer jobs; outside of Fairbanks and rural hub communities, resident employment trends higher. The Denali Borough has higher rates of nonresident employment due to the tourism jobs associated with Denali National Park. The Southwest, South Central, and Southeast Regions’ economies are based on maritime, seafood harvesting and processing, and tourism jobs, and are more reliant on a migrating workforce coming to Alaska to fill seasonal jobs.

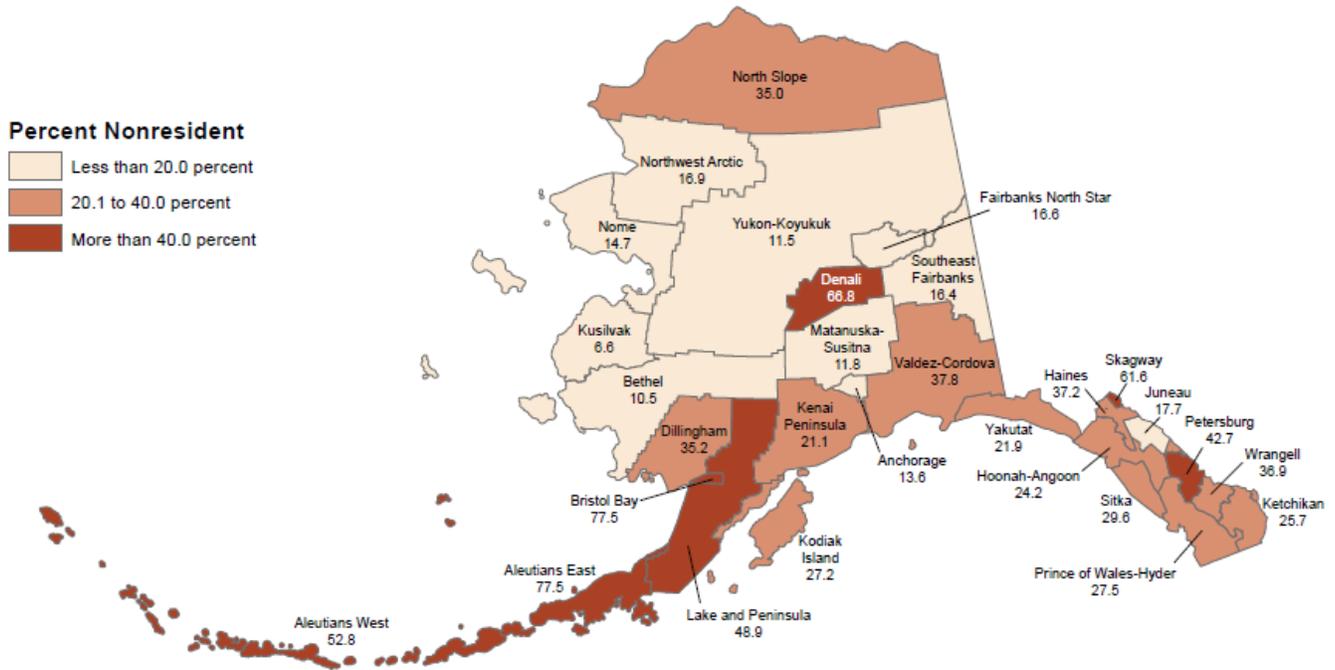
**Skills Gap - Industry-Based and Geographic**

The skills gap is evident in industries where there will be high labor demand and where there are high numbers of nonresidents employed. The skills gap is geographic as well. The in-demand occupation jobs in health care, mining, construction, transportation, and energy efficiency are distributed across the six economic and workforce regions. The rural skills gap is a critical challenge because much of Alaska’s commerce is based on the resources extracted from rural regions (oil, gas, seafood, minerals). Today a high percentage of those good paying in-region career jobs are filled by nonresidents.

Figure 13 shows the percentage of nonresident workers in various areas across the state.

### Nonresident Workers by Place of Work

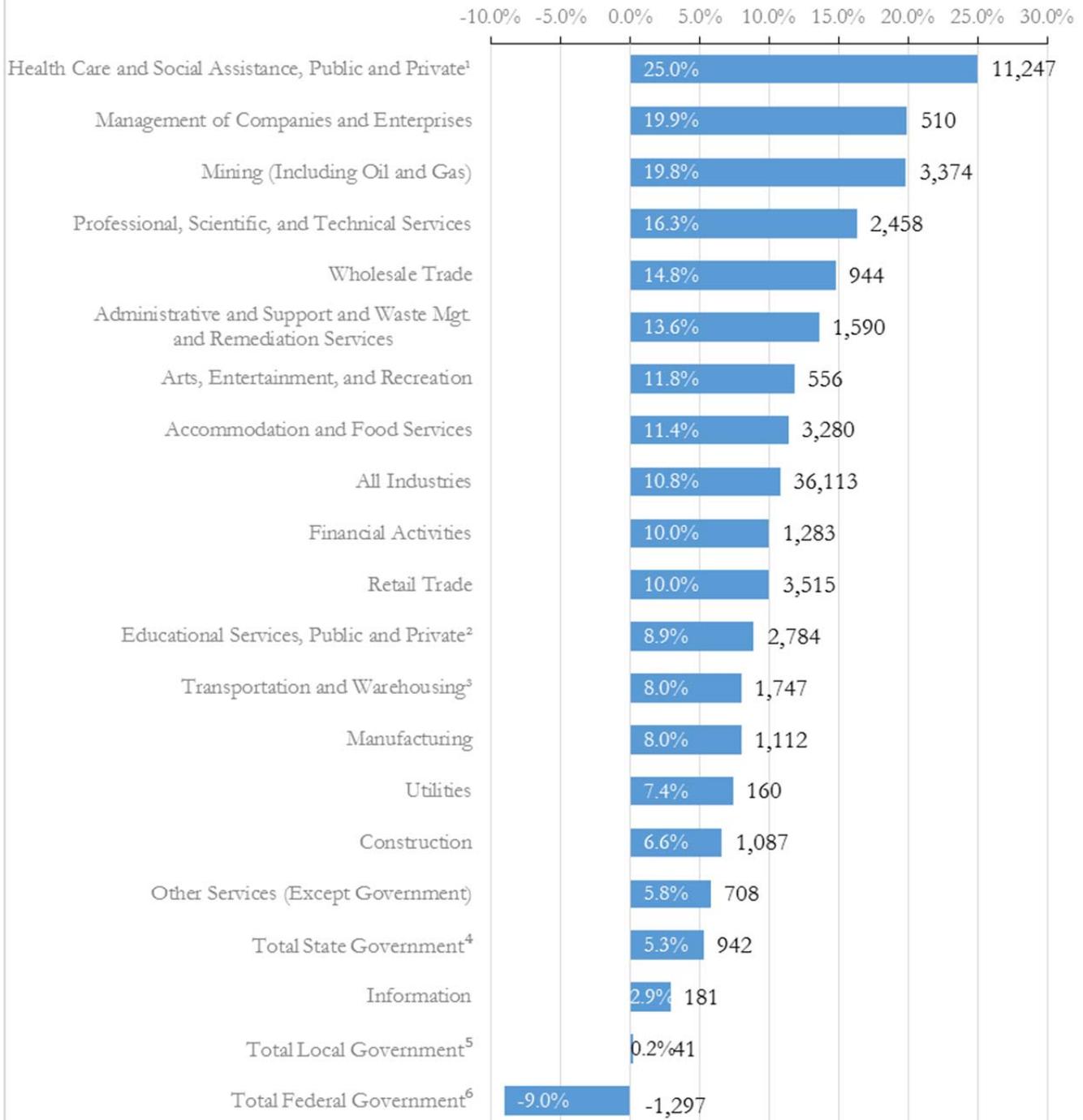
Alaska, 2014



Source: Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Research and Analysis Section

Figure 14. Alaska Industry Projections - Industry Growth by Percentage Change (2012-2022) - illustrates expected job growth by industry over the next several years in terms of the estimated number of new jobs by industry and percentage of growth.

Figure 14. Alaska Industry Projections -  
Industry Growth by Percentage Change (2012-2022)



Footnotes:

1/ Includes public sector hospital employment

2/ Includes both local and state government educational service employment

3/ Includes U.S. Postal Service employment

4/ Excludes university, railroad and hospital employment

5/ Excludes public school and hospital employment

6/ Excludes uniformed military, postal service

■ Percent Change

## **2. Workforce Development, Education and Training Activities Analysis**

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include an analysis of the workforce development activities, including education and training in the State, to address the education and skill needs of the workforce, as identified in *Education and Skill Levels of the Workforce* above, and the employment needs of employers, as identified in *Employers' Employment Needs* above. This must include an analysis of –

### **A. The State's Workforce Development Activities**

Provide an analysis of the State's workforce development activities, including education and training activities of the core programs, Combined State Plan partner programs included in this plan, and required and optional one-stop delivery system partners.\*

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\* Required one-stop partners: In addition to the core programs, the following partner programs are required to provide access through the one-stops: Career and Technical Education (Perkins), Community Services Block Grant, Indian and Native American programs, HUD Employment and Training programs, Job Corps, Local Veterans' Employment Representatives and Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program, National Farmworker Jobs program, Senior Community Service Employment program, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) (unless the Governor determines TANF will not be a required partner), Trade Adjustment Assistance programs, Unemployment Compensation programs, and YouthBuild.

## **Workforce Development, Education and Training Activities Analysis**

### **Alaska's Workforce Development Activities**

#### **Core and Partner Programs**

All core and partner programs, including One-Stop partners (see Appendix 2.2), focus on the target populations under the new federal workforce legislation, WIOA. These target populations include individuals with barriers to employment; displaced homemakers; low-income individuals; Alaska Natives, American Indians, and Native Hawaiians; youth and adults with disabilities, older individuals; ex-offenders; homeless individuals; youth who are in or who have aged out of the foster care system; individuals who are English language learners or who have low levels of literacy; individuals facing substantial cultural barriers; farmworkers; individuals within two years of exhausting lifetime eligibility under the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program; single parents (including single pregnant women); and long-term unemployed individuals. Alaska's refugee, asylum seeker, and immigrant youth and adult population may be included in several of these categories. Additionally, Alaska targets veterans and transitioning military as key populations for services.

#### **Alaska Natives**

In contrast to the Workforce Investment Act (WIA), the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) includes Alaska Natives as a specific targeted population. The Department of Labor and Workforce Development (DOLWD) will work with Alaska Native organizations to ensure adequate and appropriate attention to cultural and geographic barriers to workforce development in the Alaska Native population, including culturally appropriate services to the Alaska Native elderly population.

## **Alaska Workforce Investment Board**

Alaska's federal and state workforce programs are guided by the Alaska Workforce Investment Board (AWIB) in collaboration with the Administration and the State Legislature. That guidance is based upon input from the wide range of public and private entities engaged in educating and training the workforce, along with research from a variety of sources including DOLWD's Research and Analysis Section and the University of Alaska's Institute of Social and Economic Research (ISER). The AWIB has adopted priority industry sector workforce plans for maritime, health care, mining, renewable energy and energy efficiency, oil and gas, construction, and transportation. New industry workforce plans for Information Technology and Education are in the planning stages. All industry sector plans will be built with sector partners and updated to focus on strategies to meet future demand for priority occupations. Priority occupation analysis will inform the public workforce system statewide and regionally to concentrate on in-demand occupations. Labor market information, economic information, and direct involvement of industry employers and sector associations help identify career pathways and employment needs and opportunities.

DOLWD is the state's lead workforce agency charged with implementing the WIOA State Plan. Under Alaska Governor Bill Walker's Administrative Order 275, the DOLWD consolidated separate employment security and workforce development components into one Division of Employment and Training Services (DETS). The new division receives and disburses most of Alaska's public workforce development resources. Resources are used to serve individual customers through Alaska's Job Centers (AJCs) and serve larger cohorts of trainees through grants. The new focus on serving priority WIOA populations and moving residents to good jobs with career opportunities in high-demand occupations will be challenged by current and expected reduced state support for government operations and capital expenditures, alongside the significant downturn in the price and Alaska's production of oil.

The AWIB has been moved into the Office of the Commissioner under the consolidation of workforce agencies in DOLWD. With this move, the AWIB is better positioned to provide the oversight, guidance, assessment, and improvements to build and sustain workforce partnerships in each economic region. The AWIB will ensure regional workforce planning is tied to each region's economic and labor market needs.

### **Title I - Adult and Dislocated Worker and Youth Programs - Job Training**

The Title I programs provide an array of career services, supportive services, and training needed to encourage self-sufficiency. The services are provided by Career Support and Training Services (CSTS) case managers located in Alaska Job Centers (AJCs). The CSTS case managers work with participants and employment service partners to develop training plans for WIOA-eligible individuals and provide Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) to pay tuition-based job training activities. Individuals who have been assessed and need supportive services while attending training are provided with allowed services under WIOA. Participants may be concurrently enrolled in other federal or state programs such as Alaska's Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) or vocational rehabilitation, for example. Post-training job placement and follow-up career pathway assistance is also provided for eligible participants through WIOA. Specific services include:

*Career Services* - Basic services such as labor market information, job listings, partner program listings, and individualized services such as comprehensive and specialized assessments, development of individual training plans, counseling, career planning, and workforce preparation activities. These services are provided to assist individuals in obtaining or retaining employment.

*Training Services* - Includes occupational skills training, work-based training such as apprenticeships, on-the-job training (OJT), incumbent worker training, and customized training. Training services are available for individuals who are unlikely or unable to obtain or retain employment that leads to self-sufficiency.

*Supportive Services* - Includes participant support for transportation, dependent care, housing, food, and legal aid to reduce barriers to employment. Supportive services are available to participants who are in career or training services.

These WIOA programs focus on providing individuals the career guidance, employment skills, and vocational technical training intended to lead rapidly to employment or re-employment. This includes work-based learning programs where skills are learned through career and technical education, on-the-job training, internships, pre-apprenticeship, and apprenticeship methods of training. Alaska will expand the use of Registered Apprenticeships in Alaska to help employers get the ready-for-work employees they need in high-demand entry-level jobs and give residents more opportunities to earn while they learn by following a career path to Alaska's highest paying occupations in every region.

Alaska has recently been awarded grants from the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) that will complement and boost workforce development efforts. The first is a USDOL Employment and Training Administration (ETA) Sector Partnership - National Emergency Grant (SP-NEG) that provides \$2.9 million to promote workforce planning with industry partners and development of career education and training paths for students and adults in high-demand jobs in the state's economic regions. The two-year project will provide support for industry sector partners to coordinate efforts by employers, educators, trainers, and agencies to attract, educate, and train residents for employment. The SP-NEG will serve dislocated workers, the long-term unemployed, and veterans and transitioning service members. The project's priority industries are health care, maritime, construction, oil and gas, and mining. Key strategies include development of new pre-apprenticeship training programs for in-demand occupations and expanding Registered Apprenticeship with industry employers.

DOLWD has also been awarded a USDOL American Apprenticeship Initiative grant of \$2.9 million to increase the number of Registered Apprentices in Alaska's health care industry. This five-year project will add an estimated 450 Registered Apprentices to the workforce. The project will significantly increase career awareness, strengthen existing career pathways, introduce new career pathways, and significantly help employers fill entry-level positions in high-demand health care sector occupations.

DOLWD recently received a Disability Employment Initiative (DEI) - Round VI grant entitled "Alaska Youth Works" to serve youth with disabilities. This project will build a cohesive system with multiple partners to meet the needs of Alaska's youth with disabilities, aged 14 to 24, by expanding access to employment and career pathways to prepare for in-demand careers. The Alaska Youth Works project will offer a multifaceted approach, building on existing systems and services, by creating a bridge framework to provide for coordination, resource leveraging, and blending and braiding of funds to increase access to career pathway programs and lead to self-sustaining employment.

## **Title II - Adult Basic Education**

The Adult Basic Education (ABE) program serves adults without a high school diploma, those with math and reading skills below the 12<sup>th</sup> grade level, or those who are learning English as a second language. The ABE program prepares adults to transition into the labor market or higher academic and vocational training. The desired outcome of all ABE program activities is for adult learners to reach a higher level of self-sufficiency as individuals, community members, and employees.

## **Title III - Wagner-Peyser/One-Stop**

The One-Stop delivery system collaborates with partners to create a seamless system of service delivery that enhances access to services and improves long-term employment outcomes for individuals receiving assistance. The Employment and Training Services program is the foundation of the One-Stop delivery system in Alaska, providing universal access to labor exchange career services and training services. The goal of universal access is the provision of services to assist workers, job seekers, and employers under one roof from easy-to-find locations. The delivery points for the employment and training services are within the 17 AJCs located throughout the state. As part of the One-Stop service delivery system, the Employment and Training Services provides a variety of employment-related labor exchange services including job search assistance, job referral, job placement assistance for job seekers, re-employment services to unemployment insurance claimants, and recruitment services for employers with job openings. Services are delivered in one of three modes, including self-service, facilitated self-help services, and staff-assisted services. Depending on the needs of the labor market, additional services may be available such as job seeker assessment of skill levels and abilities, aptitude testing, career guidance, job seeking workshops, and referral for training services.

Apprenticeship specialists in the AJCs provide information to employers on sponsoring an apprenticeship program. Registered Apprenticeships allow employers to establish the standards of proficiency while developing a local and loyal workforce. Any business that requires skilled employees can benefit from this program.

DOLWD's efforts in providing prisoner re-entry services have proven successful for prisoners in transitioning back into communities by partnering with the Department of Corrections (DOC) to coordinate and develop job placement assistance and services for these returning citizens.

Services offered to employers, in addition to referral of job seekers to available job openings, include:

- Assistance in development of job order requirements;
- Matching job seeker experience with job requirements, skills, and other attributes;
- Assisting employers with special recruitment needs;
- Coordinating job fairs;
- Analyzing hard-to-fill job orders for employers;
- Helping employers minimize or avoid layoffs and business closures;
- Establishing USDOL Registered Apprenticeship programs.
- See Appendix 2.2. Mandatory and Optional One-Stop Delivery System Partners.

#### **Title IV - Vocational Rehabilitation**

Vocational rehabilitation services are provided through the Alaska Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR). DVR provides vocational rehabilitation services to individuals with disabilities who, because of their disability/ies, have difficulty obtaining or maintaining employment. Disabilities that result in an impediment to employment could include psychiatric, physical, and orthopedic disabilities, as well as cognitive, auditory, and visual impairment.

DVR provides the services necessary to achieve competitive, integrated employment, such as guidance and counseling, assessment, vocational and other training, transportation, diagnosis and treatment, on-the-job training, job-related services, customized employment, and supported employment. DVR also provides students who have disabilities with pre-employment transitional services. Through the process of informed choice and comprehensive assessment, consumers, jointly with their Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) counselors, create an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) to determine the services needed to achieve their vocational goals. Services identified in the IPE are individualized based on strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice.

DVR delivers services throughout the state through five regional offices in large, urban areas (two in Anchorage and one each in Fairbanks, the Mat-Su Valley, and Juneau) and five satellite offices in smaller or rural areas (Eagle River, Kenai, Kodiak, Sitka, and Ketchikan). Additionally, DVR has identified five rural hubs in which assigned VR counselors travel two to three times per year (Bethel, Nome, Kotzebue, Barrow, and Dillingham). DVR partners with the Tribal Vocational Rehabilitation (TVR) programs, as well as local Alaska Job Centers (AJCs) and schools located in these rural hubs.

#### **Alaska Native Organizations and Alaska Native WIOA Grantees**

There are twelve Alaska Native Regional non-profit organizations recognized under WIOA who are partners in the workforce system. Alaska Native Regional Employment and Training entities receive funding under WIOA to provide services, in tandem with state WIOA resources, to specifically serve Alaska's Native and American Indian people. These regional Alaska Native non-profits, formed under the federal Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) of 1971, are a vital component of Alaska's state and regional workforce development systems. Alaska Native organizations help ensure adequate representation in workforce development planning and in delivery of culturally and regionally responsive services to Alaska Natives and American Indians, particularly for Youth and Elders. They have unique relationships with Alaska's

largest economic drivers, Alaska Native Corporations, and businesses offering good paying jobs and careers in Alaska and across the nation. The Regional Non-Profits operate American Indian Vocational Rehabilitation Services (AIVRS) programs funded by the federal Department of Education, Rehabilitation Services Administration. They fill a gap when state DVR service providers are unable to directly serve eligible clients in rural communities and villages.

### **Trade Adjustment Assistance**

The Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) program provides re-employment services for workers who are laid off because of foreign competition or outsourcing. Workers who are eligible for TAA benefits in Alaska primarily work in the petroleum, timber, or fishing industries. Services provided to eligible participants include employment services, career development, case management, relocation assistance, trade adjustment assistance, and occupational training. The University of Alaska has received and managed four USDOL TAA-funded projects serving workers impacted by foreign competition and outsourcing over the past decade and is actively engaged in economic development and career training to provide good jobs and new careers for those affected by foreign trade.

### **Senior Community Service Employment Program**

The Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) is administered by DOLWD and serves unemployed, low-income persons who are at least 55 years of age and have a family income of no more than 125 percent of the federal poverty level. Enrollment priority is given to veterans and qualified spouses, then to individuals who are over 65, have a disability, low literacy skills or limited English proficiency, and who reside in a rural area, are homeless or at risk of homelessness, have low employment prospects, or have failed to find employment after using services through the Alaska Job Centers (AJCs). The program assists them in developing skills and experience to facilitate their transition to unsubsidized employment. SCSEP is known in Alaska as Mature Alaskans Seeking Skills Training (MASST) and is a component of the Division of Employment and Training Services. Its long-term strategy is to ensure that Alaska's job opportunities are available to older workers and that the program continues to reach out to workforce development partners, the business community, and senior service partners providing successful outcomes for seniors and Alaskan businesses alike. SCSEP fosters individual economic self-sufficiency and promotes useful part-time opportunities in community service assignments.

SCSEP is a required One-Stop partner under WIOA and, as such, it is part of the Alaska Job Center Network. When acting in their WIOA partner capacity, SCSEP grantees and sub-recipients are required to follow all applicable rules under WIOA and its regulations. The WIOA operational requirements generally do not apply to SCSEP operations but, as required partners under WIOA, grantees are obligated to be familiar with WIOA requirements. These new regulations enable grantees and sub-recipients to better concentrate on the core missions of the SCSEP by providing community service assignments to hard-to-serve older individuals. The state intends that AJCs will provide services both to older individuals who are not eligible for the SCSEP and to those who are eligible but need the career services that the SCSEP is unable to provide.

SCSEP staff work directly with mandated partners to co-enroll participants in state training and employment programs; other needed social service programs supplement this. This ensures that SCSEP is an integrated, effective, job-driven workforce program. DOLWD continues to solidify its commitments to public/private partnerships to refine strategies and increase the responsiveness of SCSEP by providing oversight and technical assistance activities to improve program performance.

SCSEP service delivery is integrated into both the state's workforce investment system as well as the senior service system. Skilled AJC and project operator staff provide quality services to older workers, and employers have reported high satisfaction levels with SCSEP participants who have entered unsubsidized employment with them. Alaska's strategy is to continue to reach out to workforce development partners, the business community, and the senior service partners to ensure successful outcomes for older workers and Alaskan businesses.

## **USDOL Registered Apprenticeship Programs**

Alaska has a long history of employers choosing to train their workforce through federally Registered Apprenticeship programs, beginning in 1947 when the Alaska Carpenters created the first trade apprenticeship program. Apprenticeship growth in Alaska continues to increase; there are more than 60 Registered Apprenticeship programs with over 2,200 apprentices and nearly 300 program sponsors. Each year, several hundred individuals complete their apprenticeship and several hundred enter apprentice training. More than 80 percent of apprentices are in a construction craft or trade occupation. Others include nurse assistants, health care technicians, telecommunications installers and repairers, cosmetologists, avionics technicians, power plant operators, and many others.

## **State Funded Workforce Programs**

### **Alaska State Training and Employment Program (STEP)**

STEP is a job-training program funded by a diversion of 0.1 percent of employee payroll tax paid for Unemployment Insurance. STEP provides approximately \$8 million annually for competitive job training grants and services for eligible individuals at AJCs. Annually, more than 3,000 residents are served by STEP. Services include job training and occupational certificates to help individuals obtain work or remain employed, learn new skills and technologies, and meet emerging job demand opportunities. In addition, individuals served by STEP may receive support services such as transportation, temporary housing, meals, tools, or childcare services while in training.

### **Alaska Technical and Vocational Education Program (TVEP)**

TVEP is funded similarly to STEP through a diversion of the employee payroll tax contribution for Unemployment Insurance at a rate of 0.16 percent, which amounts to about \$12 million annually. TVEP is distributed through a legislative formula to the University of Alaska, the Alaska Vocational Technical Education Center (AVTEC), and several Regional Training Centers (RTCs) in all regions of the state. TVEP helps secondary and postsecondary institutions and training centers create and maintain education and training services that match the regional economic and workforce needs.

### **Alaska Construction Academy (ACA)**

The ACA has operated for ten years in Alaska. The ACA is funded by the state and operated by the Construction Education Foundation (CEF) of Alaska, formed by the Alaska Chapter of the Associated General Contractors. The ACA courses are available in several economic regions of the state: Southeast (Ketchikan and Juneau Academies), South Central (Anchorage, Mat-Su and Kenai Academies), Interior (Fairbanks Academy). Annually, more than 2,000 high school students are exposed to construction occupations and career information and receive one or more courses taught after school along the career path. In addition, over 400 adult job seekers take advantage of basic construction skills courses in carpentry, electricity, plumbing, welding, heavy equipment operations, and ironwork, as well as occupational safety certificates required for employment. The academies are similar to pre-apprentice training for students and adults with the adult focus on rapid attachment to work or entering a Registered Apprenticeship program.

## **Registered Apprenticeship**

Governor Bill Walker issued Administrative Order No. 278 on November 10, 2015, which requires that Registered Apprentices perform at least 15 percent of the labor hours on any construction project advertised for bid by the Department of Transportation and Public Facilities or the Department of Administration that is valued at \$2.5 million or more. DOLWD has hired an Apprenticeship Coordinator to work with employers and the U.S. Office of Apprenticeship to expand the number of Registered Apprenticeship (RA) programs in the state. This expansion will target health care as a focus industry for RA; however, DOLWD will work with employers in all industry sectors, utilizing industry sector workforce development plans in developing RA programs.

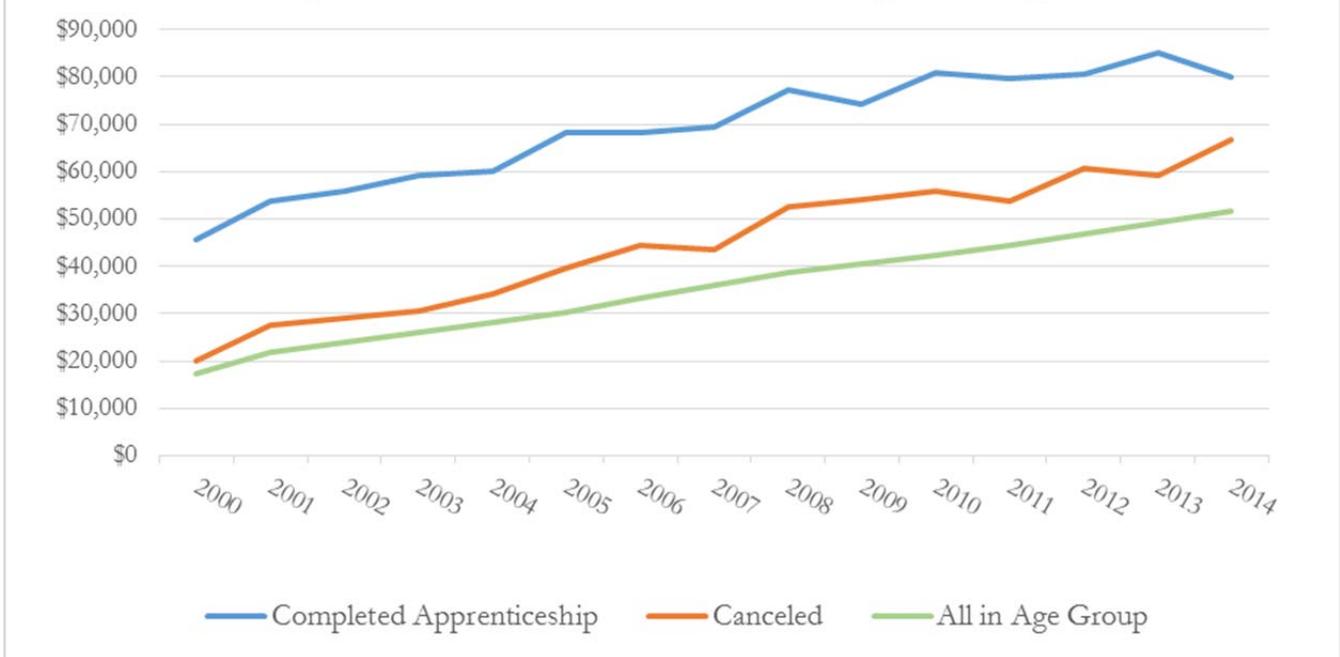
Information on apprenticeships will be included in the regular ongoing training for all AJC staff, as well as training for new staff. AJCs will each have an RA Specialist who can provide in-depth services to both job seekers and employers. The Alaska Health Workforce Coalition has recently identified targeted occupations for which RA could be appropriate, such as home health aides, medical assistants, substance abuse counselors, surgical technicians, medical lab technicians, pharmacy assistants, and physical therapy aides. The state is also establishing a Joint Health Care Training Cooperative to act as a sponsor for health care apprenticeships.

The Alaska Health Care Academy and the Alaska Construction Academy will provide quality pre-apprenticeship programs. The Construction Academies have been in existence for a decade and have become a model for high-quality pre-apprenticeship training at a variety of locations across the state. In 2016, DOLWD will pilot a new Alaska Health Care Academy offering hundreds of job seekers career awareness opportunities and basic skills training in high-demand occupations that can be learned on the job as apprentices. Health Care Academy course will be developed by AVTEC, starting with one location in Anchorage and branching out to additional locations over the next four years in conjunction with the USDOL Alaska Health Care Apprenticeship Initiative grant to expand Registered Apprenticeship in health care occupations. Public and private sector health providers are engaged and anxious to expand training through apprenticeship to fill many critical positions. The Health Care Academy and AJC activities will be linked and integrated to maximize outreach, intake, and training for WIOA target populations. The Alaska Health Care Apprenticeship Initiative is linked to Alaska's largest Alaska Native health care providers and private sector health care employers in every economic and workforce region of the state.

AVTEC will also expand its maritime offerings to provide pre-apprenticeship programs. DOLWD will work with AVTEC, the University of Alaska, and other postsecondary providers to become members of the Registered Apprenticeship College Consortium sponsored by the USDOL. The University of Alaska already offers an Associate of Applied Science in Apprenticeship Technologies Degree, for which a Registered Apprenticeship completer may earn credit towards degree completion.

Expanding the utilization of Registered Apprenticeship will have a significant impact on increased earnings by Alaskans who become apprentices. Figure 15 illustrates the earnings over the past fourteen years of individuals aged 18-34 who became Registered Apprentices in 2000, compared to those in the same age group employed in Alaska and who were not Registered Apprentices, and comparative wages for those who completed their apprentice term. On average, the apprentice who completed earned about \$80,000 in 2014. The apprentice that entered training and gained skills and work experience but did not "complete" earned about \$68,000 in 2014. The All-in-Age group non-apprentice earned an average of about \$51,000. Increasing the number of apprentices and the completion rate will have a significant impact on the local and statewide economy as well as in the lives of individuals and their families.

Figure 15. Alaska Apprentice Earnings (2000-2014)  
Compared to Others in the 18-34 Age Group



## B. The Strengths and Weaknesses of Workforce Development Activities

Provide an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the workforce development activities identified in (A) above.

### Strengths and Weaknesses of Workforce Development Activities

#### Strengths of Workforce Development Activities

##### Workforce Plans

Existing sector partners are already actively involved in workforce development for their sectors, as identified in the various industry sector workforce development plans discussed in previous sections. In addition, a robust Career and Technical Education (CTE) Plan, which provides a framework for technical training at both the secondary and postsecondary levels, was developed in 2010 with implementation led by the Departments of Education & Early Development, Labor and Workforce Development, and the University of Alaska. Used by school districts, University programs, and other postsecondary training programs, it advances a seamless system of CTE for Alaska.

##### Alaska Native Groups

Alaska Native Corporations and other Alaska Native groups and organizations are extremely important to Alaska's economy and the health and prosperity of every region. Alaska Native non-profit organizations assure adequate and appropriate attention to cultural and geographic barriers that inhibit workforce development. There are twelve regional Alaska Native Non-Profit Corporations organized under the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act recognized under Section 4(b) of the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (PL 93-638, 25 U.S.C. 450b) that provide a wide range of social,

education, and employment services. Each has unique abilities and resources to serve Alaska Natives and American Indians and drive new initiatives to overcome education and employment barriers for greater success among this population. They provide a vital connection among education, training, and employment and are most able to respond to the needs and strengths of Alaska's Native and American Indian people.

### **Other Groups**

A diversity of groups actively promote workforce and economic development, including: Business Education Compact; Alaska Native Coalition for Employment and Training (ANCET); the Construction Education Foundation; the Alaska Apprenticeship and Training Coordinators Association; Alaska Association for Career and Technical Education; the AWIB; state agencies including: the Departments of Education & Early Development, Labor and Workforce Development, and Commerce, Community, and Economic Development; the University of Alaska system; Regional Training Centers; the Alaska Postsecondary Access and Completion Network; the Alaska Process Industries Career Consortium; Alaska Native education and training providers; and the Fairbanks Pipeline Training Center Trust, among others.

### **Partnerships**

Strong partnerships and collaborations among state agencies ensure that programs or services are complementary rather than duplicated.

Alaska's Regional Development Organizations (ARDORs) contribute greater understanding of regional economic realities and bring a comprehensive economic and workforce focus for the regional communities, industries, and employers. Collaboration with ARDORs incorporates broad-ranging economic goals into specific workforce development actions that strengthen each region. ARDORs provide a vital tool for resource-leveraging, innovation, and the ability to sustain a regional workforce system.

The merger of two DOLWD divisions (Business Partnerships and Employment Security) into the Division of Employment and Training Services provides streamlined and efficient services and training for job seekers and employers.

Strong partnership with the USDOL Office of Apprenticeship in Alaska establishes and supports Registered Apprenticeship programs.

### **Weakness/Challenges of Workforce Development Activities**

#### **Geography**

Alaska's geographic size and diverse population make access to education, training, and apprenticeships a unique challenge. The state's largest cities are connected by road, but a large portion of the state is accessible only by air or water, and travel may be expensive and time-consuming. There is often the additional challenge of cultural differences for people coming from villages to urban areas. Those challenges create a unique need for distance delivery of employment and training services and, in many cases, for funds to cover travel and housing when training can only be completed in-person. To overcome geographic barriers and higher unemployment rates, DOLWD is working to develop mobile information and connections to career training to better serve persons living in rural communities, providing job seekers and employers increased access to services anytime from anywhere.

While urban areas have good access to job training, apprenticeship, colleges, and trade schools, most remote rural communities do not. The career and technical education pathways are competitive, adding more difficulty for rural residents to participate because courses fill quickly with those living locally. The cost of connecting students and job seekers to the resources and education needed to succeed are high for those in rural areas. Paying for travel and housing while in training can be a significant barrier that job seekers in an urban area do not face. This complex location of services barrier is not solved by AJC services alone. Successfully developing an engaged and qualified Alaskan-based workforce in rural

communities takes more reliance on collaboration and utilization of resources due to the challenges that exist both economically and socially in rural Alaska.

### **Technology Access and Skills**

Another skills gap, not illustrated in the graphs and charts, is in the area of computer and other technology skills. The difference in internet speed and technology capacity between urban and rural/remote communities is significant, where the cities are up to date, and the rural/remote communities lag behind. Many people living in remote communities, students, teachers, employers, and job seekers simply do not have the electronic capacity to learn skills, apply for jobs, or receive on-line services on a par with those living in the city because of the lack of technology infrastructure.

### **Employability Skills**

Many employers report a lack motivated job seekers with basic employability skills to fill community jobs. There are many causes: personal issues such as substance abuse and system issues such as the lack of local career pathway programs, and few vocational instructors and available mentors. Lack of motivation is affected by seasonality of work and rates of pay for entry-level jobs.

### **Immigrant Population**

Over 50,000 persons residing in Alaska are immigrants, refugees or asylum seekers. Many are highly educated and have knowledge and skills employers need. Foreign education and credentials may not be as valued or recognized in the United States, which results in high rates of unemployment, underemployment, and poverty among this population. Anchorage is one of the nation's most ethnically diverse communities. Limited English proficiency is a significant barrier to learning and employment. The inability to recognize foreign education degrees and occupational credentials is another significant barrier.

### **State Fiscal Considerations**

Worker layoffs are increasing and are expected to grow over the next few years due to the declining production of oil in Alaska and the significant decline in the price of oil, revenue from which has provided the bulk of the state's operating revenue. Alaska is currently experiencing a growth in dislocated worker clients due to layoffs of workers in the oil and gas industry, workers employed by contractors and vendors that support the industry, and local and state publicly-funded positions. In January 2016, Governor Walker announced a hiring freeze for state agency positions.

State budget reductions for Fiscal Year 2016, including significant cuts to state-funded career and technical education, means there are fewer staff to deliver programs and services. Reduced funding is already resulting in closing AJCs located in rural hub communities. Consolidation of space in urban centers will drive significant change away from providing employment services at fixed locations to a model that provides more information and services on-line and in conjunction with regional workforce partners such as the University of Alaska Community Campuses, Regional Training Centers, and Regional Alaska Native WIOA grantees.

### **C. State Workforce Development Capacity**

Provide an analysis of the capacity of State entities to provide the workforce development activities identified in (A) above.

## **Alaska Workforce Development Capacity**

### **Secondary Education and Training**

Alaska has 54 school districts, most of which have at least one Career and Technical Education (CTE) program. Many of these districts have articulation agreements with a University program so students may earn concurrent secondary and postsecondary credits. High school CTE programs are aligned to industry, academic, and employability standards.

### **Postsecondary Education and Training**

#### **AVTEC**

The Alaska Vocational Technical Education Center (AVTEC), located in Seward, is the state's largest campus dedicated to postsecondary vocational education, providing career and technical training for young adults. AVTEC courses offer occupational credentials, certifications, and pathways to good jobs and careers in Alaska's industries. Operated by DOLWD, AVTEC's mission is to train a diverse and effective workforce that supports the economic growth and stability of the state.

AVTEC is nationally accredited by the Council on Occupational Education and boasts an average placement rate of 90 percent for its graduates. Program offerings are based on the workforce needs of the state and include Allied Health, Culinary, Applied Technology, Energy and Building Technology, Information Technology, and a world-class Maritime program and facilities.

#### **University of Alaska**

The University of Alaska (UA) consists of three independently accredited universities located in Anchorage, Fairbanks and Juneau, with thirteen community campuses throughout the state, fulfilling the community college mission. UA enrolls approximately 35,000 full- and part-time students annually by offering close to 500 unique degree, certificate, or endorsement programs. UA's workforce development focus is aligned with the AWIB and regional priorities including the Health, Mining, Construction, Oil & Gas, Education, and Maritime industry occupations. UA rural campuses serve as regional training centers and support regional economic drivers through engagement with local industries and employers to provide timely education and training programs.

UA participates in apprenticeship programs through membership in the Registered Apprenticeship College Consortium, developing new federally Registered Apprenticeship programs, providing opportunities for apprenticeship completers with credit for prior learning, and sponsoring apprenticeships programs. The UA system works closely with the school districts to provide dual credit opportunities for career and technical education students so they may quickly attain postsecondary certificates and degrees after completing high school. UA also partners with K-12 education through the Alaska Middle College School and Alaska Native Science and Engineering Program (ANSEP).

#### **University of Alaska Anchorage (UAA)**

- UAA Community & Technical College - Anchorage
- Matanuska-Susitna College - Palmer
- Prince William Sound College - Valdez
- Kodiak College - Kodiak
- Kenai Peninsula College - Soldotna

#### University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF)

- UAF Community & Technical College - Fairbanks
- Chukchi Campus - Kotzebue
- Interior Alaska Campus - based in Fairbanks, serves rural areas in Interior Alaska
- Northwest Campus - Nome
- Kuskokwim Campus - Bethel
- Bristol Bay Campus - Dillingham

#### University of Alaska Southeast (UAS)

- UAS Juneau
- UAS Sitka Campus
- UAS Ketchikan Campus

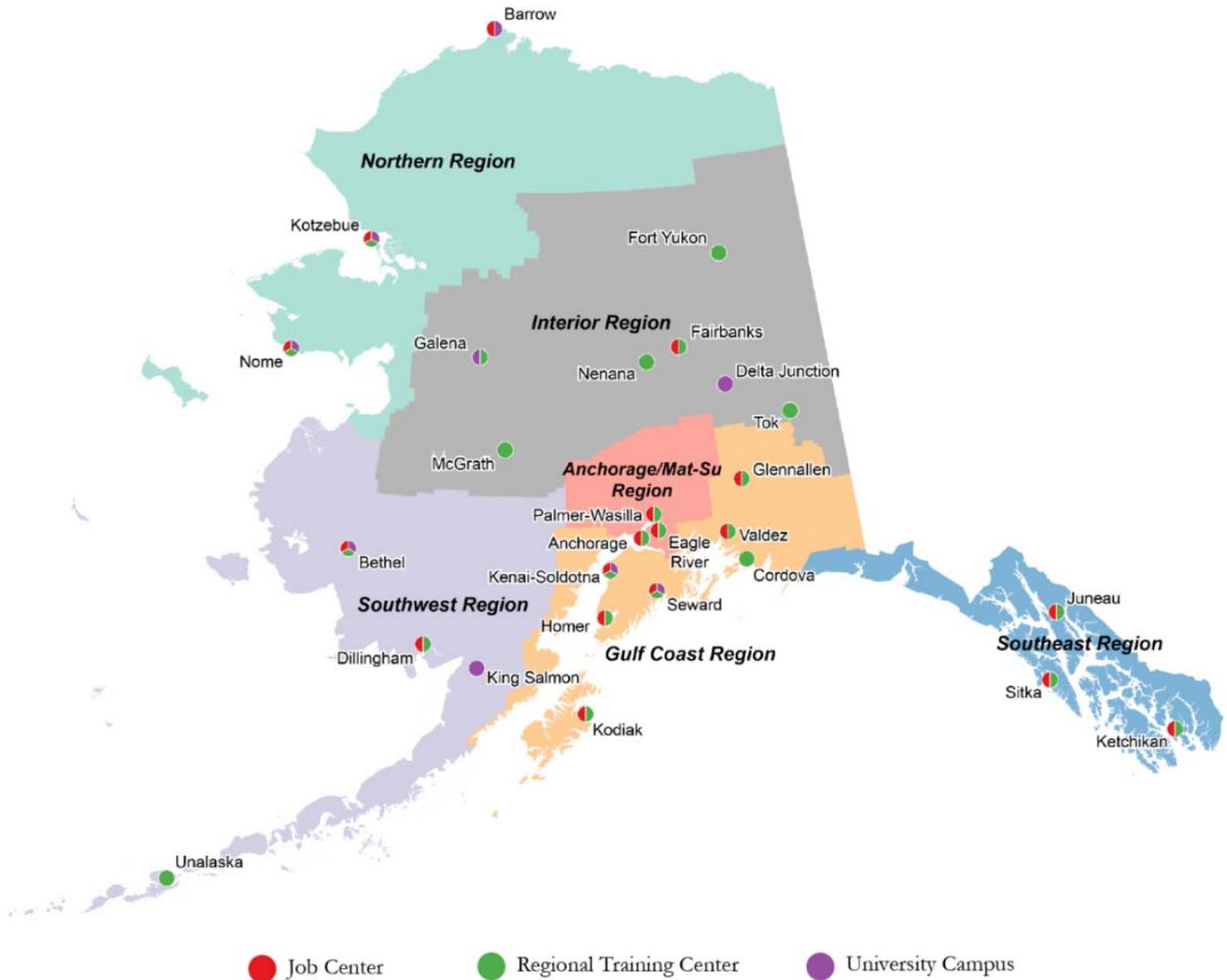
#### **Regional Training Centers**

Alaska's Regional Training Centers (RTCs) are public or non-profit centers whose mission is to develop and provide educational and training activities linked to employment opportunities in the region. Each RTC is governed by a local or regional board and is a partnership comprised of two or more of the following types of organizations: business/industry; Alaska Native regional and community organizations; economic development entities; local boroughs; city, state, federal, and tribal governments; Registered Apprenticeship programs (union and non-union); K-12 school districts; accredited college and university educational institutions; and DOLWD AJCs. RTCs work closely with the region's employers to provide the training necessary to fill the workforce needs of that region. In FY 2015, these programs trained approximately 4,500 individuals. Regional Training Centers include:

- Alaska Technical Center, Kotzebue
- Amundsen Educational Center, Soldotna
- AVTEC, Seward
- Fairbanks Pipeline Training Center, Fairbanks
- Galena Interior Learning Academy, Galena
- Ilisagvik College, Barrow
- Northwestern Alaska Career and Technical Center, Nome
- Partners for Progress in Delta, Inc., Delta
- Southwest Alaska Vocational Education Center, King Salmon
- Yuut Elitnaurviat - People's Learning Center, Bethel

Figure 16 shows the locations of Job Centers, Regional Training Centers, and University campuses across the state.

**Figure 16 Locations of Job Centers, Regional Training Centers, and UA Community Campuses**



**Training Clearinghouse**

DOLWD’s Research and Analysis Section maintains the “Alaska Training Clearinghouse,” which is a database of postsecondary providers and programs. It currently lists over 130 training providers, offering several hundred training programs in a variety of industries, including the postsecondary programs listed above.

**Performance Measures**

In addition, the state has historically met or exceeded performance measures on the following programs: WIA (now WIOA) Titles I, II, III, and IV; Senior Community Service Employment Program; Trade Adjustment Assistance; Veterans Employment and Training Services; Work Opportunity Tax Credit; Foreign Labor Certification; and the Disability Employment Initiative. This illustrates the state’s capacity to provide successful workforce development programs and activities.

## **b. State Strategic Vision and Goals**

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include the State’s strategic vision and goals for developing its workforce and meeting employer needs in order to support economic growth and economic self-sufficiency. This must include—

### **1. Vision**

Describe the State’s strategic vision for its workforce development system.

#### **State Strategic Vision and Goals**

##### **Vision**

Alaska’s strategic vision for developing Alaska’s workforce and meeting employer needs is:

“Alaskans have multiple pathways to high skill, high wage jobs and careers.”

Alaska’s workforce system will provide the guidance, knowledge, and pathways for Alaska’s workforce to acquire the skills Alaskan employers need to become and remain competitive in local, state, and global economies. All Alaskans, including individuals with disabilities, the underserved, Alaska Natives, dislocated workers, and others who experience significant barriers to employment, will have access to the career education, training, and support services needed to prepare for and participate in high-demand occupations that pay family-sustaining wages.

The coordinated effort among workforce partners and agencies will improve the efficiency and performance of Alaska’s workforce system. The workforce strategies will strengthen accountability across the system by focusing on education and competency attainment, individual progress, career advancement, and participant employment and earnings outcomes through coordination and resource leveraging. This will serve to increase access to career pathway programs and lead to self-sustaining employment while avoiding duplication of services. The Department of Labor and Workforce Development (DOLWD) will enhance Alaska Job Centers’ effectiveness through technology and mobile services that increase outreach to employers and job seekers. The Alaska Workforce Investment Board (AWIB) and DOLWD will assess how effectively workforce partners are collaborating to achieve good results and identify areas for improvement or innovation. A central focus will be to reduce program and customer administrative and process obstacles to improve customer outcomes.

### **2. Goals**

Describe the goals for achieving this vision based on the above analysis of the State’s economic conditions, workforce, and workforce development activities. This must include—

- Goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce, including preparing youth and individuals with barriers of employment\* and other populations.\*\*
- Goals for meeting the skilled workforce needs of employers.

\* Individuals with barriers to employment include displaced homemakers; low-income individuals; Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians; individuals with disabilities, including youth who are individuals with disabilities; older individuals; ex-offenders; homeless individuals, or homeless children and youths; youth who are in or have aged out of the foster care system; individuals who are English language learners, individuals who have low levels of literacy, and individuals facing substantial cultural barriers; eligible migrant and seasonal farmworkers (as defined at section 167(i) of WIOA and Training and Employment Guidance Letter No. 35-14); individuals within 2 years of exhausting lifetime eligibility under the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Program; single parents (including single pregnant women); and long-term unemployed individuals.

\*\* Veterans, unemployed workers, and youth and any other populations identified by the State.

## Goals

### Goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce -

including preparing youth and individuals with barriers of employment\* and other populations.\*\*

#### Goal 1: Build clear routes to careers for students, youth, and adults.

- Enhance and expand career information and guidance for students, parents, guardians, teachers, and counselors, with the help of employers, to engage students in exploring careers and workplaces.
- Increase the life, work-ready, and technical skills of in- and out-of-school youth and adults.
- Help youth transition from high school to post high school education, training, and work.
- Increase industry-sector focused work-based learning opportunities for youth and adults through internships, school-to-work, pre-apprentice and apprentice training, seasonal employment work experience, and work-study.

#### Goal 2: Support and grow learning opportunities for workers at all stages of life.

- Provide career counselors for youth and adults through school district career and technical education partners and Alaska's Job Centers (AJCs).
- Connect youth and adults with disabilities with educational opportunities and employment supports to maximize successful employment retention.
- Improve the ability to accept and transfer credits earned in high school, through apprenticeships, postsecondary education, and college coursework.
- Promote competency-based occupational training that reduces the time it takes an individual to complete training and go to work.
- Expand pre-apprentice and apprenticeship opportunities and other work-based learning approaches to individuals with disabilities and others with significant barriers to training and employment.

#### Goals for meeting the skilled workforce needs of employers.

#### Goal 3: Develop multiple paths for employers and workers.

- Increase outreach to employers to support career guidance and career awareness activities.
- Expand industry sector workforce planning to attract and prepare youth and adults for employment.
- Use labor market research to determine where there are significant labor shortages and determine the occupations in-demand.
- Effectively cross-match and identify current worker skills, including military experience, with skills needed to fill occupations in-demand.
- Connect regional economic and workforce development planning in each economic region to stimulate job creation and growth.
- Expand the utilization of Registered Apprenticeships by industry sector employers to train workers and meet occupational demands.
- Assess how effectively workforce partners are collaborating to achieve good results and identify areas for improvement or innovation.
- Reduce program and customer administrative and process obstacles to improve customer outcomes.
- Develop focused regional workforce initiatives that blend partner resources (co-investment) to educate and train workers for jobs within the economic region.

### 3. Performance Goals

Using the table provided in Appendix 1, include the State's expected levels of performance relating to the performance accountability measures based on primary indicators of performance described in section 116(b)(2)(A) of WIOA. (This Strategic Planning element only applies to core programs.)

#### Performance Goals

See Appendix 1 - Performance Goals for the Core Programs.

### 4. Assessment

Describe how the State will assess the overall effectiveness of the workforce development system in the State in relation to the strategic vision and goals stated above in sections (b)(1), (2), and (3) and how it will use the results of this assessment and other feedback to make continuous or quality improvements.

#### Assessment

#### Accountability Measures

The state will use the performance accountability measures in Section 116 of WIOA to assess the overall effectiveness of Alaska's workforce investment system and the individual core programs. These measures align well with the strategic vision and goals. The state will also track the number of new Registered Apprenticeship programs, the number of new apprentices, and the number of sponsors/employers providing employment and training services.

#### Industry Sector Partnerships

DOLWD will work with industry sector partners on an on-going basis and solicit feedback about how the workforce system, programs, and initiatives are working for employers and training providers and solicit their ideas for continuous quality improvements.

#### Data Analysis

DOLWD and the AWIB will analyze the data from these measures and outcomes such as employment and earnings to assess and compare strategies and determine which are working well and which need adjusting. Workforce program results are published annually for policy makers, the public, and the AWIB to further assess programs and comparative outcomes to determine in greater detail the services and interventions that work and those that are less effective. The participant data and rich labor market information provide a solid platform for deeper and longer-term evaluation of workforce programs.

#### c. State Strategy

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include the State's strategies to achieve its strategic vision and goals. These strategies must take into account the State's economic, workforce, and workforce development, education and training activities and analysis provided in Section (a) above. Include discussion of specific strategies to address the needs of populations provided in Section (a).

**1. Describe the strategies the State will implement, including industry or sector partnerships related to in-demand industry sectors and occupations and career pathways, as required by WIOA section 101(d)(3)(B), (D). "Career pathway" is defined at WIOA section 3(7). "In-demand industry sector or occupation" is defined at WIOA section 3(23).**

## **State Strategies**

### **Career Pathways**

#### **Engage industry sector partnerships and create career pathways for all Alaskans.**

The Alaska Workforce Investment Board (AWIB) will lead the engagement of industry sector partnerships in in-demand industries including health care, construction, maritime, oil and gas, transportation, technology, education, and mining. Each sector will convene its employers and other sector partners (K-12 education; postsecondary education; regional training centers; economic development organizations; labor unions; AWIB; and other appropriate state agencies). The partnerships will update existing workforce plan(s) pertinent to that industry and gauge the status of current workforce development activities. Each sector partnership will then develop a framework that will result in education and training investments focused on and responsive to employer needs. Career pathways will be accessible to all Alaskans, including all WIOA-targeted populations.

Each sector partnership will obtain current labor market information from employers and from DOLWD's Research and Analysis Section. The employer partners will identify high priority occupations for which trained and skilled workers will be needed in the next five years, and will identify the training, skills, and credentials required for these occupations. The sector partners will examine existing training programs to determine gaps in training both statewide and regionally. Employers will work closely with the other partners in developing career pathways to address the needs for the industry - from K-12 through postsecondary. Postsecondary will be viewed in the broad sense of any education or training that happens after high school, which could include college/university, Registered Apprenticeships, short-term training, industry certification programs, pre-apprenticeship programs, adult education, etc. AJC career specialists and case managers will adopt an industry sector approach to work more effectively with employers and job seekers.

#### **Expand Registered Apprenticeships, pre-apprenticeships, and other work-based learning approaches.**

The governor and AWIB have determined that the expansion of Registered Apprenticeship by employers will lead youth and adults, including those with disabilities and those who have multiple barriers to employment, into good paying jobs with career opportunities, while providing employers with new workers to fill in-demand occupations.

DOLWD has created a new position, Apprenticeship Coordinator, to develop new Registered Apprenticeship programs and increase the number of apprentices in training. The Apprentice Coordinator will work closely with Alaska's USDOL Office of Apprenticeship to provide support and technical assistance to the employer partners. Alaska is expanding the participation of colleges joining the Registered Apprenticeship College Consortia so that apprentices earn college credit toward degrees and may transfer the credits to other members of the Consortia. DOLWD will work with the Alaska Department of Education & Early Development and local school districts to expand work-based learning opportunities for students and out-of-school youth, including youth with disabilities. This includes school-to-apprenticeship programs, internships, and cooperative learning to strengthen career paths and better prepare young Alaskans for employment in their career field. In December 2015, the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) Alaska Office of Apprenticeship and the Division of Employment and Training Services began training Career Counselors and Case Managers in the process involved in creating approved programs and informing job seekers and students about the benefits of apprenticeships. The training included ways to inform employers about the advantages of sponsoring an apprentice program and training workers with the skills they need to sustain and grow that business. Training included representatives from school districts, Alaska's Job Corps Center (Palmer), University of Alaska Anchorage, AVTEC, and Ilisagvik College, Alaska's Tribal College.

#### **Demonstrate innovation in delivery of Alaska Job Center services.**

Delivery of services through Alaska Job Centers (AJCs) will transform from site-located services for job seekers and employers to a delivery system that maximizes web-based information and increases the mobility of Community Development Specialists and case managers to provide assistance and services at various locations in the community.

DOLWD will review the status of each AJC and develop strategies to change how AJCs deliver services in collaboration with community partners. This will allow a systematic approach to reduce long-term operational costs for office leases, for example, and transition to a more cost-effective approach. AJC services will focus on serving WIOA priority populations and connecting residents to career pathways leading to employment and career opportunities. AJCs with co-located programs such as Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF), Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), and Vocational Rehabilitation, will strengthen relationships with WIOA core programs.

Qualified partners that deliver services for youth, adults, dislocated workers, veterans, or persons with disabilities will be trained by Job Centers to determine participant eligibility and perform some case management tasks to WIOA standards.

#### **Prioritize services to target populations.**

WIOA funds will focus on serving WIOA-defined target populations. Outreach will be expanded through regional workforce partners to inform persons with barriers to employment and other target populations of the services that are available to them. Services include career awareness and planning, employment skills, education and training opportunities, job placement, and follow-up services. DOLWD will work to enhance the connection among the variety of systems and programs that serve the targeted populations.

Alaska's high priority target populations are:

- Youth and adults with disabilities
- Alaska Natives
- Veterans and transitioning service members
- Out-of-school youth
- Returning citizens
- Unemployed and underemployed
- Individuals with multiple barriers to training and employment

DOLWD's Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) will continue to provide training for AJC and partner staff working with clients who have disabilities. Alaska has implemented the Ticket to Work program and is reaching out to those on Social Security Insurance (SSI) or Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) to encourage them to go to an AJC for those services. DOLWD will work to expand this program to other agencies and programs, such as the Division of Behavioral Health; the Division of Senior and Disabilities Services; the Division of Public Assistance Work Services; and Centers for Independent Living.

The Department of Health and Social Services is developing a website called "Disability Benefits 101," an online tool for those with disabilities to provide available work incentives and to determine how their SSI, SSDI, or other public benefits may be impacted by employment. The Achieving a Better Life Experience Act (ABLE) allows eligible persons with disabilities to secure a "taxed advantaged" savings account of up to \$100,000 without affecting public benefit limits. Calculating benefits and ABLE savings is a critical tool for achieving quality long-term outcomes. Once the website is complete, AJC and partner staff will be trained in using the tool with clients. DOLWD will collaborate with the Department of Health and Social Services on its Work Incentives Planning & Assistance Project and on the recently awarded Disability Employment Initiative - Round VI grant entitled, "Alaska Youth Works." These projects will build a system with multiple partners to meet the needs of Alaska's youth with disabilities, aged 14 to 24, both in school and out-of-school, by expanding access to employment and career pathways to prepare for in-demand careers.

Alaska's "Employment First" legislation calls for "competitive integrated employment" as the preferred outcome for those with disabilities. DOLWD will pursue a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) among DOLWD; Health and Social Services; and Education and Early Development to ensure progress towards that goal. The MOU will include commitments for active participation on the Interagency Council on Employment First, under the auspices of the Employment First State Coordinator.

Through DVR, Pre-Employment Transition Services (PETS) provides the following required activities to students with disabilities (16 to 21 year-olds) who are eligible or potentially eligible for vocational rehabilitation services: (1) job exploration counseling, (2) work-based learning opportunities, (3) counseling on postsecondary educational opportunities (4) workplace readiness training, and (5) instruction in self-advocacy. Implementation of (PETS) has resulted in increased coordination among local school districts and DVR.

DOLWD will work with Alaska Native organizations already engaged in workforce development activities to ensure services are provided as widely as possible while avoiding duplication.

DOLWD will continue to participate in Alaska's Returning Citizens Initiative in partnership with the Alaska Department of Corrections to assist youth and adults leaving correctional facilities in obtaining gainful employment and connecting to a career path.

DOLWD will work with agencies such as Catholic Social Services to support refugees, asylum seekers, and other immigrants in improving their skillsets, pursuing education, training, and sustainable employment, in alignment with the White House Task Force on New Americans Plan developed with the participation of the Municipality of Anchorage.

DOLWD will also continue working with Alaska's military leadership in providing training and employment opportunities to veterans and transitioning service members, for example, through a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with the U.S. Army to expand their Soldier for Life - Career Path training for transitioning services members (TSMs), preparing them for employment in Alaska as they leave military service. The MOA and Army-approved training providers will create pre-apprentice and occupational training pathways to priority industry jobs.

**Partner with other agencies, organizations, and programs to leverage resources.**

DOLWD will continue and expand its partnerships with other agencies and organizations. While the following list is not all-inclusive, below are some examples of partnership development and partner programs:

- Alaska AFL-CIO
- Alaska Apprenticeship and Training Coordinators Association
- Alaska Association for Career and Technical Education
- Alaska Career and Technical Education Plan Advisory Committee
- Alaska Health Workforce Coalition
- Alaska Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson Military Transition Services
- Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority
- Alaska Native Organizations
- Alaska Native Regional Employment and Training Entities
- Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium
- Alaska Performance Scholarship Program
- Alaska Postsecondary Access and Completion Network
- Alaska Process Industry Career Consortium
- Alaska Regional Economic Development Organizations
- Alaska state agencies such as Departments of Corrections; Health and Social Services; Administration; Commerce, Community, and Economic Development; Education & Early Development
- Alaska Vocational Technical Education Center
- Alaska Works Partnership, Inc.
- Alaska Youth Works (Alaska Mental Health Trust Program)
- Alaska Youth Works (Disability Employment Initiative)
- Anchorage Literacy Project
- Catholic Social Services - Refugee Assistance and Immigration Services
- Construction Education Foundation of Alaska

- Fairbanks Pipeline Training Center
- Governor’s Council on Disabilities and Special Education
- Joint-Administered Training Trusts
- Northern Industrial Training, Inc.
- Regional Training Centers
- Renewable Energy Alaska Project
- Southcentral Foundation
- Sponsors of Federal Registered Apprenticeship Programs
- University of Alaska and Community Campuses
- USDOL Office of Apprenticeship in Anchorage

**Streamline internal processes.**

DOLWD has already taken steps to streamline internal processes and work more efficiently. This includes the following activities:

**Division Merger**

Governor Walker signed Administrative Order No. 275 on June 10, 2015, directing DOLWD to merge the Employment Security Division (ESD) and the Division of Business Partnerships (DBP) into a single Division of Employment and Training Services (DETS). Reorganization will reduce duplication and overlapping functions, streamline financial administration, and lay the groundwork for future change to improve public workforce services in a cost-effective manner. The first year savings are estimated at \$600,000.

**Division of Employment and Training Services**

The new division is led by a director, along with assistant directors for four units:

- Unemployment Insurance
- Workforce Services: Wagner-Peyser, Reemployment, and AJC Services
- Workforce Development: Grants, Contracts and Technology
- Administration: Budget and Financial Operations

The management team for the four units supervises more than 400 employees.

**Policy Review**

Reorganization requires that DETS review all policies to 1) reflect the new division; 2) discard duplicative and irrelevant policies; 3) ensure compliance with rules, regulations, and required processes for financial administration and operations of federal and state workforce programs; and 4) streamline processes for DOLWD staff and external customers.

**Greater Integrity, Program Assessments & Grants**

Consolidation of two previous divisions into one Division of Employment and Training Services (DETS) immediately ended duplicated grant administration and fiscal processes while streamlining communications between Workforce Services and Workforce Development staff for better coordination and delivery of services. DETS provides greater integrity for the allocation and use of public resources and the assessment of programs. Assessment, evaluation, and continuous improvement of workforce strategies and programs will be enhanced by the AWIB, now positioned in the Commissioner of Labor’s office. This new platform creates clear lines of distinction between workforce programs and the assessment and evaluation of those programs operated by DOLWD.

DETS prepares public solicitations for grants and performs due diligence to assure all applicants considered for funding meet the pre-application requirements. Workforce development grant administrators assist with the collection of grant applications and assist the AWIB with independent grant application reviews. The AWIB independently reviews applications, makes recommendations to the commissioner for awarding grants, and ensures integrity in award, denial, and appeal of decision processes.

## **Other**

DOLWD has been working closely with the Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education (ACPE), in streamlining processes for DOLWD grantees and Eligible Training Providers by sharing information between the two agencies regarding the status of training providers' compliance with ACPE regulations.

DOLWD regularly coordinates with the University of Alaska and the Department of Education & Early Development on education and workforce issues such as continued implementation of the Alaska Career and Technical Education Plan; dual/concurrent credit for high school students; aligning secondary and postsecondary programs to industry standards and industry needs; and partnering to provide pre-apprenticeship and Registered Apprenticeship opportunities.

**2. Describe the strategies the State will use to align the core programs, any Combined State Plan partner programs included in this Plan, required and optional one-stop partner programs, and any other resources available to the State to achieve fully integrated customer services consistent with the strategic vision and goals described above. Also describe strategies to strengthen workforce development activities in regard to weaknesses identified in section II(a)(2).**

### **Core and Partner Program Alignment**

All core programs and the combined plan partner program - Senior Community Service Employment Program - are housed under DOLWD. All of the strategies listed under Section (c) State Strategy (1) will serve to align the core and partners and programs, as well as other entities in the state's education, workforce, and economic development arena. Staff members from each program have bi-monthly meetings to discuss operational strategies aligned with the goals. These meetings will continue to identify areas where alignment is required. This includes cross-program training, AJC staff training, DOLWD policy changes, communication strategies, and frequent reviews of performance outcomes.

DOLWD will engage One-Stop partners (See Appendix 2.2) on a regular basis to further implement state workforce programs and to coordinate activities regionally to ensure the focus on WIOA target populations, while supplying good job applicants and apprentice applicants for employers and apprentice sponsors. Key projects include improving services for persons with disabilities, expanding Registered Apprenticeships, modernization of AJCs and service delivery, and increasing services for youth and adults reentering society - all of which require constant program review and coordinated activities among partners.

### **Strategies to Strengthen Activities in Regard to Identified Weaknesses**

**Weakness:** Alaska's geographic size and diverse population make access to education, training, and apprenticeships a unique challenge. The state's largest cities are connected by road, but a large portion of the state is accessible only by air or water, and travel may be expensive and time-consuming. There is often the additional challenge of cultural differences for people coming from villages to urban areas. Those challenges create a unique need for distance delivery of employment and training services and, in many cases, for funds to cover travel and housing when training can only be completed in-person. To overcome geographic barriers and higher unemployment rates, DOLWD is working to develop mobile information and connections to career training to better serve persons living in rural communities, providing job seekers and employers increased access to services anytime from anywhere.

**Strategy:** Alaska's strategies include making employment and training services available via the internet and smart phones; support local rural resources such as libraries and tribal council offices to provide public internet access to employment and

training services in areas without an Alaska Job Center; and strengthen partnerships with rural organizations, such as tribal organizations, to co-enroll and share the costs of travel and housing when participants have to travel to attend training.

Weakness: Rural/remote communities lag behind in internet speed and technology capacity. Many people living in remote communities, students, teachers, employers, and job seekers simply do not have the electronic capacity to learn skills, apply for jobs, or receive on-line services on a par with those living in the city because of the lack of technology infrastructure.

Strategy: Alaska will work to strengthen partnerships with the University of Alaska rural campuses, state funded technical and vocational education program locations, and local governments to provide the best internet access available in as broad an area as possible so rural residents will have access to employment and training services via the internet and hopefully via smart phones.

Weakness: Many employers report a lack of motivated job seekers with basic employability skills to fill community jobs. There are many causes: personal issues such as substance abuse and system issues such as the lack of local career pathway programs, and few vocational instructors and available mentors.

Strategy: Alaska will begin offering the ACT Career Ready 101 Soft Skills Suite in job centers as a stand-alone workshop for jobseekers' initial visits to the job centers specifically to address the lack of motivated job seekers with basic employability skills. The workshops will also introduce other Career Ready 101 courses, WorkKeys® assessments, and the National Career Readiness Certificate for jobseekers. Alaska has promoted WorkKeys for a number of years. The Career Readiness certificate gives job seekers a document they can reference on their resume and include with their interview packet that will give them a leg up on other applicants who do not have the certificate. Alaska encourages employers to recognize, request, and/or require the certificate knowing it can save them money in their hiring, training and succession planning activities.

Weakness: Remote rural communities do not have good access to job training, apprenticeship, colleges, and trade schools.

Strategy: The University of Alaska acts as a Community College at its rural campuses across the state. They and some other training providers are increasing their training programs that are available via distance delivery. Alaska will support distance delivered training by funding participant tuitions through Individual Training Accounts where appropriate. Where distance delivery is not available, Alaska will seek out local organizations such as Alaska Native Tribal organizations to co-enroll rural participants and share the costs of travel and housing for participants to attend job and apprenticeship trainings not available in their local area.

Weakness: Limited English proficiency is a significant barrier to learning and employment. The inability to recognize foreign education degrees and occupational credentials is another significant barrier.

Strategy: Alaska Job Center (AJC) staff will refer limited English speaking customers to the Department's WIOA Title II - Adult Basic Education programs. Customers holding foreign education degrees can meet individually with Employment Counselors or Employment and Training Technicians in the job centers to work on a plan to have their degrees recognized and/or to find work in their field of study.

Weakness: Worker layoffs are increasing and are expected to grow over the next few years due to the declining production of oil in Alaska and the significant decline in the price of oil, revenue from which has provided the bulk of the state's operating revenue. Alaska is currently experiencing a growth in dislocated worker clients due to layoffs of workers in the oil and gas industry, workers employed by contractors and vendors that support the industry, and local and state publicly-funded positions.

Strategy: Alaska will maximize the use of Dislocated Worker and Rapid Response funding in an attempt to return laid-off workers to jobs with living wages as quickly as possible.

Weakness: State budget reductions for Fiscal Year 2016, including significant cuts to state-funded career and technical education, means there are fewer staff to deliver programs and services. Reduced funding is already resulting in closing AJCs located in rural hub communities. Consolidation of space in urban centers will drive significant change away from providing employment services at fixed locations to a model that provides more information and services on-line and in conjunction with regional workforce partners such as the University of Alaska Community Campuses, Regional Training Centers, and Regional Alaska Native WIOA grantees.

Strategy: Alaska will work to strengthen partnerships with the University of Alaska rural campuses, state funded technical and vocational education program locations, and local governments to provide public access to employment and training services via the internet and hopefully via smart phones.

### III. Operational Planning Elements

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include an Operational Planning Elements section that support the State’s strategy and the system-wide vision described in Section II.(c) above. Unless otherwise noted, all Operational Planning Elements apply to Combined State Plan partner programs included in the plan as well as to core programs. This section must include—

#### A. State Strategy Implementation

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include—

##### 1. State Board Functions

Describe how the State board will implement its functions under section 101(d) of WIOA (i.e. provide a description of Board operational structures and decision making processes to ensure such functions are carried out).

#### State Strategy Implementation

##### State Board Functions

As the governor’s lead workforce policy entity, the Alaska Workforce Investment Board (AWIB) reviews statewide programs and policies to ensure Alaska’s workforce system is useful, accessible, and understandable to all of the system’s customers. This includes businesses seeking qualified workers, unemployed Alaskans looking for jobs, and incumbent workers wanting to upgrade their skills to meet the demands of a changing work environment.

AWIB members are appointed by the governor, and the AWIB is supported by an Executive Director and one full-time program staff. The AWIB operates according to Alaska statutory requirements and Board bylaws. A Chair and Vice-Chair are elected annually and serve for one year. The AWIB makes formal decisions during its full board meetings; in between these meetings, the Executive Committee, composed of the Chairs of each standing committee and the current and past Chair and current Vice-Chair, are authorized by its bylaws to make decisions on behalf of the AWIB. Staff keep track of action items and next steps necessary to complete them. The Executive Director works closely with the Executive Committee in setting meeting agendas and activities to ensure all functions are carried out.

Organizationally, the AWIB is now housed under the Commissioner of the Department of Labor and Workforce Development. The vision of the AWIB is “to build connections that put Alaskans into good jobs.” The AWIB achieves this vision by utilizing labor market data and regional and sector stakeholder input to guide DOLWD in continuous improvement of Alaska’s workforce system. The AWIB develops a statewide workforce investment policy framework and drives coordination and collaboration among programs and agencies.

The AWIB has been proactive in identifying and utilizing labor market data to identify priority industries to target for employment training and investment, and has developed workforce-training plans for these industries. The AWIB has also been deeply engaged in creating a strong career pathway system through the statewide Alaska Career and Technical Education (CTE) Plan. The AWIB has endorsed workforce development plans for the health care, transportation, construction, oil and gas, and maritime industries. The AWIB is actively engaged in working with other priority sectors in Alaska on additional workforce strategies.

Identifying areas of improvement is a top priority for the AWIB, and it is active in the assessment and evaluation of Alaska Job Centers (AJCs). As an example, in a recent evaluation of the Kodiak AJC, an AWIB member identified a need for better staff training in the area of Registered Apprenticeship. DOLWD immediately responded to this feedback by developing and implementing training for frontline AJC staff about options for job seekers who may qualify for Registered Apprenticeship training.

The AWIB also actively engages in the development and evaluation of training programs targeted for youth and other Alaska residents. The AWIB participates in the evaluation of training and education grants, and through this process, emphasizes investment in training for individuals who experience barriers to employment, as well as utilizing labor market analysis to recommend investment in programs that prepare Alaskans for high-demand occupations in priority industries. The AWIB is developing a multi-year strategic plan, which will guide its work using the industry sector approach to workforce development. The strategic plan will include goals for business engagement, services to businesses, and development of metrics of success for these activities.

To fulfill its role of guiding DOLWD through oversight of the training programs, the AWIB participates in the annual review of the effectiveness of the state's core WIOA programs, as well as reviewing and commenting on the state's workforce plan required under WIOA. Several members of the AWIB attended and participated in each of the regional meetings held this year to inform the writing of the state's Combined Plan. The full AWIB reviewed the entire WIOA plan at its February, 2016 meeting.

## **2. Implementation of State Strategy**

Describe how the lead State agency with responsibility for the administration of each core program or a Combined Plan partner program included in this plan will implement the State's Strategies identified in Section II(c). above. This must include a description of—

### **A. Core Program Activities to Implement the State's Strategy**

Describe the activities the entities carrying out the respective core programs will fund to implement the State's strategies. Also describe how such activities will be aligned across the core programs and Combined State Plan partner programs included in this plan and among the entities administering the programs, including using co-enrollment and other strategies.

#### **Implementation of State Strategy**

##### **Core Program Activities to Implement the State's Strategy**

DOLWD supports integration of services through a single delivery system for both businesses and individuals. This efficient use of resources includes integrating all WIOA core programs with Unemployment Insurance (UI), veterans' programs, the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP), the Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) program, apprenticeship and sector partnership development, and the Disability Employment Initiative (DEI).

The WIOA core programs will be delivered through 17 AJCs located throughout the state, ten vocational rehabilitation offices, six of which are collocated with the AJCs, six WIOA Youth Program sub-recipients, and 17 Adult Basic Education

(ABE) sub-recipients. SCSEP is co-located within the Division of Employment and Training Services (DETS) and works closely with its integrated partners to ensure that participants are co-enrolled with other appropriate services. Program staff are trained to refer customers to the programs and resources that best fit their needs.

The activities carried out by staff who administer these programs are designed to meet job seeker needs through intake, assessment, development of individual training plans, individualized plans for employment, or individual service strategies, along with case management, counseling, training, support services, and referral to partner programs and other community and educational resources. For example, referrals are made to a local ABE program for eligible job seekers needing to improve basic math and reading skills in order to enter training or attain a **General Educational Development (GED)** credential, improve their English proficiency, enhance job search skills, develop a resume, practice interviewing, and connecting with jobs that offer good wages.

DETS and the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) Co-enrollment Policy 07-505 ensures a commitment to the provision of co-enrollment in order to deliver customer-focused, integrated, and coordinated services. This includes the sharing of relevant customer program information and records such as referral information, assessment results, training plans, progress reports, and job development strategies. Co-enrollment is encouraged to coordinate cohesive and consistent services that complement and strengthen the services offered by each individual program.

Appropriate co-enrollment happens when:

- The participant would benefit from services, activities, or funding provided from the various funding streams or programs (see Appendix 2.2 for One-Stop partners);
- The participant meets the respective eligibility requirements of each program, and the program is appropriate;
- The services are not duplicated, including assessments, creation of employability plans, training, job placement assistance, and follow-up employment services; and
- The grant sub-recipient or staff is able to identify and track the funding streams that pay the costs of services provided to program participants.

All core programs and the combined plan partner program, SCSEP, are housed under DOLWD. Staff from each program have bi-monthly meetings to discuss operational strategies to ensure all are working towards the same goals. The department will continue these regular meetings and will identify areas in need of more alignment. Once these areas are identified, the department will implement actions to ensure they are addressed. These include cross-program training; AJC staff training; department policy changes; increasing opportunities for communication; and frequent reviews of performance outcomes.

## **B. Alignment with Activities outside the Plan**

Describe how the activities identified in (A) will be aligned with programs and activities provided by required one-stop partners and other optional one-stop partners and activities provided under employment, training (including Registered Apprenticeships), education (including career and technical education), human services and other programs not covered by the plan, as appropriate, assuring coordination of, and avoiding duplication among these activities.

### **Alignment with Activities outside the Plan**

#### **Core and One-Stop Partners**

Core program staff and partners continuously work towards an integrated partnership that seamlessly incorporates services to fit customer needs. Core and One-Stop partners will meet regularly to collaborate on operational policies, procedures, and best practices for an integrated system of performance. Communication and the use of technology will help to achieve integration and expand service offerings to achieve success.

DOLWD works with other state agencies, mandatory One-Stop partners, the University of Alaska, Alaska Native Corporations, private-sector employers, trade associations, and Joint Apprenticeship Training Programs to develop high-wage, high-demand employment and training plans that make the most of existing Registered Apprenticeship and other training models. These training plans will have an increased focus on industry sectors and career pathways under WIOA.

Industry representatives help drive decisions and design of workforce solutions as shown in successful public-private partnerships for training apprentices and skilled workers for pipeline construction and maintenance on Alaska's North Slope. The training partnership includes contractors, labor organizations, Joint Apprenticeship Training Programs, and the State Training Employment Program, which all provide opportunities for workers from across the state to attend pipeline construction courses.

## **TANF**

The Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and Tribal TANF programs are used as a primary engagement and recruitment mechanism to identify and enroll appropriate low-income Alaskans into Career and Training Services offered through WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, Wagner-Peyser, and other programs specific to client need and eligibility, such as the Disabled Veterans Outreach Program. At locations throughout the state, DOLWD staff engage with the Division of Public Assistance (DPA) or their contractor's Work First/Families First program to identify individuals on their caseload to be co-enrolled with services offered through the AJCs. In locations served through Tribal TANF, the partnerships exist and are being expanded with each of the seven programs in the state to ensure that collaboration and co-enrollment is promoted. These activities identify additional barriers to employment, allow for a complete employment plan with direct or partner supports to overcome barriers, and continue the progress towards sustainable employment for the individual.

## **Alaska Job Centers and Partners**

The AJCs provide access and outreach to areas with higher numbers of low-income Alaskans. The AJCs provide a critical pathway to Career and Training Services through their physical locations, partner linkages, online presence, and itinerant services. Local coordination with partners, such as the Alaska Housing Finance Corporation, TANF, Alaska Native entities, area correctional facility release programs, and regional training centers, promotes cross-referrals to services that address barriers to employment and facilitate attachment to employment or training. Apprenticeship and On-the-Job Training (OJT) are particularly beneficial for low-income individuals and those reentering the workforce after incarceration, due to the immediate attachment to the community and to income.

## **Senior Community Service Employment Program**

The AJCs partner with the state's SCSEP, branded as Mature Alaskans Seeking Skills Training (MASST). AJCs are utilized as a "finishing" site to provide culminating customer service training; training on the use of job search tools, resume writing, and interviewing; and ultimately, job placement through referral and application or job development. The state provides a wide range of programs and services to seniors, spanning multiple divisions and other private and public entities. Funds from the Older Americans Act (OAA) are leveraged with WIOA, other federal programs, and resources from the Alaska State Training and Employment Program (STEP), assuring coordination and avoiding duplication of services or activities. The programs provide local training in priority industry sectors by placing participants in community work-based training sites at non-profit, faith-based organizations, transportation and public facilities, governmental offices, senior centers, schools, and hospitals, to name a few.

## **Referrals**

The referral process among the core programs is implemented on an individualized basis depending on the specific needs of the individual. All DOLWD staff are trained and expected to be knowledgeable in the requirements and eligibility of other core programs to ensure an appropriate program referral. Appropriate referrals are necessary in order to leverage resources and maximize service delivery to individuals while ensuring non-duplication of services. For example, AJC staff

that provide initial intake and career services have been trained through the Disability Employment Initiative (DEI) to appropriately identify and refer individuals to disability services through the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR), Tribal Vocational Rehabilitation, and other supporting entities. This training has provided a high level of thoughtfulness to the reason for each referral, increasing the success for the participant when obtaining needed services. Coordinated data collection mechanisms will be implemented in order to capture cross-agency referrals.

### **C. Coordination, Alignment and Provision of Services to Individuals**

Describe how the entities carrying out the respective core programs, Combined State Plan partner programs included in this plan, and required and optional one-stop partner programs will coordinate activities and resources to provide comprehensive, high-quality, customer-centered services, including supportive services to individuals including those populations identified in section II(a)(1)(B). The activities described shall conform to the statutory requirements of each program.

#### **Coordination, Alignment and Provision of Services to Individuals**

DOLWD is the lead agency for the administration of the four core WIOA programs. DOLWD is also responsible for Veteran Services through the Jobs for Veterans State Grant, TAA, and UI. Additionally, the SCSEP, operated as MASST, is also within DOLWD and is the Combined State Plan partner program. Whether through direct service or sub-recipient, the AJCs are primary access points for the majority of the services provided by DOLWD's programs.

DOLWD manages Title V of the Older Americans Act (OAA) for senior employment. The planned action to coordinate activities includes following labor directives and guidance in developing the workforce needs. SCSEP is aligned with the state's commitment to economic development, and its workforce development programs rely on the broad strategic policy decisions of the AWIB.

Partners collaborate to develop policies, procedures, and best practices to facilitate the integration of services to ensure job seekers' needs are being met and referrals to other resources are successful.

AJC partners are committed to the provision of co-enrollment in order to deliver customer-focused, integrated, and coordinated services. This includes the sharing of relevant customer program information and records such as referral information, assessment results, training plans, progress reports, and job-development strategies. Co-enrollment is encouraged to coordinate cohesive and consistent services that complement and strengthen the services offered by each individual program. The coordination of services, including referrals, is supported by DETS and DVR Policy 07-505, which is designed to promote cooperative partnerships to maximize resources. The policy encourages program staff and grant sub-recipients to develop procedures for the provision of co-enrollment.

Local management teams, representing partner agencies at the AJCs, work in collaborative fashion to ensure that services provided in the locality are coordinated and non-duplicative. Customer flow, shared resources, co-enrollment, special initiatives/programs, and area workforce needs are addressed collectively.

ABE has a required intake document that gathers information about each student's employment status and training goals. ABE programs also teach a career and college awareness class that includes discussing what is available in the community and through workforce partners.

The workforce system aligns services with those most in need and can be served through efficient and effective strategies. Efficient strategies support the timely delivery of services through a process that is aligned with the priorities of the Alaska Workforce Investment Board (AWIB). Effective strategies ensure job seekers and employers receive services based on their needs and circumstances.

DOLWD's objective is to maintain a fully integrated workforce development system that ensures availability of workforce services to all customers, with a focus on veterans and military spouses, low-income individuals, public assistance recipients, adults and youth with disabilities, out-of-school youth, Alaska Natives, and individuals with barriers to employment.

#### **D. Coordination, Alignment and Provision of Services to Employers**

Describe how the entities carrying out the respective core programs, any Combined State Plan partner program included in this plan, required and optional one-stop partner programs will coordinate activities and resources to provide comprehensive, high-quality services to employers to meet their current and projected workforce needs. The activities described shall conform to the statutory requirements of each program.

##### **Coordination, Alignment and Provision of Services to Employers.**

A relationship between DOLWD and industry sector employers is critical to Alaska's workforce investment system. DOLWD continuously looks for ways to develop cooperative working relationships based on Alaska employer needs, and this creates lasting partnerships with the business community.

##### **Business Connection Staff**

Employer service representatives, particularly Business Connection staff, pay attention to local labor market trends to match employers with skilled job seekers. Staff work with employers to coordinate recruitments, plan job fairs, post job orders, provide applicant pre-screening and referrals, develop jobs, provide space for job recruitments, and offer employment and training service plans. Using a mass e-mail distribution list of employers and other interested parties, staff send daily messages on new job postings, recruitments at the AJCs, and upcoming job fairs. DOLWD has identified that the health care, oil and gas, and mining industries are the highest-demand industries and continually engages industry leaders in these fields. Under WIOA, Business Connection staff will be provided more in-depth training to work with the various industry sector partnerships to meet training and labor needs for those industries.

##### **Services and Programs**

Employer services and programs available through AJCs include:

- Veteran services provided by a full-time veteran employment specialist who conducts outreach to employers to advocate for veteran hire;
- Youth services provided by six youth program recipients, which coordinate work experience opportunities with businesses to ensure young job seekers are prepared to enter the job market;
- Apprenticeship specialists in AJCs who increase employer involvement in Registered Apprenticeships;
- On-the-Job Training (OJT) that offers employers the opportunity to hire and custom train employees and receive partial employee wage reimbursements;
- Training based on current employer demands (including incumbent worker training) and the perceived needs of the future job market;
- Rapid Response (RR) services, including employee protection and layoff aversion strategies to companies facing layoffs and closures;
- Seafood and other specialized recruitments, orientations, and interviews;
- Fidelity bonding services that encourage employers to hire workers who may pose a financial risk to the employer; and
- Referral to local ABE programs and other partner programs.

## **Alaska Career Ready**

Alaska recognizes the gaps between job seekers' education, training, and skills and those that Alaska employers request or require. The Alaska Career Ready program uses ACT WorkKeys<sup>®</sup> to help fill those gaps. WorkKeys<sup>®</sup> assessments help job seekers obtain the National Career Readiness Certificate, a portable credential that certifies job seekers have essential, verifiable workplace skills. The foundational skills certified by the National Career Readiness Certificate are recognized and used by thousands of employers nationwide.

DOLWD provides ACT WorkKeys<sup>®</sup> job profiling, which enables employers to reduce employee turnover and training costs. A critical part of the service is identifying the gaps between job seekers' skills and what Alaska employers need. AJC staff subsequently work with job seekers on training targeted toward rapid reemployment.

## **Employer Relationships and Outreach**

Business Connection staff members build trusting, long-term relationships with Alaska employers from small businesses to large industries. Promotion of DOLWD's employment and training programs is based on meeting employer needs. It emphasizes the benefits to employers and avoids the impression of a "hard-sell" or bombardment with unwanted information. These relationships also ensure employers view DOLWD as a valuable resource. For example, DOLWD fosters relationships with mining industry employers and works closely with the University of Alaska Southeast mining training program to fill positions with Alaska workers. An example is annual underground miner training and incumbent worker training, including haul truck simulator training in Southeast Alaska. The goal is to provide Juneau-area mining employers, such as Hecla Greens Creek and Coeur Alaska Kensington, with qualified Alaska workers.

Exploration of new outreach methods that can reach many employers at once, and material with better content, are intended to increase employer awareness of DOLWD employment and training resources. For example, the apprenticeship and veteran programs are working to determine the best ways to use GI Bill, WIOA, and STEP funds to support apprenticeship and other training opportunities for Alaska's veterans.

DOLWD's tax and employer services units established a cost-effective, mutually beneficial method of employer outreach. The exchange of material reaches an average of 20 employers per week. It includes employment and training information such as Alaska Career Ready, veterans' services, and OJTs as part of the new- or returning-employer packets mailed by the tax unit. In return, AJC Business Connection staff help alleviate overflow calls to the tax unit by promoting web-based tax self-registration to employers with whom they come into contact. An apprenticeship brochure will be included in the new-employer packet, and will highlight significant wage incentives for hiring a veteran into an apprenticeship program. This supports the state's WIOA strategies of expanding Registered Apprenticeships and focusing on veterans and transitioning service members as a priority population.

## **Website**

DOLWD is substantially revising its web pages that are specific to employer needs. The Business Connection page will focus on the most commonly requested employer services under easily identifiable general headings with associated topics underneath. The overarching theme of the modification is to answer the question, "What is the benefit to the employer?" For example, the heading "Protect Your Workers" will lead employers to topics including TAA, Layoff Aversion Strategies, Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification requirements, and COBRA continuation of employee health care benefits. Other main headings include Post a Job, Employment and Labor Laws, Hire Leadership and Experience (veterans), and Hiring Incentives.

## **Employer Recognition for Veteran Hire**

Plans to recognize employers who hire veterans will include public identification of the business by public service announcements, listings on the Business Connection and veterans' web pages, and window decals. The goal is to produce a logo decal, easily identifiable to all Alaska employers, showing that a particular business honors America's veterans by hiring them and that will inspire friendly competition among local and industry employers, generating greater momentum for veteran hiring. Business Connection and veteran staff plan to increase their presence at the Society for Human Resources Management and local chambers of commerce meetings on a regular basis in Juneau, Anchorage, and Fairbanks.

## **Division of Vocational Rehabilitation**

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) partners with employers to promote the hiring of individuals with disabilities. DVR has implemented the dual customer model to deliver services to employers. DVR has created a Business Employment Services Team (DVR-BEST), which is tasked with providing employers with the four required services as outlined in Section 109 of the Rehabilitation Act within WIOA, in order to secure competitive integrated employment for individuals with disabilities, which is part of DOLWD's strategy to focus on serving those with disabilities.

## **Senior Community Service Employment Program**

SCSEP service delivery is integrated into both the state's workforce investment system and the senior service system. Employers have reported high satisfaction levels with SCSEP participants who have entered unsubsidized employment with them. Employers have reported that they have great work habits, problem solving skills, the ability to work with others, and adaptability to change with business needs. Alaska's long-term strategy is to continue to reach out to workforce development partners, the business community, and social service partners to ensure successful outcomes for workers and Alaska businesses alike.

DOLWD strives to provide outstanding customer service to employers by focusing on long-term, respectful relationships; understanding and responding to their employment and training needs; and promoting and providing consequential services and resources that meet those needs. DOLWD will continue to meet or exceed the expectations of employers to include excellent performance outcomes for mutual workforce goals.

## **E. Partner Engagement with Educational Institutions**

Describe how the State's Strategies will engage the State's community colleges and area career and technical education schools, as partners in the workforce development system to create a job-driven education and training system. WIOA section 102(b)(2)(B)(iv).

### **Partner Engagement with Educational Institutions**

Alaska understands the vital role training providers play in workforce development and the need to focus attention on an effective career and technical training system. The state has pledged to create world-class schools that prepare graduates for careers that may begin immediately after high school graduation or may require additional education and training.

### **Career and Technical Education Plan**

A comprehensive Career and Technical Education (CTE) Plan was launched in 2010 and involved a broad cross-section of policy makers, educators, employers, state agencies, training institutions, and parent representatives. The AWIB and the Departments of Education & Early Development and Labor and Workforce Development, in coordination with the University of Alaska, continue to implement, review, and refine CTE strategies.

The CTE Plan addresses the individual need for career preparedness as well as the broader social need for a training and education system that is efficient, effective, and coordinates with regional and state current and future workforce needs. CTE Plan strategies include:

- Planned transitions and accountability for both successful student progress and systemic cooperation;
- Align curricula at all training institutions to meet current industry standards;
- Identify and promote CTE delivery models that ensure that Alaskans have opportunities to attain the knowledge and skills needed for further training and careers;
- Recruit, develop, support, and retain high-quality CTE teachers and faculty;
- Maximize the use of public facilities for training; and
- Establish and maintain sustainable funding mechanisms for a successful CTE system for youth and adults.

### **Technical and Vocational Education Program**

One of the funding mechanisms for Alaska CTE is through the Technical and Vocational Education Program (TVEP), which provides state funding through a portion of unemployment taxes to designated technical and vocational education entities to provide industry specific training, OJT, and classroom-linked job training. Grant funds are appropriated by the Alaska Legislature and administered by DOLWD, the Department of Education & Early Development, and the University of Alaska. The AWIB establishes a list of industry priorities for training under this program.

State education and training providers are critical to prepare Alaskans to be successful with the academic and technical knowledge required for a specific career pathway. Programs of study incorporate industry and business standards and are validated using benchmarks, assessments, and a body of evidence to demonstrate that job seekers are prepared to be successful in their chosen career.

### **Community Colleges and Area Career and Technical Schools**

Alaska no longer has separate community colleges; rather, the community college mission is carried out by the University of Alaska (UA) through its Office of Workforce Development and the programs offered at its network of community campuses. DOLWD is in regular contact with UA and with the state's career and technical schools (as defined in the Carl Perkins CTE Improvement Act of 2006), both secondary and postsecondary. Members of the AWIB represent these providers (University workforce programs and secondary and postsecondary CTE) and provide information to the AWIB as they develop recommendations for coordination and alignment of the state's workforce system. DOLWD meets annually with secondary and postsecondary CTE coordinators and directors to align programs and discuss issues of mutual interest. In addition, DOLWD meets bi-weekly with the state's CTE plan lead partners to continue implementation of the CTE plan and CTE system.

### **F. Partner Engagement with Other Education and Training Providers.**

Describe how the State's Strategies will engage the State's other education and training providers, including providers on the state's eligible training provider list, as partners in the workforce development system to create a job-driven education and training system.

#### **Partner Engagement with Other Education and Training Providers**

The state routinely engages with partners and other education and training providers. An example is the Eligible Training Providers List (ETPL) policy and procedures. These were created in concert with education and training providers who provided feedback during AWIB meetings and a public comment period. The largest provider, the University of Alaska, was integral in providing feedback during the drafting of the ETPL process. The AWIB played an active role in reviewing guidance, and the education and training board members provided critical feedback that was incorporated with the final

products. The goal is to make the ETPL a robust product that offers training to meet the needs of Alaska's high growth industries while making the ETPL process less cumbersome for education and training providers.

#### **G. Leveraging Resources to Increase Educational Access**

Describe how the State's strategies will enable the State to leverage other Federal, State, and local investments that have enhanced access to workforce development programs at the above institutions, described in section (E).

##### **Leveraging Resources to Increase Educational Access**

Alaska leverages resources as a strategy to increase and sustain economic growth. This practice fosters enhanced partnerships between federal, state, local, and private resources in innovative ways, relying on three different levels of leveraged resources.

First, cash contributions are state, local, and private resources that are allocated in direct support of a training project. A state general fund appropriation is an example of a cash contribution. Second, in-kind contributions are federal, state, local, and private resources that support the efforts of a training project, but are not easily cost allocated. Third, Alaska applies federal and state resources as potential leveraged funds that are consistent with the economic and workforce development goals of the state, preparing Alaska workers for employment in high-wage, high-demand occupations.

At the community-based participant level, AJC partners conduct joint planning and case management to maximize resources, providing individuals with comprehensive services. By working together for the common benefit of participants, each partner agency is able to reach more participants and ensure comprehensive services.

#### **H. Improving Access to Postsecondary Credentials**

Describe how the State's strategies will improve access to activities leading to recognized postsecondary credentials, including Registered Apprenticeship certificates. This includes credentials that are industry-recognized certificates, licenses or certifications, and that are portable and stackable.

##### **Improving Access to Postsecondary Credentials**

The workforce and education systems work closely to expand the supply of skilled workers for Alaska's high-growth industries. Through partnership with the DOLWD, University of Alaska, and Department of Education & Early Development (EED), the AWIB developed the Alaska CTE Plan to align education programs with Alaska's in-demand industries and occupations. Alaska continues to support the use of work-based and applied learning to cultivate student awareness of, and interest in, high-demand industries. The state will expand the use of Registered Apprenticeships and industry-led CTE.

Alaska's primary focus in responding to employers and job seekers is to maximize the benefits of workforce development, offering services and training to job seekers that lead to employment. Programs such as Registered Apprenticeship and OJT are exemplary examples of this dual focus. The most effective are programs that result in portable, industry-recognized credentials.

DOLWD is an active partner in Alaska's Postsecondary Access and Completion Network. The Network is working towards the goal of "65 by 2025" - that 65 percent of Alaskans will have a postsecondary credential or degree by 2025. DOLWD works directly with other Network partners to ensure that Registered Apprenticeship certificates, industry certifications, and occupational endorsements are included in the definition and that the corresponding outcome data are collected and reported.

**I. Coordinating with Economic Development Strategies.** Describe how the activities identified in (A) will be coordinated with economic development entities, strategies and activities in the State.

### **Coordinating with Economic Development Strategies**

#### **Alaska Regional Development Organizations**

According to the Alaska Department of Commerce, Community & Economic Development, Alaska has 11 economic development entities called “ARDORs” - Alaska Regional Development Organizations. Their mission is to prepare and implement regional development strategies. Through these strategies, local knowledge, and coordinated implementation, ARDORs champion economic development planning for Alaska’s regions and communities by leveraging baseline support provided by the State of Alaska.

As partners of the state and leaders of regional economic development efforts, ARDORs serve as conduits to a network of economic development programs and support services for their regions, communities, and businesses. Although ARDORs have much in common and implement similar scopes of work, the form and function of each ARDOR is customized to the region. Decisions are made by elected or appointed boards of directors that reflect the economic diversity and character of the region.

#### **Regional Economic Development Strategies**

As provided by Alaska Administrative Code (3 AAC 57.090), ARDORs are required to develop and implement regional economic development strategies or similar economic development plans. These strategies or plans are commonly referred to as comprehensive economic development strategies that satisfy the following requirements:

- Fact-gathering, to assure the region understands the current development situation;
- Identification of potential resources that serve as assets for economic development initiatives;
- Establishment of goals and objectives to guide direction of economic development activities;
- Production of a strategy for regional and local economic development that includes a work plan detailing the methods, resources, responsibilities, and schedules for implementing the strategy; and
- Development of a set of regional and local economic profiles for every community within the region.

#### **Work Plans**

Further, each ARDOR develops its own customized work plan for addressing regional economic development needs. Although each plan includes region-specific goals, objectives, and strategies, they all include the following broad goals:

- Facilitating development of a healthy regional economy that results in sustainable business growth, new business investment, and economic diversification;
- Identifying and working to eliminate regional economic development barriers;
- Developing and implementing a comprehensive economic development strategy;
- Coordinating regional planning efforts that result in new employment and business opportunities;
- Working to enable multiple communities to collaborate and pool limited resources;
- Strengthening partnerships with public, private, and non-government organizations; and
- Providing technical assistance to encourage business startup, retention, and expansion.

The work plans are available on the Alaska Department of Commerce, Community & Economic Development website at:

<https://www.commerce.alaska.gov/web/ded/DEV/ARDORs/DevelopmentStrategies.aspx> .

## Coordination

The AWIB and DOLWD coordinate with the ARDORS in a variety of ways:

- DOLWD staff are in regular contact with the ARDOR program manager to discuss workforce and economic development activities, needs, and opportunities;
- The Director of the Division of Economic Development, which houses the ARDOR program, is that department's designee on the AWIB, and brings the ARDOR voice to discussions;
- ARDORS participated in providing public input into the WIOA plan and will continue to provide input to DOLWD on implementation of the plan; and
- ARDORS have been awarded several grants from DOLWD for capacity-building for programs that tie directly in with education and training.

ARDORS also maintain robust partnerships with education, training, and economic development entities within their state-defined region to foster growth in that region. At the core of the ARDOR mission is economic development that retains and creates well-compensated jobs. Once the jobs are available, the task of providing motivated, skilled, and reliable workers tailored for those jobs must also be accomplished. The ARDORS provide communication, collaboration, and knowledge of rural regions of the state to help inform the enhancement of the workforce investment system.

### b. State Operating Systems and Policies

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include a description of the State operating systems and policies that will support the implementation of the State strategy described in **Section II Strategic Elements** . This includes—

#### 1. The State operating systems that will support the implementation of the State's strategies. This must include a description of—

##### A. State operating systems that support coordinated implementation of State strategies (e.g., labor market information systems, data systems, communication systems, case-management systems, job banks, etc.).

### State Operating Systems and Policies

#### Support of implementation of the State's strategies

#### Coordinated implementation of State strategies

#### State Databases

Alaska has databases containing much of the relevant data (wage records, student records from the Department of Education & Early Development (EED), the University of Alaska (UA), Permanent Fund Dividend data, and training program participant data from the DOLWD's Individual Case Management (ICM) System. DOLWD's Research and Analysis Section was awarded a Workforce Data Quality Initiative grant from U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) to modernize its database management system and produce dashboards. There is regular communication among core programs as the state works to incorporate labor market information and job seeker needs while capturing this work in various data systems.

The primary vehicle for disseminating workforce information to internal and external customers is the internet. The Alaska Job Center (AJC) home page includes "Labor Market Information" as a main link with many other related links, including "Business/Employer Connection" and "Job Seeker Resources." The site is used in all AJC resource rooms. Information is available to businesses and job seekers as well as staff and is a separate category that is more visible on the main page. The site is available to anyone with an internet connection, including libraries, schools, work sites, and homes. The state also

produces a monthly magazine, *Alaska Economic Trends*, which is prepared by DOLWD's Research and Analysis Section and distributed to businesses and individual subscribers, as well as published on the web.

Alaska continues to leverage and support understanding of labor market information, particularly as it relates to high-wage, high-demand industries, to the One-Stop operator responsible for determining and negotiating individual training accounts, and delivering the majority of WIOA Title I-B Adult and Dislocated Worker services. Labor Market Information staff work with local office staff upon request to explain how the state and local economies operate, how to assess occupational employment opportunities at the state and local level, and how to use the tools and information available on the Research and Analysis Section's website to obtain training and navigate career transitions. In this era of consumer choice, labor market information creates informed consumers who are able to make better decisions about personal career development.

AJCs use a variety of web-based systems that are essential in supporting state workforce development strategies. The Alaska Career Information System, America's Career InfoNet, America's Service Locator, O\*NET OnLine, Alaska's Labor Exchange System (ALEXsys), and America's Job Bank websites and services are all available in AJC resource rooms and any location with an internet connection.

Alaska's core programs utilize separate systems for data collection and reporting. A data working group representing the core programs will meet on a regular basis to determine how the systems may be integrated.

#### **WIOA Title I-B - Youth, Adult, and Dislocated Worker**

Title I-B programs use the Individual Case Management (ICM) system, allowing AJC staff delivering adult and dislocated worker services and sub-recipients delivering youth services to maintain comprehensive records documenting interaction with participants. This includes planned and actual services for participants, training and supportive service-related costs, Individual Employment Plans, Individual Service Strategies, referrals to partner agencies, and funding amounts from each of the partner services involved in the participant's service strategy.

Youth program funds are administered using the web-based Electronic Grants Administration and Management System (EGrAMS). The system provides consistent and standard user interfaces to handle the process from grant application entry to closeout and uses a comprehensive security framework for user authentication and authorization.

#### **Title II - Adult Basic Education**

Alaska's Adult Basic Education (ABE) programs report individual student data into the Alaska Statewide ABE Database. The database is available to ABE program staff only and is accessed through myAlaska, which is a state-managed system for Secure Single Sign-on and Signature or authentication, allowing citizens to interact with multiple State of Alaska services through a single username and password.

#### **Title III - The Wagner-Peyser System**

The Division of Employment and Training Services (DETS) is supported by a fully-developed automated service delivery and management information system called ALEXsys. ALEXsys is a Virtual AJC system that has been extensively modified and maintained in-state based on business practices and federal requirements. ALEXsys is a valuable tool for clients looking for work, job search assistance, training, or career exploration. Registered employers can post jobs, view resumes of qualified candidates, and access a wide range of economic and labor market information. ALEXsys provides staff with the online tools to deliver, track, and report on Wagner-Peyser services for job seekers and employers. Automated interfaces are used to communicate and exchange information between ALEXsys and the Unemployment Insurance (UI) wage system, the job training services, and the ICM database, to facilitate better delivery of services and fulfill federal reporting requirements.

## **Title IV - Vocational Rehabilitation**

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) utilizes a management information system called AWARE. AWARE was developed based on Vocation Rehabilitation (VR) business practices and federal requirements. AWARE offers a comprehensive set of case, financial, and organizational modules. The features and procedures in AWARE are consistent and standardized throughout all modules, and are designed around the natural flow of the VR case process, making it intuitive for VR Counselors.

AWARE VR consists of 17 modules, approximately 300 data pages (screens), more than 350 reports, and a central database with over 330 tables. From AWARE VR, rehabilitation staff can perform all tasks and collect and access all data required to do the work of case management. AWARE software is updated regularly to meet Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) federally mandated reporting requirements and to produce the data file for uploading to the RSA. This software is being upgraded to include reporting elements for the Participant Individualized Record Layout and new data elements needed to collect new information for the proposed performance measures.

### **B. Data-collection and reporting processes used for all programs and activities, including those present in one-stop centers\*.**

#### **Data-collection and reporting processes used for all programs and activities, including those present in one-stop centers[1].**

Core program staff and sub-recipients are responsible for the collection of data and subsequent entry into the applicable data systems. The core programs that are required to report wage data coordinate with DOLWD's Research and Analysis Section to automate the compiling of wage data. Strict data-sharing agreements are adhered to when determining access levels and handling of wage data and participant information to ensure compliance with confidentiality agreements. Wage data are used for reporting on the quarterly and annual reports. These data are also used in reporting pre- and post-training earnings change and various state level reports, including ad hoc reporting.

#### **Youth, Adult, and Dislocated Worker**

Data are collected from program participants in several ways. The Youth, Adult, and Dislocated Worker programs require a paper application; the information is then entered into the ICM system by AJC staff or grantee staff. Wagner-Peyser participants complete an on-line registration, and subsequent service information is system-generated based on the participant's activity in ALEXsys or it may be manually entered by AJC staff.

#### **ABE**

ABE data are collected from ABE program staff that enter individual student data into the Alaska Statewide ABE Database. The data are used to manage programs, for program improvement, and for producing the reports required by Title II to be submitted to the federal government.

#### **DVR**

DVR data are collected by paper application forms and one-on-one interviews. Data are also collected outside of the system to validate disability and public support dollars. AWARE is used to maintain continuous case information and documentation to meet the goal of successful employment for the participant.

#### **SCSEP**

The USDOL provides the SCSEP Performance and Results Quarterly Progress Report (SPARQ) database system. The system is an efficient method for monitoring grantees' and sub-recipients' data collection, reporting, and performance. By having all

SCSEP grantees and sub-recipients use a standardized database, USDOL is able to support the quality of the information used to assess the effectiveness of the SCSEP program. The database is designed to accomplish the following:

1. Provide tools that help sub-recipients analyze participant eligibility and the causes of performance successes and failures;
2. Match data elements against source documents to verify compliance with federal definitions, which provides sub-recipients the opportunity to correct any identified problems;
3. Ensure that critical eligibility and performance data are used to meet the Employment and Training Administration's (ETA) Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) responsibilities and that mandated performance goals are reasonably accurate by calculating an error rate for each data element validated;
4. Minimize the burden on grantees by providing a web-based data validation system that displays individual participant records and provides built in random samples, validation worksheets, and automated validation reports; and
5. Further minimize the burden on grantees by selecting the smallest possible validation samples necessary to calculate valid error rates.

\* For the PY 2016 state plan, descriptions of data collection and reporting processes need only include currently known indicators.

**2. The State policies that will support the implementation of the State's strategies (e.g., co-enrollment policies and universal intake processes where appropriate). In addition, describe the State's process for developing guidelines for State-administered one-stop partner programs' contributions to a one-stop delivery system, including benchmarks, and its guidance to assist local boards, chief elected officials, and local one-stop partners in determining equitable and stable methods of funding infrastructure in accordance with sec. 121(h)(1)(B). Beginning with the state plan modification in 2018 and for subsequent state plans and state plan modifications, the State must also include such guidelines.**

**Policies to support the implementation of the State's strategies (e.g., co-enrollment policies and universal intake processes where appropriate).**

With the implementation of WIOA, outdated policies were re-written to ensure WIOA compliance. The core programs worked together to eliminate duplication of policies. Additionally, One-Stop provider agreements and local Memorandums of Understanding are being reviewed to ensure alignment with this Combined Plan.

These policies will all be accessible on DOLWD's public website and will be communicated to AJC staff and sub-recipients to ensure they have full understanding of the most current policies and methods for compliance. It is important to ensure that policies are reasonable and necessary and provide adequate flexibility while meeting Alaska's strategic goals and vision. All WIOA-related policies are listed in the table below. Policy documents for Adult, Youth, Dislocated Worker; Wagner-Peyser; and AWIB will be available here: <http://labor.state.ak.us/wioa/home.htm>. Vocational Rehabilitation policy documents are available here: [http://www.labor.state.ak.us/dvr/policy\\_temp.htm](http://www.labor.state.ak.us/dvr/policy_temp.htm).

**Figure 17. WIOA Policies**

<b>WIOA Adult, Youth, and Dislocated Worker and Wagner-Peyser Policies</b>	<b>Policy</b>
Eligible Training Provider List	07-501
Youth Program Eligibility	07-502
High Concentration of Eligible Youth	07-503
Cash Management for Grants	07-504
Co-enrollment	07-505
Equal Opportunity Discrimination Complaints	07-506
Grant Award and Appeal	07-507
Participant Performance Data Collection	07-508
Military Veteran Priority of Service	07-509
Program Complaint and Appeal	07-510
Property Management	07-511
Registrant Family Income	07-512
Sanctions for Non-Compliance	07-513
Self-Sufficiency	07-514
Work Experience	07-515
Alaska Job Center Universal Access for Individuals with Disability	07-516
Priority Populations - Adult Program	07-517
Funding Distribution - Within Local Area Allocation and Reallocation	07-518
Allocating Wagner-Peyser Staff to Alaska Job Centers	07-519
Allowable Costs	07-520
Support Services	07-521
Incentives - Youth Program	07-522
Grant Monitoring	07-523
Local Area Designation	07-XXX
<b>Alaska Workforce Investment Board Policies</b>	<b>Policy</b>
Conflict of Interest for State or Local Board member	Addressed in Ethics Act Procedures for Boards and Commissions AS 39.52.010 and 9 AAC 52.120
Provide public access to meetings and information on activities of State and Local Boards	Addressed in Alaska Administrative Procedures Act - AS 44.62.310
Criteria for appointment of local AWIB members.	Not Applicable. Alaska, as a single board state, meets the requirements for state board members and appointments.
Certification of Local Boards every two years	Not Applicable, as Alaska is a single board state.
Alternative Entity for State Board meets WIOA and legal requirements	Addressed in Administrative Order 182, SB 142 and Alaska’s Unified Workforce Plan (2000-2005)
How the State Board helps determine methods and factors of distribution and how the state consults with chief elected officials in determining the distributions.	Refer to DETS Policy 07-518

<b>Vocational Rehabilitation Policies - available at <a href="http://www.labor.state.ak.us/dvr/policy_temp.htm">http://www.labor.state.ak.us/dvr/policy_temp.htm</a></b>	<b>Policy</b>
Co-enrollment	07-505
Ethics	CS 1.0
Confidentiality	CS 2.0
Informed Choice	CS 3.0
Appeals	CS 4.0
Application	CS 5.0
Eligibility	CS 6.0
Trial Work	CS 7.0
Significance of Disabilities	CS 8.0
Financial Participation	CS 9.0
Individualized Plan for Employment	CS 10.0
Vocational Rehabilitation Services	CS 11.0
Supported Employment	CS 12.0
Self-Employment	CS 13.0
Closure	CS 14.0
Post-Employment	CS 15.0
Transition Services and Pre-Employment Transition Services	CS 16.0
Order of Selection	CS 17.0

### **3. State Program and State Board Overview**

#### **A. State Agency Organization**

Describe the organization and delivery systems at the State and local levels for the programs covered in the plan, including the organizational structure. Include an organizational chart.

#### **State Program and State Board Overview**

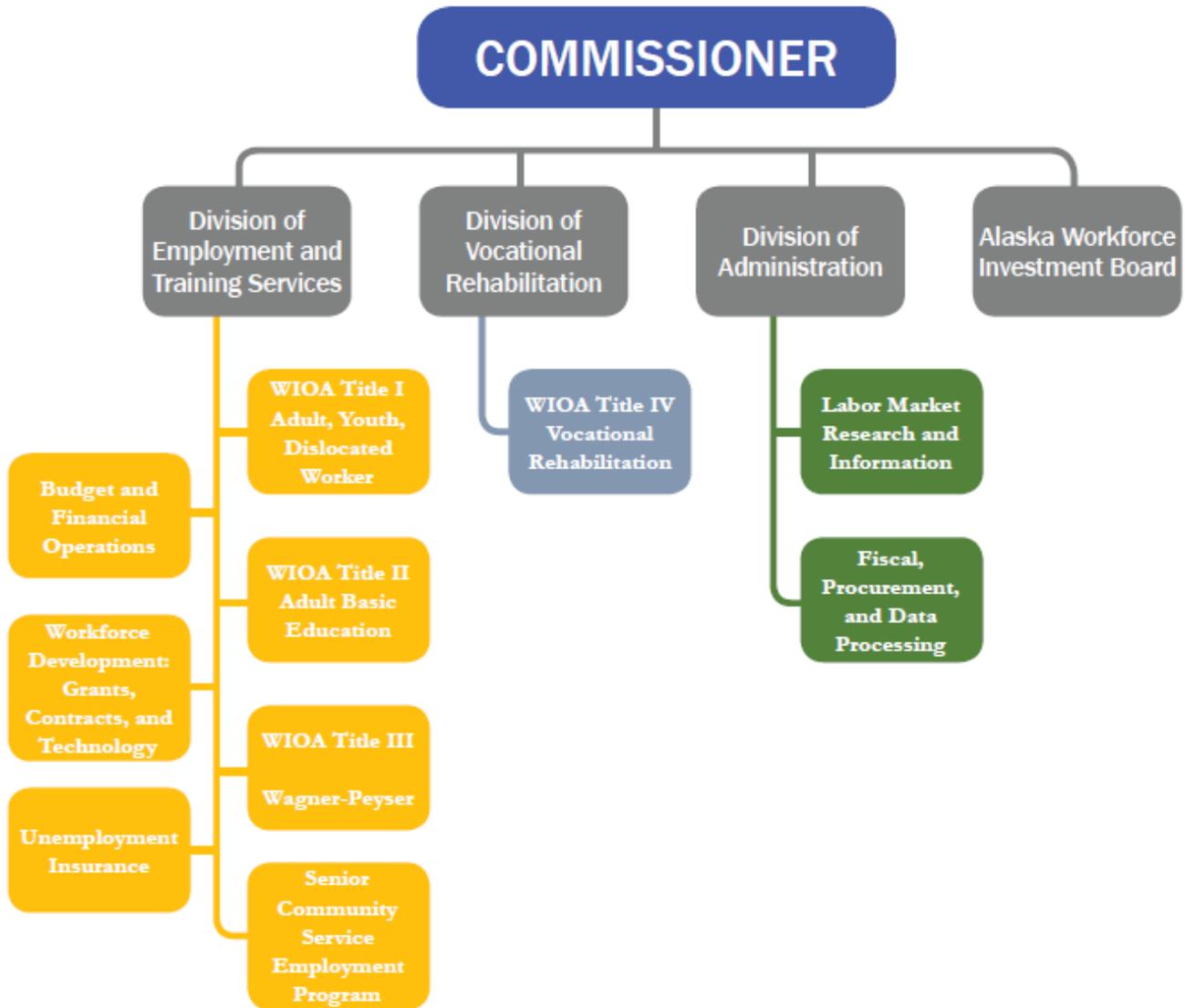
##### **State Agency Organization.**

All WIOA core programs and SCSEP are housed within the Alaska DOLWD. WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth (WIOA Title I–B), ABE (WIOA Title II), Wagner–Peyser (WIOA Title III), and the SCSEP program are administered by the Division of Employment and Training Services (DETS). The DVR administers WIOA Title IV, Vocational Rehabilitation.

The AWIB oversees the WIOA core programs and several state employment and training programs including STEP, the Alaska Construction Academies, and the TVEP, with administrative support provided by DETS.

DETS administers the Trade Act and Work Opportunity Tax Credit programs and operates the Alaska Job Centers, a proud partner of the American Job Center Network, with 17 AJCs across the state. AJC staff provide Wagner–Peyser and Title I–B career services, Title I–B Adult and Dislocated Worker Individual Training Accounts and training related supportive services, STEP training and supportive services, SCSEP OJT, and services to employers through the AJC business connection staff. Figure 18 shows the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development Organizational Chart for WIOA programs.

Figure 18 Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development WIOA Organizational Chart



Under WIOA, face-to-face personal services are the foundation of the service delivery system through our 16 AJCs across the state. Wagner-Peyser and Title 1 B programs are represented in all 16 AJCs. ABE (Title II) is allocated to statewide grantees and a standard referral mechanism from the AJCs to the grantees has been established. Title IV Vocational Rehabilitation is co-located in several of the AJCs across the state. In AJCs that aren't co-located with an on-site Vocational Rehabilitation office, the standard referral method is used.

Under WIOA, AJC staff will identify the specific needs of each client by conducting an initial assessment to determine individual skill, aptitude, and ability levels, and the need for supportive services. This supports our "no wrong door" approach to services and will eliminate duplication of effort and the tiered (core, intensive and training) structure to entrance into a funded training or education plan, receipt of a credential, or access to other services under the WIOA core programs. AJC staff will provide a menu of "career services" to clients who are job ready. For clients who need additional training, education, credentials, or other services, the AJCs act as an access point in the referral process and help coordinate the introduction to other programs and services. The AJCs have built strong partnerships in their communities with a strong emphasis on seamless service delivery to clients.

Training and education will align with the state’s economic and workforce needs as identified by the AWIB. WIOA core program services will be delivered in-person or itinerantly through the AJCs or electronically at the client’s convenience.

Upon entering an AJC, each client will be assessed as to how individual needs can best be met. This initial assessment includes self-identification of veteran and other eligible person status to ensure receipt of Priority of Service (POS). Any client who identifies as a veteran will also be assessed for eligibility and assistance through the Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JVSG). Customers seeking services and assistance through ALEXsys are also assessed for POS and JVSG eligibility. Those eligible for POS will be able to view job postings up to 24 hours before non-veterans. Additionally, JVSG-funded staff members are located in areas of the state that have the largest veteran populations. All local areas without on-site JVSG-funded staff are served itinerantly or electronically.

WIOA core program staff will co-enroll eligible participants to leverage resources and funding. Co-enrollment ensures access to a wide array of comprehensive, vitally-important services like in-depth assessments, interest inventories, reviews of transferable skills, and vocational training, and also to support services such as child care and local transportation. These partnerships will generate positive outcomes resulting in meaningful, sustainable employment. Customers can also participate in self-service activities through ALEXsys including job search, labor market information, and orientation to AJC services. Customers who view our public website or who are enrolled in ALEXsys periodically receive updated information about job trends and opportunities, training academies, and upcoming career fairs throughout the state.

## **B. State Board**

Provide a description of the State Board, including—

### **State Board**

#### **Membership Roster**

The AWIB is authorized by Alaska statute and comprised of members appointed by the governor. The AWIB operates a single statewide board under an Alternative Entity State Board designation through the USDOL. Several of the governor’s cabinet members are seated on the AWIB, including the lieutenant governor and the commissioners of Labor and Workforce Development; Health & Social Services; Education & Early Development; and Commerce, Community & Economic Development. Board membership also includes a representative from the University of Alaska system and representatives from postsecondary vocational education, secondary vocational education, ABE, and public education. Four members of the board represent business and industry, and four represent organized labor. Additional board members include one who has professional experience with individuals with developmental disabilities, a member who is a veteran, a member from an organization representing the employment and training needs of Alaska Natives, and additional members from the private sector. A complete member roster is included below.

The Alaska Department of Labor Workforce Development has requested the Governor of Alaska appoint two chief local elected officials to the Alaska Workforce Investment Board in compliance with the Alaska statutes that govern the process for appointing new board members.

#### **1. Membership roster**

Provide a membership roster for the State Board, including members’ organizational affiliations.

**Figure 19. Alaska Workforce Investment Board Membership Roster\***

Name	Organization	Address	Phone	E-mail
1. Lt. Governor Byron Mallott	State of Alaska	P.O. Box 110015 Juneau, AK 99811	465-3520 269-7460	byron.mallott@alaska.gov
Lt. Governor's Designee: Gerad Godfrey	Lt. Governor's Office State of Alaska	550 W 7 <sup>th</sup> Ave Anchorage, AK 99501	269-7450	gerad.godfrey@alaska.gov
2. DOLWD Commissioner Heidi Drygas	Dept. of Labor and Workforce Development	P.O. Box 111149 Anchorage, AK 99501	465-2700	heidi.drygas@alaska.gov
DOLWD Designee: Greg Cashen	Dept. of Labor and Workforce Development	P.O. Box 111149 Juneau, AK 99802	465-2700	greg.cashen@alaska.gov
3. EED Commissioner	Dept. of Education & Early Development	P.O. Box 110500 Juneau, AK 99811	465-2800	
EED Designee: Curtis Clough	Dept. of Education & Early Development	P.O. Box 110500 Juneau, AK 99811	465-8730	curtis.clough@alaska.gov
4. DHSS Commissioner Valerie Davidson	Dept. of Health & Social Services	P.O. Box 110601 Juneau, AK 99811	465-3030	valerie.davidson@alaska.gov
DHSS Designee:	Dept. of Health & Social Services	P.O. Box 110601 Juneau, AK 99811		
5. DCCED Commissioner Chris Hladick	Dept. of Commerce, Community & Economic Development	P.O. Box 110804 Juneau, AK 99811	465-5459	chris.hladick@alaska.gov
DCCED Designee: Ethan Tyler	Dept. of Commerce, Community & Economic Development	550 W. 7 <sup>th</sup> Ave. Ste. 1770 Anchorage, AK 99501	269-4048	ethan.tyler@alaska.gov
6. University of Alaska System Fred Villa	Workforce Programs	P.O. Box 755200 Fairbanks, AK 99775	450-8008 450-8002	fred.villa@alaska.edu
7. Ken J. Peltier Postsecondary Education, Vocational Education, Industry	Alaska Technical Training and Consultation	P.O. Box 2433 Palmer, AK 99645	244-0238	alasken@kw.com alaskencountry@ gmail.com
8. Margaret Cowan Secondary Vocational Education	Education Consultant	18005 Pt. Stephens Road Juneau, AK 99801	789-8450	peggy.cowan.ak@ gmail.com
9. Mike Woods Public Education	Anchorage School District King Career Center	2650 E NL Blvd. Anchorage, AK 99508	742-8964 230-4136	woods_mike@asdk12.org
10. David Alexander Adult Basic Education	Nine Star Education and Employment Services	16452 Noble Point Drive Anchorage, AK 99516	339-0810 301-4888	davida@ninestar.com
11. Kathy Craft Professional with Experience in Developmental Disabilities	Alaska Health Workforce Coalition	1116 Pickering Drive Fairbanks, AK 99709	388-9417	kcraft@uaa.alaska.edu
12. Mike Tucker Native Employment and Training Organization	Knik Tribe	4205 Charing Cross Circle Anchorage, AK 99504	529-5650	mtucker@kniktribe.org
13. Pearl A. Strub Business/Industry	Bristol Bay Economic Development Corporation	P.O. Box 493 Dillingham, AK 99576	842-4370 317-0844 843-2695	pearl@bbedc.com

Name	Organization	Address	Phone	E-mail
14. Larry Bell, Chair Business/Industry	National Electrical Contractors Assn. of Alaska	712 W. 36 <sup>th</sup> Avenue Anchorage, AK 99503	561-1958 244-4166	larry@alaskaneca.org
15. Doug B. Ward Business/Industry	Director of Shipyard Development Vigor Alaska	P.O. Box 9470 Ketchikan, AK 99901	225-7199 617-4726	doug.ward@ vigorindustrial.com
16. Florian Borowski Vice Chair Business/Industry	Schlumberger	6411 A. St. Ste. 400 Anchorage, AK 99501	748-3521	fborowski@slb.com
17. John MacKinnon Private Sector	Associated General Contractors of Alaska	8005 Schoon Street Anchorage, AK 99518	561-5354	john@agcak.org
18 Kurt Kuhne Private Sector	Yuut Elitnaurviat	P.O. Box 869 Bethel, AK 99559	543-0992 545-0123	kkuhne@yuut.org
19. James Hastings Veteran	Alaska's Healing Hearts	860 North Plymouth Cir. Wasilla, AK 99654	233-1527 232-2527	ahh-james@outlook.com
20. Marcus Trivette Private Sector	Brice, Inc.	P.O. Box 61202 Fairbanks, AK 99706	452-2512 978-3025	marcust@briceinc.com
21. Bruce Bustamante Private Sector	Anchorage Chamber of Commerce	1016 W. 6 <sup>th</sup> Ave. Ste. 301 Anchorage, AK 99501	272-2401 351-0185	bruce@ anchoragechamber.org
22. Kevin Pomeroy Organized Labor	Laborers Union Local 942	970 Gold Mine Trail Fairbanks, AK 99712	456-4584 322-0942	kpomeroy@local942.net
23. Corey Baxter Organized Labor	International Union of Operating Engineers Local 302	9309 Glacier Hwy Bldg A Ste 105 Juneau, AK 99801	586-3850	cbaxter@iuoe302.org
24. Doug Tansy Organized Labor	International Brother- hood of Electrical Workers Local 1547	P.O. Box 10126 Fairbanks, AK 99710	456-4248 590-4663	dtansy@ibew1547.org
25. Gary Dixon Organized Labor	Alaska Teamsters Union	520 East 34 <sup>th</sup> Ave Anchorage, AK 99503	751-8591 250-0027	gdixon@akteamsters.com

**\* Roster current at time of initial WIOA Plan Submission, March 2016**

## 2. Board Activities

Provide a description of the activities that will assist State Board members and staff in carrying out State Board functions effectively.

### Board Activities

The AWIB meets three times annually as a full board with each meeting held in a different region of the state. The statewide board meetings serve as an opportunity to engage with regional stakeholders and sector partners. In statewide board meetings, members adopt resolutions or motions designed to provide policy guidance, program oversight, and improvements to Alaska's workforce system. Between the three statewide board meetings, members of the AWIB serve on one or more of the following standing committees: Workforce Readiness & Employment Placement; Policy & Planning; Assessment & Evaluation; Legislative; and the Executive Committee. Committees meet bimonthly, with the exception of the

Executive Committee, which meets monthly. Through the committee structure, AWIB members engage in examining the workforce system to identify areas for improvement, build sector partnerships, develop sector strategies, evaluate policies and programs, research and recommend legislative initiatives, and identify areas of improvement in services for Alaska's adults and youth who experience barriers to employment.

#### **4. Assessment and Evaluation of Programs and One-Stop Program Partners**

##### **A. Assessment of Core Programs**

Describe how the core programs will be assessed each year based on State performance accountability measures described in section 116(b) of WIOA. This State assessment must include the quality, effectiveness, and improvement of programs broken down by local area or provider. Such state assessments should take into account local and regional planning goals.

##### **Assessment and Evaluation of Programs and One-Stop Partners**

###### **Assessment of Core Programs**

One way to measure effectiveness is to analyze numbers and percentages of participants going to work. Alaska has the unique ability to match employment and wage records using the Permanent Fund Dividend (PFD) database. The state has a history of working with partners such as the Department of Education & Early Development (EED), the University of Alaska (UA), and sub-recipients to provide participant information, within the confines of privacy, which allows effective analyses.

Alaska is committed to the use of performance data to evaluate programs and partners. Alaska will use the joint performance measures found in Section 116 of WIOA to measure and evaluate program effectiveness, to help improve program evaluations, and to remove potential barriers to integration of services. These joint performance measures promote consistency by creating common definitions of success.

The system will be monitored and evaluated on an ongoing basis using the reports required for federal and state reporting as well as ad hoc reports generated from the databases used to capture service delivery data. Leadership and program staff will review these reports and communicate with core program operators and partners to provide technical assistance on areas needing improvement and to obtain information on best practices to share.

Performance levels will be established through a negotiation process with the Employment and Training Administration (ETA) on a biannual basis. A state team representing the core programs will review actual performance outcomes and determine proposed levels for each core program. This team will be responsible for coordinating with ETA to negotiate and report statewide performance levels as required by WIOA.

All core programs will be responsible for establishing a system for collecting, reviewing, and evaluating performance required by WIOA. Each core program will be responsible for compiling performance data for that program and will be responsible for submitting program reports as required. Each core program will be responsible for establishing and implementing performance improvement plans, if needed, based on the evaluation of performance data.

Monitoring and assessments related to programs and activities authorized by WIOA will be an on-going activity. These activities will allow the AWIB to identify how effectively the state's programs are achieving the vision and goals of the U.S. Departments of Education and Labor and of DOLWD. The results will provide the basis for making statewide and regional judgments regarding the effectiveness of the WIOA programs administered within Alaska's workforce development system.

All performance data required by Section 116 of WIOA will be collected from each core program and compiled into a combined report as required.

Title II requires the state Adult Basic Education (ABE) office to monitor and evaluate the quality of, and the improvement in, adult education and literacy activities. ABE programs will be monitored with a formal monitoring document on a predetermined schedule. Routine auditing will be done through desk audits of student records and monthly reviews of program data to assess progress in meeting the performance accountability measures based on indicators in Section 116. Programs not meeting the negotiated levels will receive increased technical assistance. ABE reports are submitted to the federal office annually.

The overall strategy to improve core programs, grant administration, on-site monitoring, and assessment of programs is a crucial element for DOLWD's delivery of service and ensures that limited dollars are spent well. Alaska's assessment of programs is based on the delivery of high-quality, outcome-focused job seeker and business services. Alaska's workforce development system is demand-driven and fully integrated, and links employers to job seekers in order to promote the success of workers and businesses. Alaska uses the USDOL Core Monitoring Guide to ensure that oversight and monitoring practices reinforce USDOL principles while ensuring program outcomes are achieved and a high level of integrity is maintained. The guide provides a consistent framework and starting point for all on-site grant-monitoring responsibilities. The assessment will include the quality, effectiveness, and improvement of programs broken down by local area or provider.

## **B. Assessment of One-Stop Partner Programs**

Describe how other one-stop delivery system partner program services and Combined State Plan partner programs included in the plan will be assessed each year. Such state assessments should take into account local and regional planning goals.

### **Assessment of One-Stop Program Partner Programs**

The assessment of One-Stop delivery system partner program services must be based on participant outcomes identified under their statutorily required performance and reporting requirements. However, the WIOA joint performance measures, which consist of six customer outcomes specific to core indicators or performance and employer satisfaction, demonstrate value in promoting integration of services and boosting accessibility and transparency within the workforce system. Therefore, if possible, the same measures and methodologies will be applied to other One-Stop partner programs that are applied to the core programs, in addition to any program-specific measures required by federal or state regulations.

The Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) has three common measures: entered employment, employment retention, and average earnings. It uses the USDOL Core Monitoring guide. This ensures that oversight and monitoring practices reinforce labor principles while ensuring program outcomes are achieved and a high level of integrity is maintained each year.

Regardless of whether a program is a core program or a partner program, or whether a measure is required by WIOA or partner program law and regulation, performance measures and performance evaluations will be applied at the customer level first and then may be aggregated by program or population.

## **C. Previous Assessment Results**

Beginning with the state plan modification in 2018 and for subsequent state plans and state plan modifications, provide the results of an assessment of the effectiveness of the core programs and other one-stop partner programs and Combined State Plan partner programs included in the Unified or Combined State plan during the preceding 2-year period (i.e. the 2-year period of the plan modification cycle). Describe how the State is adapting its strategies based on these assessments.

### **Previous Assessment Results**

The state will address this in the 2018 state plan modification and in subsequent state plans.

## D. Evaluation

Describe how the state will conduct evaluations and research projects on activities under WIOA core programs; how such projects will be coordinated with, and designed in conjunction with, State and local boards and with State agencies responsible for the administration of all respective core programs; and, further, how the projects will be coordinated with the evaluations provided for by the Secretary of Labor and the Secretary of Education under WIOA.

### Evaluations and research projects on activities under WIOA core programs

DOLWD will work with the AWIB to identify key evaluation criteria and research projects to assess the core programs. These projects will align with the evaluations provided for by the Secretary of Labor and Secretary of Education under WIOA.

## 5. Distribution of Funds for Core Programs

Describe the methods and factors the State will use in distributing funds under the core programs in accordance with the provisions authorizing such distributions.

### A. For Title I programs

For Title I programs, provide a description of the written policies that establish the State's methods and factors used to distribute funds to local areas for—

#### 1. Youth activities in accordance with WIOA section 128(b)(2) or (b)(3),

Alaska has implemented Within State Allocations Policy 07-518 that describes the methodology used in annually allocating Youth funds among local workforce areas in the state.

Alaska is a Single State Local Area and the DOLWD allocates funds to six regional economic and workforce areas established in this Combined State Plan. The six regions are: Northern, Interior, Southwestern, Southcentral, Gulf Coast and Southeast Alaska. The formula for regional distribution of resources targets are based upon state level needs and regional needs.

For the state level distribution of funds, five percent of Alaska's Youth federal allotment for statewide administration and ten percent for statewide projects will be reserved annually. From the balance, the Division of Employment and Training Services Director (DETS) or designee will determine the amount or percent of funding to be distributed to the economic regions. The most recent labor market, employment and unemployment data available from the DOLWD, Research and Analysis Section will be used to determine the allocation.

For the Youth program, as much as is practicable, from the total to be distributed between economic regions: 1. One third shall be allocated on the basis of the relative number of unemployed individuals in areas of substantial unemployment (census areas with an unemployment rate of 6.5% or higher) in each economic region compared to the total number of unemployed individuals in areas of substantial unemployment statewide; 2. One third shall be allocated on the basis of the relative excess number of unemployed individuals (census areas with an unemployment rate of 4.5% or higher) in each economic region compared to the total excess number of unemployed individuals statewide; and 3. One third shall be allocated on the basis of the relative number of disadvantaged youth in each economic region compared to the total number of disadvantaged youth statewide.

WIOA Youth allocations will be distributed primarily through competitive grants.

## **2. Adult and training activities in accordance with WIOA section 133(b)(2) or (b)(3),**

Alaska has implemented Within State Allocations Policy 07-518 that describes the methodology used in annually allocating funding for Adult employment and training activities among local workforce areas in the state.

Alaska is a Single State Local Area and funding is allocated to six regional economic and workforce areas established in this Combined State Plan. The six regions are: Northern, Interior, Southwestern, Southcentral, Gulf Coast and Southeast Alaska. The formula for regional distribution of resources targets are based upon state level needs and regional needs.

For the state level distribution of funds, five percent of the Adult federal allotment for statewide administration and ten percent for statewide projects is reserved annually. From the balance, the DETS Director or designee will determine the amount or percent of funding to be distributed to the economic regions. The most recent labor market, employment and unemployment data available from the DOLWD, Research and Analysis Section will be used to determine the allocation.

For the Adult program, as much as is practicable, from the total to be distributed between economic regions: 1. One fourth shall be allocated on the basis of the relative number of unemployed individuals in areas of substantial unemployment (census areas with an unemployment rate of 6.5% or higher) in each economic region compared to the total number of unemployed individuals in areas of substantial unemployment statewide; 2. One fourth shall be allocated on the basis of the relative excess number of unemployed individuals in each economic region compared to the total excess number of unemployed individuals statewide; 3. One fourth shall be allocated on the basis of the relative number of disadvantaged adults in each economic region compared to the total number of disadvantaged adults statewide; and 4. One fourth shall be allocated on the basis of the relative number of employed individuals in each economic region compared to the total number of employed individuals statewide.

Adult program allocations will be distributed through the job centers for Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) and Supportive Services, and potentially, through competitive grants. The DETS Director or designee may reallocate Adult funds between the economic regions to make effective and efficient use of the funds while taking into consideration statewide needs. The transfer of up to 100 percent of funds between the Adult and Dislocated Worker programs is allowed with approval from the DETS Director or designee.

## **3. Dislocated worker employment and training activities in accordance with WIOA section 133(b)(2) and based on data and weights assigned.**

Alaska has implemented Within State Allocations Policy 07-518 that describes the methodology used in annually allocating Dislocated Worker employment and training funds among local workforce areas in the state.

Alaska is a Single State Local Area and the DOLWD allocates funds to six regional economic and workforce areas established in this Combined State Plan. The six regions are: Northern, Interior, Southwestern, Southcentral, Gulf Coast and Southeast Alaska. The formula for regional distribution of resources targets are based upon state level needs and regional needs.

For the state level distribution of funds, the DOLWD will: 1. Reserve five percent of Alaska's Dislocated Worker federal allotments for statewide administration; 2. Reserve ten percent of Alaska's Dislocated Worker federal allotments for statewide projects; 3. Reserve up to twenty-five percent of the Dislocated Worker federal allotment for rapid response activities.

From the balance the DETS Director or designee will determine the amount or percent of funding to be distributed to the economic regions. The most recent labor market, employment and unemployment data available from the DOLWD, Research and Analysis Section will be used to determine the allocation.

For the Dislocated Worker program, as much as is practicable, from the total to be distributed between economic regions: 1. One fourth shall be allocated on the basis of the relative number of insured unemployed individuals in each economic

region compared to the total number of insured unemployed individuals statewide; 2. One fourth shall be allocated on the basis of the relative concentrations of unemployed individuals (census areas with an unemployment rate of 6.5% or higher) in each economic region compared to the total concentrations of unemployed individuals statewide; 3. One fourth shall be allocated on the basis of the relative number of long-term unemployed (15 weeks or more) individuals in each economic region compared to the total number of long-term unemployed individuals statewide; and 4. One fourth shall be allocated on the basis of the relative number of employed individuals in each economic region compared to the total number of employed individuals statewide.

Dislocated Worker allocations will be distributed through the job centers for Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) and Supportive Services, and potentially, through competitive grants. The DETS Director or designee may reallocate Dislocated Worker funds between the economic regions to make effective and efficient use of the funds while taking into consideration statewide needs. The transfer of up to 100 percent of funds between the Adult and Dislocated Worker programs is allowed with approval from the DETS Director or designee.

## **B. For Title II:**

### **1. Multi-year grants or contracts**

Describe how the eligible agency will award multi-year grants or contracts on a competitive basis to eligible providers in the State, including how eligible agencies will establish that eligible providers are organizations of demonstrated effectiveness.

Title II funds will be awarded as multi-year grants for three years each. Grants fund 13 regional programs which are competed within each region and serve as the main delivery system of ABE throughout Alaska. Two additional grants are competed statewide for Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education (IELCE) and for ABE services to be offered in the Department of Corrections' (DOC) correctional centers.

The 13 regional programs are funded through a formula that specifies a base budget allocation of \$50,000, a cost of living adjustment based on the Alaska Department of Education's Area Cost Factor Differentials used for the state's distribution to public school districts, and an adjustment for the number of adults in each region over the age of 18 who do not have a high school diploma as calculated from American Community Survey data. The division of the 13 regions basically follows the same regions established by the Alaska Native Regional Corporations. All of Alaska is not divided into counties or a parish, as is the case in other states, but all of Alaska is divided into Alaska Native Regional Corporations.

The amount of the corrections grant is determined from the law (section 222.(a)(1)) which states that it cannot be more than 20 percent of the 82.5 percent of the grant funds used to award sub grants. The fund amount of the Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education grant is the amount designated by the federal award each year.

Alaska issues one Request for Proposal (RFP) for all of the above named grants. Notice of availability of funds for Title II is published on the State of Alaska Public On-line Notice System. The RFP is attached as a PDF to the announcement, thus ensuring that all potential grantees have access to the same application. The rubric to score all of the applications is included. An announcement that the RFP is being published on the State of Alaska Public On-line Notice System is emailed to eligible providers that participated in the most recent statewide competition. Eligible providers, for the purposes of the RFP, are defined in Title II Section 203 (5).

For eligible providers who have previously received ABE funds, three years of past performance data will be used to determine demonstrated effectiveness, with particular attention to past effectiveness in serving eligible individuals who have low levels of literacy. An eligible provider that has not been previously funded under Title II of WIOA may demonstrate effectiveness by providing performance data related to its record of improving the skills of eligible individuals, particularly eligible individuals who have low levels of literacy, in the content domains of reading, writing, mathematics, English language acquisition, and other subject areas relevant to the services contained in the Alaska Adult Basic Education application for funds.

## 2. Ensure direct and equitable access

Describe how the eligible agency will ensure direct and equitable access to all eligible providers to apply and compete for funds and how the eligible agency will ensure that it is using the same grant or contract announcement and application procedure for all eligible providers.

DOLWD will announce the availability of funds for Title II ABE through the State of Alaska Public On-line Notice System. A copy of the RFP is attached to the announcement. The announcement and the RFP will both reference WIOA Title II's definition of "eligible provider." All known eligible providers that participated in the most recent statewide competition will be notified of the On-line Notice. During the initial period of the grant submission process, any eligible agency that contacts DOLWD with an interest in participating will be told how to access the On-line Notice System.

The same announcement, application, and process will be used for all applicants for each RFP issued by the State of Alaska ABE office. The State of Alaska ABE office conducts the grant application process and ensures that the same review process is used for all applications received. The ABE grant recipients are directly funded from the state DOLWD.

## C. Title IV Vocational Rehabilitation

In the case of a State that, under section 101(a)(2)(A)(i) of the Rehabilitation Act designates a State agency to administer the part of the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan under which VR services are provided for individuals who are blind, describe the process and the factors used by the State to determine the distribution of funds among the two VR agencies in the State.

### Title IV Vocational Rehabilitation

The DVR is a combined agency; therefore, this is not applicable.

## 6. Program Data

### A. Data Alignment and Integration

Describe the plans of the lead State agencies with responsibility for the administration of the core programs, along with the State Board, to align and integrate available workforce and education data systems for the core programs, unemployment insurance programs, and education through postsecondary education, and to the extent possible, the Combined State Plan partner programs included in this plan. The description of the State's plan for integrating data systems should include the State's goals for achieving integration and any progress to date.

**1. Describe the State's plans to make the management information systems for the core programs interoperable to maximize the efficient exchange of common data elements to support assessment and evaluation.**

### Data Alignment and Integration

#### Management information systems for the core programs interoperable

All participants are enrolled in ALEXsys, which captures services delivered by the AJCs. The database used for SCSEP is maintained by USDOL.

A state work group with representatives from each core program is tasked with determining how data integration can be achieved. This work group has met several times to address how program data are collected and shared. As each of the core programs has already spent considerable financial and workforce resources implementing unique software systems to

provide data for federal reporting and to monitor quality improvement, complete interoperability poses challenges. However, many core programs have been sharing participant information for statistical purposes for many years; this data-sharing will be continued and will be expanded where feasible. As the need for new data elements is identified, methods of collecting that data such that all core programs have shared access to it will be a primary consideration.

DOLWD has worked for years with EED, UA, and a variety of training providers. These existing relationships with state agencies and other training providers will support the sharing and integration of data.

For program performance measures based on employment and wages, DOLWD's Research and Analysis Section has integrated databases that are regularly used to determine, among other measures, employment status, wages, and continued residency in the state. Research and Analysis received a Workforce Data Quality Initiative grant used in part to modernize its data management systems and develop performance measure dashboards.

Although, as mentioned above, each core program has its unique software system, not all of those systems currently capture all of the common elements required for WIOA reporting. Modification of those software systems to capture all the necessary elements and integrate that data continues to be a high priority issue.

Pending a complete interoperability capability, an interim approach is the development of an interface that would allow access to the information from each core program for data reporting. Phase I of this effort, an interface between the primary WIOA database, Individual Case Management (ICM), and the Wagner-Peyser labor exchange services ALEXsys database, has been initiated. Lessons learned from this initial effort will be applied to the addition of databases from other core programs. In the meantime, work group members are working within their respective programs to develop workflow processes, implementation plans, and memorandums of understanding, and to include the required workforce and financial resources in their budgets for software upgrades and interface.

## **2. Describe the State's plans to integrate data systems to facilitate streamlined intake and service delivery to track participation across all programs included in this plan.**

### **Integration of data systems**

A state work group with representatives from each core program is evaluating the feasibility of a single point of data entry for any participant seeking services through the AJC. Some considerations are the practicality of using the existing applicant software systems to determine the program to which applicants should be referred; the possibility of having those referrals go to the specific programs electronically; and how this system either creates or alleviates barriers to services.

An interface that would allow access to the information from each core program as necessary for data reporting is under development. Phase I of this effort, an interface between the primary WIOA database, ICM, and the Wagner-Peyser labor exchange services ALEXsys database, has been initiated. One of the goals of this interface is to allow visibility into the services being provided to participants by other core programs. This will promote integrated service delivery, improved efficiency, and reduced duplication of services. Lessons learned from this initial interface-development effort will be applied to the inclusion of databases from other core programs. Work group members are working within their respective programs to develop workflow processes, implementation plans, and memorandums of understanding, and to include the required workforce and financial resources in their budgets for software upgrades and interface.

**3. Explain how the State board will assist the governor in aligning technology and data systems across required one-stop partner programs (including design and implementation of common intake, data collection, etc.) and how such alignment will improve service delivery to individuals, including unemployed individuals.**

**State board assists governor in aligning technology and data systems**

The AWIB will implement memorandums of understanding, as appropriate, to ensure that the required common data elements can be collected and stored, and to facilitate shared use by all core programs. This process can ensure that all the core programs are sharing resources to the fullest extent possible and that the process is transparent to the applicant. Inherent challenges in mandatory One-Stop partners' data security frameworks and the resultant barriers to sharing of data will be addressed as a database interface is developed.

This alignment will improve service delivery to individuals, including unemployed individuals, by helping to open lines of communication among staff, reduce duplication of service, and improve efficiency.

**4. Describe the State's plans to develop and produce the reports required under section 116, performance accountability system. (WIOA section 116(d)(2)).**

**Development and production of required reports**

The report elements identified in WIOA Section 116(d)(2) are significantly similar to reports currently being generated by DOLWD's Division of Employment and Training Services (DETS) and SCSEP. Through a Workforce Data Quality Initiative grant, dashboard performance measures will be developed that will contribute to the WIOA reporting.

Elements not currently being reported will be evaluated when specific regulations are published that clearly state the extent and timing of those new data elements, and a determination will be made as to how and by which program those elements will be reported.

*Planning Note: States should be aware that Section 116(i)(1) requires the core programs, local boards, and chief elected officials to establish and operate a fiscal and management accountability information system based on guidelines established by the Secretaries of Labor and Education. Separately, the Departments of Labor and Education anticipate working with States to inform future guidance and possible information collection(s) on these accountability systems. States should begin laying the groundwork for these fiscal and management accountability requirements, recognizing that adjustments to meet the elements above may provide opportunity or have impact on such a fiscal and management accountability system.*

**B. Assessment of Participants' Post-Program Success**

Describe how lead State agencies will use the workforce development system to assess the progress of participants who are exiting from core programs in entering, persisting in, and completing postsecondary education, or entering or remaining in employment. States may choose to set additional indicators of performance.

**Assessment of Participants' Post-Program Success**

The existing primary WIOA database, ICM, collects participant data allowing the reporting of, among other items, training completion, entered employment, job retention, entered education, and earnings change. Longitudinal employment-related information has been collected for many years; training- and education-related information is currently collected for training programs that report data to the Alaska DOLWD and for education through the University of Alaska system. Employment or education elements not currently being collected will be evaluated when specific regulations are published that clearly state the extent and timing of those new data elements, and a determination will be made as to how and by

which program those elements will be reported. State performance indicators are aligned with economic development opportunities, focused on in-demand occupations, and aligned with USDOL ETA policies.

Reports of employment- and education-related information will be evaluated to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the current services provided and the means for providing those services to inform continuous improvement.

Another topic under consideration is whether Alaska needs, and if it is financially viable, to have a common point of participant entry for current core program partner systems to reduce enrollment burden on clients and for them to see all core partner services available. Additional work groups will meet to set goals and timelines on topics including:

- Measuring core programs' effectiveness in Alaska;
- Increasing education for all core program partner staff on services all partner programs provide; and
- Updating current partner programs' intake/referral processes to be more partner-integrated and determine whether it is financially viable for certain parts to be automated to reduce barriers and burden to clients.

Alaska has two unique data sets that give it more options for developing indicators of performance. Determining who has left the state is made possible by accessing applications for the state's Alaska Permanent Fund Dividend, a program that distributes a share of oil-related state investment earnings each year to Alaska residents. Alaska also has more detailed information about worker occupations because it has been the only state with a history of collecting that information as part of employers' mandatory quarterly reporting under state Unemployment Insurance (UI) laws.

### **C. Use of Unemployment Insurance (UI) Wage Record Data**

Explain how the State will meet the requirements to utilize quarterly UI wage records for performance accountability, evaluations, and as a source for workforce and labor market information, consistent with Federal and State law. (This Operational Planning element applies to core programs.)

#### **Use of Unemployment Insurance (UI) Wage Record Data**

Alaska will continue to use quarterly UI wage records to look at outcomes in terms of occupations, wages, etc. The state will carefully control individuals' data and release only aggregated data consistent with federal and state regulations and statutes. DOLWD's Research and Analysis Section has a history of successfully working with various programs to obtain and analyze data while maintaining confidentiality and privacy safeguards.

### **D. Privacy Safeguards**

Describe the privacy safeguards incorporated in the State's workforce development system, including safeguards required by section 444 of the General Education Provisions Act (20 U.S.C. 1232g) and other applicable Federal laws.

#### **Privacy Safeguards**

Alaska will carefully control individuals' data and release only aggregated data consistent with federal and state regulations and statutes. DOLWD restricts access to microdata with file protocols, staff are familiar with working with confidential data, and they are required to take regular training with the Bureau of Labor Statistics to ensure they are using the most up-to-date procedures.

UI wage record data are securely transferred from the state's UI program to DOLWD's Research and Analysis Section through system extracts. The records are then reviewed for quality control and stored and accessed in restricted-access folders. Except where specifically allowed or required by state statute (AS 23.20.100) or federal regulation (20 CFR 603.5), the wage record data are only released or published in aggregated form so that names and other confidential information of individual workers and individual firms are never revealed.

The analysts and economists who work with the data receive annual confidentiality training on state procedures and protocols and participate in annual data confidentiality training on federal-state cooperative data programs with the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. In over 15 years of working with confidential K-12, university, and UI data, there has never been a breach of confidentiality or any type of accidental disclosure.

## **7. Priority of Service for Veterans**

Describe how the State will implement and monitor the priority of service provisions for veterans in accordance with the requirements of the Jobs for Veterans Act, codified at section 4215 of 38 U.S.C., which applies to all employment and training programs funded in whole or in part by the Department of Labor. States should also describe the referral process for veterans determined to have a significant barrier to employment to receive services from the Jobs for Veterans State Grants (JVSG) program's Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) specialist.

### **Priority of Service for Veterans**

#### **State Policies**

Alaska state policies ensure Priority Of Service (POS) to all covered persons and that they are identified at the initial point-of-entry whether in-person, at an AJC, or through ALEXsys.

After the Jobs for Veterans Act was enacted into Public Law 107-288, and after changes under the WIOA, the state revised, published, and issued an updated POS Policy 07-509. This policy requires that veterans and other covered persons under Public Law 107-288 receive POS under all employment and training programs funded by the USDOL.

DETS administers many programs that are covered by the laws, regulations, and policies encompassing POS. These include the WIOA Adult, Youth, and Dislocated Worker programs, Wagner-Peyser, Trade Act programs, National Emergency Grants, SCSEP, Helmets to Hardhats, and the Disability Employment Initiative (DEI).

#### **Staff Training**

All WIOA and Wagner-Peyser staff routinely receive training including specifics about the Jobs for Veterans Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act, and other legislation that impacts veteran priority, preference, and employability. AJC efforts focus on the initial assessment of veterans to facilitate delivery of career and training services, as well as conducting outreach to employers to promote veteran hire. POS education efforts include signage at all AJC entry points. Additionally, all AJC staff provide initial contact, POS, and general information.

#### **POS Definition**

POS means that eligible veterans and covered persons receive head-of-the-line privileges for all programs funded either in whole or in part by the USDOL. All recipients of WIOA funds for employment and training programs are required to identify those who are eligible for POS at the points-of-entry to programs, resources, and services. Once veterans or eligible persons meet a program's eligibility requirements, AJC staff ensure covered persons receive POS as specified. Other community service providers funded by WIOA or Wagner-Peyser agreements are aware of their requirement to provide POS to veterans and eligible persons.

#### **ALEXsys**

One feature of ALEXsys is the Veterans' Virtual Recruiter. This important tool sends messages to veterans when job orders meeting their pre-selected search criteria are in 'Open to Vets' status. This special status holds ALEXsys job orders for 24 hours so that staff can review them and alert veterans prior to releasing the job order to the public. ALEXsys also reminds employers that Alaska provides POS to veterans as required by law.

Each AJC manager directly monitors POS in his or her office and electronically files a weekly activity report to the central office through regional managers. Upon receiving them, a division assistant director checks the reports to ensure veterans receive services. DETS provides POS by moving veterans to the top of sign-up lists for workshops and other resources and through dedicated computers for use by veterans at the larger AJCs. As such, veterans and eligible persons receive services and resources before non-covered persons. Local offices annotate veteran status on resource room sign-in logs and staff members compile information for the managers. Regional managers monitor AJC activities by frequent connection with the AJC managers and through weekly or monthly reports.

### **Disabled Veterans' Outreach Programs**

Some AJCs have Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) specialists and Local Veterans' Employment Representative (LVER) staff funded by the Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JVSG). These staff members provide vital services to both veterans and employers seeking employment-related assistance. DETS complies with all federal guidance for JVSG staff and seeks to fully utilize the expertise of DVOPs and LVERs. DETS developed a referral process to direct veterans to the appropriate staff member to ensure a client-centered approach to the delivery of career and training services.

When job seekers indicate veteran status upon initial entry to an AJC, staff members are trained to engage them to determine if they are eligible for DVOP services. Veterans are asked a series of questions and handed a checklist of the eligibility criteria to see a DVOP, which is reviewed with the veteran. If veterans indicate they meet one of the eligibility criteria, staff attempt to immediately connect them with a DVOP. If a DVOP is unavailable, eligible veterans will receive the DVOP's contact information and staff will ensure the appropriate DVOP receives the veteran's information so they can connect with one another.

AJCs follow a team approach to serving customers, including providing services to veterans. Teams work together to support the roles of LVERs and DVOPs in providing services to veterans. All staff are trained to deliver as many services to veterans as possible to ease the burden on DVOPs. DETS encourages staff to engage veterans and insists that all AJC staff are veterans' representatives, not just JVSG-funded staff. The state follows all Special Grant Provisions, Veterans' Program Letters, USDOL/VETS Law 107- 288, and United States Code Title 38.

**8. Addressing the Accessibility of the One-Stop Delivery System for Individuals with Disabilities.** Describe how the one-stop delivery system (including one-stop center operators and the one-stop delivery system partners), will comply with section 188 of WIOA (if applicable) and applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.) with regard to the physical and programmatic accessibility of facilities, programs, services, technology, and materials for individuals with disabilities. This also must include a description of compliance through providing staff training and support for addressing the needs of individuals with disabilities. Describe the State's one-stop center certification policy, particularly the accessibility criteria.

### **Accessibility of the One-Stop System for Individuals with Disabilities**

The state's One-Stop system of Alaska Job Centers (AJCs) has developed a comprehensive approach to ensure accessibility and inclusion of all customers, including those with disabilities, to all facilities, programs, and services. Physical and programmatic accessibility are continuously evaluated with an annual Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) assessment and continuous improvement strategies planned and implemented when needed. Alaska will continue to refine the policies, training, and continuous improvement strategies to ensure compliance with WIOA and continued compliance with ADA.

#### **The One-Stop system's approach to ADA compliance includes:**

- Physical and programmatic accessibility;
- Staff training and accountability;
- Adaptive technology and other accommodations; and
- On-going survey of effectiveness and continuous improvement.

### **Physical and programmatic accessibility:**

- “Alaska Job Center Universal Access for Customers with Disabilities” policy plays a vital role in establishing the working-level framework for outlining and improving the accessibility, capacity, and accountability of AJCs to serve customers with disabilities. The policy covers both physical and programmatic accessibility within AJCs and outlines the assistive technologies available and required staff training;
- Each location has appropriate signage identifying the policy that no individual with a disability shall, by reason of such disability, be excluded from participation in, or be denied the benefit of, the services, programs, or activities of the AJCs;
- All outreach and marketing materials developed for distribution from the AJCs to partners, job seekers, and employers contain notice of the availability of auxiliary aids and services for needed accommodations to access programs and services; and
- Alaska maintains an ADA Compliance Program: <http://doa.alaska.gov/ada/>. Through the state ADA Coordinator’s Office, each department has its own designated ADA coordinator, who acts as a technical assistance provider and liaison for that department.

### **Training and accountability for all AJC staff:**

- As a result of two Disability Employment Initiative (DEI) grants, all AJC staff have received Disability Resource Coordinator I (DRC I) training, which includes awareness of programmatic and physical barriers to accessibility and covers completion of the “ADA checklist for Readily Achievable Barrier Removal.” The ADA checklist is completed annually at each facility and any needed corrective action is identified and implemented;
- The DRC I training is an integrated and mandated part of new-hire training for all AJC staff;
- Each regional office has a higher-level staff member trained to the Disability Resource Coordinator II (DRC II) level, who is the disability and accessibility subject matter expert for the region. The DRC II functions as the technical assistance advisor for all staff on disability and accessibility related issues;
- The DRC IIs, the statewide lead for the DEI, and the Training Coordinator identify periodic and on-going training in specialized topics to augment standardized training and ensure continual learning and awareness in the area of improving access to all services within the AJC system for individuals with disabilities; and
- Each AJC manager documents physical and programmatic complaints and ensures a corrective action plan is developed and addressed by the most appropriate and relevant method: policy change, training, or addressing physical barriers.

### **Adaptive technology and other accommodations:**

- Each AJC has Assistive Technology (AT) available that includes screen readers, magnifiers, adaptive software, virtual sign language interpretation, closed captioning on scrolling program and services video, TTY phones, and personal voice amplification device;
- “Tips for Improving Access to Workshops and Training” has been developed and disseminated to staff. This document offers guidance and suggestions on increasing accessibility and success for individuals attending AJC workshops and training sessions and is broken down by disability type. The document outlines ways the facilitator or trainer can incorporate accommodations and adaptations into the class to ensure an optimal learning environment for all; and
- Any program and service may be accommodated for full inclusion on an “as needed” basis with the accommodation being dependent on the needs of the individual customer and provided through the AJCs in collaboration with partners.

### **On-going survey of effectiveness and continuous improvement:**

- AJC certification occurs annually and is a collaborative process involving all partners of the One-Stop delivery system. The joint AJC management team collectively completes the documents and surveys for the certification and submits them to the AWIB for approval. Certification involves reviewing site working agreements, cost allocations, self-assessment surveys, and the ADA accessibility survey. In addition to reviewing all submitted documents, members of the AWIB conduct an on-site review identifying best practices and need for corrective action planning. Based on their review and findings, the AWIB recommends and approves certification; and
- Regular AJC management team meetings occur between all on-site partners, during which all joint operations are discussed and plans for system improvement and any corrective action are implemented. This forum is effective for change and involves addressing and improving accessibility for customers with disabilities.

### **9. Addressing the Accessibility of the One-Stop Delivery System for English Language Learners**

Describe how the one-stop delivery system (including one-stop center operators and the one-stop delivery system partners) will ensure that each one-stop center is able to meet the needs of English language learners, such as through established procedures, staff training, resources, and other materials.

#### **Accessibility of the One-Stop Delivery System for Individuals who are English Language Learners**

The state provides staff training, materials, and resources to meet the needs of Limited English Proficient individuals, including direct referral to the Alaska Immigration Justice Project Language Interpreter Center.

DOLWD has established a contract with language interpreter services to be provided telephonically.

## **IV. Coordination with State Plan Programs**

Describe the methods used for joint planning and coordination among the core programs, and with the required one-stop partner programs and other programs and activities included in the Unified or Combined State Plan.

### **Coordination with Combined State Plan Programs**

#### **Coordination with SCSEP**

Designated staff representing each core program and the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) have met weekly or bi-weekly since August 2015 to implement joint planning and coordination efforts. Working groups were formed and met more often to work on various issues in-depth, including data coordination, policy development, performance accountability, Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL), and One-Stop operator designation.

The Department of Labor and Workforce Development (DOLWD) sponsored three meetings for the public to attend and provide input on the plan, with program staff also participating in these meetings.

Inclusion in Alaska's WIOA Combined State Plan provided the SCSEP another opportunity to work directly with its partners in education, industry, workforce development, economic development, and the public. SCSEP attests that it and its sub-recipient partners have been involved in the WIOA joint planning and policy development. The WIOA Plan emphasizes sector partnerships, career pathways, cross-program data and measurement, and job-driven investments to required and interested partners. Three public meetings were held in November of 2015 in Juneau, Fairbanks, and Anchorage to provide information and seek feedback from the public to help develop the WIOA Combined Plan, which stresses the importance of education, training, credentials, and skill attainment. The Combined Plan programs strive for workers' economic self-sufficiency by aligning workforce development with education and economic development.

Another example of joint planning and coordination of core programs with other programs is the Alaska State Plan on Aging under the Older Americans Act (OAA) that was approved on August 11, 2015 for July 1, 2015 through June 30, 2019. DOLWD SCSEP was an active partner in that plan, too. It was the product of a nineteen-month statewide process that began with the Alaska Commission on Aging (ACoA) first elder/senior listening session in Copper Center in September 2013. Five other listening sessions around the state followed, each presenting a series of questions for seniors, family members, service providers, and public members to consider and provide input. The planning process also included a statewide senior survey and a provider survey to identify the top issues of concern to seniors. Findings from the elder/senior listening sessions and the surveys, along with the ongoing input from agency partners, were the building blocks from which the goals, strategies, and performance measures were constructed.

The State of Alaska assures that SCSEP will maintain the integrity and purpose of services provided under Title V of the OAA and that Alaska's SCSEP stand-alone plan, written with coordination of core programs and other OAA programs, was approved by USDOL on March 20, 2015. Alaska remains focused on joint planning and coordination of service delivery in that it has integrated SCSEP into both the state's workforce investment system as well as the senior service system. Alaska's long-term strategy for older workers is to continue to reach out to workforce development partners, the business community, education, and health and social services partners to ensure successful outcomes for older workers and Alaska businesses alike.

## V. Common Assurances (for all core programs)

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include assurances that—

1. The State has established a policy identifying circumstances that may present a conflict of interest for a State Board or local board member, or the entity or class of officials that the member represents, and procedures to resolve such conflicts; **Yes**
2. The State has established a policy to provide to the public (including individuals with disabilities) access to meetings of State Boards and local boards, and information regarding activities of State boards and local boards, such as data on board membership and minutes; **Yes**
3. The lead State agencies with optimal policy-making authority and responsibility for the administration of core programs reviewed and commented on the appropriate operational planning elements of the Unified or Combined State Plan, and approved the elements as serving the needs of the populations served by such programs; **Yes**
4. (a) The State obtained input into the development of the Unified or Combined State Plan and provided an opportunity for comment on the plan by representatives of local boards and chief elected officials, businesses, labor organizations, institutions of higher education, the entities responsible for planning or administering the core programs, required one-stop partners and the other Combined Plan programs (if included in the State Plan), other primary stakeholders, including other organizations that provide services to individuals with barriers to employment, and the general public, and that the Unified or Combined State Plan is available and accessible to the general public; (b) The State provided an opportunity for review and comment on the plan by the State Board, including State agency official(s) for the Unemployment Insurance Agency if such official(s) is a member of the State Board; **Yes**
5. The State has established, in accordance with WIOA section 116(i), fiscal control and fund accounting procedures that may be necessary to ensure the proper disbursement of, and accounting for, funds paid to the State through allotments made for the core programs to carry out workforce development activities; **Yes**
6. The State has taken appropriate action to secure compliance with uniform administrative requirements in this Act, including that the State will annually monitor local areas to ensure compliance and otherwise take appropriate action to secure compliance with the uniform administrative requirements under WIOA section 184(a)(3); **Yes**

7. The State has taken the appropriate action to be in compliance with WIOA section 188, Nondiscrimination, as applicable; **Yes**
8. The Federal funds received to carry out a core program will not be expended for any purpose other than for activities authorized with respect to such funds under that core program; **Yes**
9. The State will pay an appropriate share (as defined by the State board) of the costs of carrying out section 116, from funds made available through each of the core programs; **Yes**
10. The State has a One-Stop certification policy that ensures the physical and programmatic accessibility of all One-Stop centers with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA); **Yes**
11. Service providers have a referral process in place for directing Veterans with Significant Barriers to Employment (SBE) to DVOP services, when appropriate; and **Yes**
12. Priority of service for veterans and eligible spouses is provided in accordance with 38 USC 4215 in all workforce preparation, development or delivery of programs or services funded directly, in whole or in part, by the Department of Labor. **Yes**

## **VI. Program-Specific Requirements for Core Programs**

The State must address all program-specific requirements in this section for the WIOA core programs regardless of whether the State submits either a Unified or Combined State Plan.

### **Program-Specific Requirements for Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth Activities under Title I-B**

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include the following with respect to activities carried out under subtitle B--

#### **a. General Requirements**

##### **1. Regions and Local Workforce Development Areas**

###### **A. Identify the regions and the local workforce development areas designated in the State.**

###### **Regions and Areas**

In 2003, then-Governor Frank Murkowski issued Administrative Order No. 210, designating the State of Alaska as a single state workforce investment area and the Alaska Workforce Investment Board (AWIB) as the state's sole workforce board under the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) of 1998 (<http://www.gov.state.ak.us/admin-orders/210.html>). That same year, the U.S. Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration (USDOL ETA) recognized Alaska as a single local workforce development area and a single regional planning area and approved the state's waiver request to allow the AWIB to act as both the state board and the local board. This waiver also allowed Alaska to report as a single area. The waiver request was approved in all subsequent plan modifications. Alaska is again requesting the waiver in this WIOA Plan in Section VI (E): Waiver Request to Allow the State Board to Carry out the Roles of a Local Board.

Under WIOA definitions, a single "local area" cannot contain more than one "region." Therefore, Alaska must also be considered a single planning region. However, operationally, the state bases planning and labor market analysis on the six

existing state-defined “economic regions,” Southeast; Southwest; Anchorage/Mat-Su; Interior; Northern; and Gulf Coast, as each one has different economic and workforce needs.

AWIB members come from a variety of industries and represent all geographic and economic regions of the state. They bring the voice of employers, educational institutions, and other workforce partners in their respective regions. The AWIB is developing a strategic plan, which includes using a regional industry sector approach to workforce development. Using that approach, AWIB will be focusing not only on employer engagement but on connecting education and training strategies through building career pathways; supporting work-based learning; and improving career results for all job seekers and employers alike, based on the demographics and needs of each economic region. The AWIB will continue to successfully carry out the functions of both a state board and a local board, as it has for over a decade.

**B. Describe the process used for designating local areas, including procedures for determining whether the local area met the criteria for “performed successfully” and “sustained fiscal integrity” in accordance with 106(b)(2) and (3) of WIOA. Describe the process used for identifying regions and planning regions under section 106(a) of WIOA. This must include a description of how the State consulted with the local boards and chief elected officials in identifying the regions.**

### **Designation of local areas**

The AWIB developed policy and procedures for Local Workforce Area Designation under WIOA, which allow a local governing board to request such designation. Should an application be submitted, it would be reviewed by the AWIB, and then a recommendation for approval or denial would be forwarded to the governor. An applicant would need to demonstrate that the proposed area:

- Is consistent with local labor market areas;
- Has a common economic development area;
- Has the federal and non-federal resources, including appropriate education and training institutions, to administer activities under the Youth, Adult, and Dislocated Worker formula programs under WIOA Title I- B; and
- Has the fiscal, administrative, and reporting capacity and systems in place to report on participant outcomes as required by WIOA and the Alaska WIOA Combined Plan.

To determine whether a local area meets the criteria for “performed successfully” and “sustained fiscal integrity” in accordance with Section 106(b)(2) and (3) of WIOA, the AWIB will annually monitor the performance measure outcomes and fiscal records and reporting systems of the local area.

### **Input from local officials**

The Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development (DOLWD) solicited input on this process from local officials and employers across the state. They were invited to the public WIOA planning meetings held in November 2015; given the opportunity to provide comments via a web-based survey in October/November 2015; and provided the draft of the local area designation request process for review and comment from September 17 through October 20, 2015. DOLWD received no response to the draft local area designation, waiver, and appeals process, and there have been no requests received for designation as a local area.

The AWIB will continue to solicit feedback from local officials and employers in two ways: 1) outreach by individual Board members to their local officials; and 2) opportunities for input at each Board meeting, which are held at various locations around the state. The AWIB will focus on statewide strategies and their linkage to regional economic and workforce development needs.

**C. Provide the appeals process referred to in section 106(b)(5) of WIOA relating to designation of local areas.**

**Appeals process**

The policy sets out the procedure for appeals as follows:

- The governor may approve or deny the request for designation. In either case, DOLWD will notify the applicant in writing. If the request is denied, the written notification will include the reasons for the denial;
- If the request for local area designation is denied, the applicant may appeal;
- Appeals must be made to the AWIB and must address each issue cited in the denial notification; and
- If a decision on the appeal is not made within 60 days or if the appeal to the AWIB does not result in designation of the local area, the applicant may request a review by the Secretary of Labor in accordance with 20 CFR Section 683.640 of the WIOA statute.

**D. Provide the appeals process referred to in section 121(h)(2)(E) of WIOA relating to determinations for infrastructure funding.**

**Appeals process for infrastructure funding**

The lead agencies of the core programs are working together and with the AWIB on an infrastructure funding process that will be included as a required part of the partner Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). When such process is finalized, it will detail an associated appeals process that complies with WIOA.

**2. Statewide Activities**

**A. Provide State policies or guidance for the statewide workforce development system and for use of State funds for workforce investment activities.**

**Statewide workforce development system**

Alaska will ensure the required statewide employment and training activities are carried out as required by WIOA. This includes the provision of Rapid Response (RR) and the provision of additional assistance to areas that experience disasters, mass layoffs, plant closings, or other events that precipitate substantial increases in the number of unemployed individuals.

Additionally, statewide activities funds will support the state strategic vision and goals outlined in Section II (b) State Strategic Vision and Goals of this Combined Plan. This includes, but is not limited to, the development of career pathways; convening and engaging industry sector partnerships; and the expansion of apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeships programs.

Innovations in the delivery of AJC services will be targeted, as well as development and training of AJC staff to ensure veterans and individuals with barriers to employment have access to suitable employment opportunities in in-demand occupations. Military veteran POS Policy 07-509 and Priority for Services - Adult Program Policy 07-515 support these requirements.

Required monitoring and oversight activities will be conducted and are supported by Grant Monitoring Policy 07-525.

Eligible Training Provider List Policy 07-501 ensures the compiling and dissemination of the Eligible Training Provider List, which includes information on performance and cost of attendance.

Additional effort will be put into the compilation of a state list that includes non-traditional training services and eligible providers of apprenticeship programs, providers of OJT, customized training, incumbent worker training, internships, work experience opportunities, and transitional jobs.

Business services will be a focus, including effective outreach and partnerships, and implementing effective strategies to serve employers, incumbent workers, and job seekers.

Information on physical and programmatic accessibility for individuals with disabilities is supported by statewide activities funding and reinforced by the AJC Universal Access for Individuals with Disability Policy 07-516.

**B. Describe how the State intends to use Governor’s set aside funding. Describe how the State will utilize Rapid Response funds to respond to layoffs and plant closings and coordinate services to quickly aid companies and their affected workers. States also should describe any layoff aversion strategies they have implemented to address at risk companies and workers**

### **Set-aside funding**

The state intends to use the governor’s set-aside funding to enhance services to one or more of Alaska’s priority populations, including youth and adults with disabilities. DOLWD will use these funds to leverage other programs and initiatives, for example, DOLWD’s DEI Grant for Youth and American Apprenticeship Initiative for Health Care. DOLWD may also support projects such as the Department of Health and Social Services’ development of the “Disability Benefits 101” online tool and subsequent training for AJC staff and other counselors in using the tool with clients, as well as other programs targeted at serving those with disabilities and multiple barriers to employment.

### **Rapid Response**

Rapid Response (RR) is a primary gateway to the workforce system for both dislocated workers and employers and is a component of a demand driven system. The central purpose of RR is to help laid-off workers quickly transition to new employment. RR acts as both a provider of direct reemployment services and as a facilitator of additional services and resources.

The service strategy of the dislocated worker program is to facilitate readjustment to a job loss by providing services that will assist workers with their transition back into the workforce. The program provides pre-layoff activities and linkages to the AJCs and to Unemployment Insurance (UI). These services are available to workers who have lost their jobs as a result of a mass layoff, permanent business closing, or a natural or other disaster that resulted in mass job losses.

When notification of a plant closing or mass layoff is received, the RR Statewide Coordinator from DOLWD develops a coordinated response to the dislocation event and coordinates an on-site meeting to assist workers facing a job loss. The following services are provided to employers and affected workers:

- Engaging in on-site or telephonic contact with the employer, worker representatives, union representatives(s) (if applicable), local Alaska service providers, UI staff, and others as deemed necessary to assess the company’s layoff plans; determine the potential for averting the layoffs; and gather background information on the affected workforce to determine training and other needs of the workforce to facilitate rapid re-employment;
- Providing information on UI benefits, AJC Services, and employment and training opportunities;
- Providing technical and financial support for establishing a Joint Adjustment (labor-management) Committee;
- Providing emergency assistance to serve the affected workers at a particular site, including state and federal funds and re-employment services. AJCs throughout the state oversee the delivery of re-employment services.

These services are designed to prepare participants for re-entry into the workforce and are categorized as follows:

- Basic Career Services are available to all dislocated workers and may include program information and basic assessment, general information, individual job development, advanced job club, advanced screened referrals, group activities, job search.
- Individualized Career Services are designed for dislocated workers who have been unable to obtain employment through core services and have been determined to be in need of more individualized services. Individualized career services may include comprehensive specialized assessment, individual employment planning, counseling, case management, literacy activity, out of area job search, relocation assistance, and work experience.

Training in specific, in-demand occupations may be available to dislocated workers who have not been able to find employment through career services. Training services may include occupational skills training, OJT, Registered Apprenticeship, incumbent worker training, pre-apprenticeship training, skill upgrading and retraining, and adult education and literacy training provided in combination with any other training services.

### **Layoff Aversion**

Plant closings and mass layoffs can occur for a variety of reasons in periods of both economic expansion and decline. These reasons may include financial difficulty, mergers and acquisitions, loss of market share, consolidations, foreign competition, product or service obsolescence, shift in parent company focus, natural disaster, or other factors. Opportunities may exist to save jobs and avoid resulting hardships imposed on individuals and communities when a plant or business closes.

#### **Early response is critical. Adequate lead time is essential.**

In order for RR to work effectively, early intervention is critical. For a layoff aversion effort to succeed, there must be sufficient time to organize an effective response.

#### **Layoff aversion is a cooperative effort.**

An important initial step in RR is to address the reason for the plant closing or mass layoff before it happens or reaches crisis stage. If there is an indication that the business is closing or mass layoff might be averted, the RR team can provide technical assistance and work with all parties involved to develop solutions.

Alaska has strengthened its response team by building trust with employers and having business connection staff work with employers not only on building their business by hiring qualified workers, but to notify them of RR services if they should ever need them. Staff are trained to identify potential indicators that a business might be in trouble and need RR support.

#### **C. In addition, describe the State policies and procedures to provide Rapid Responses in cases of natural disasters including coordination with FEMA and other entities.**

##### **Rapid Response in natural disaster**

The Statewide Rapid Response Coordinator and team are responsible for the planning and delivery of services to enable dislocated workers to transition to new employment as quickly as possible in cases of a natural disaster. The coordinator will organize and develop a coordinated response with federal, state, local agencies, and media to ensure the dislocated workers receive the services they need, for example, information on unemployment benefits, housing, AJC services, and re-training. The state has a proven history of responding not only to major cities but also to rural areas where there are vast distances between villages and no roads connecting them. Some of these villages experienced flooding and wildfires. The RR team members are trained staff who are knowledgeable about the labor markets around the state and are on call to respond to any layoff situation.

**D. Describe how the State provides early intervention (e.g., Rapid Response) to worker groups on whose behalf a Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) petition has been filed. (Section 134(a)(2)(A).) This description must include how the State disseminates benefit information to provide trade-affected workers in the groups identified in the TAA petitions with an accurate understanding of the provision of TAA benefits and services in such a way that they are transparent to the trade-affected dislocated worker applying for them (Trade Act Sec. 221(a)(2)(A) and Sec. 225; Governor-Secretary Agreement). Describe how the State will use funds that have been reserved for Rapid Response to provide services for every worker group that files a TAA petition.**

## **TAA**

With the implementation of the TAA Reauthorization Act of 2015 (TAARA 2015), the TAA program was reauthorized for six years (retroactive to January 1, 2014). Under TAARA 2015, petition certification is available not only to manufacturing worker groups, but also to eligible service sector and secondary worker groups. In addition, a new version of the Health Coverage Tax Credit benefit is available to TAA program participants. These changes allow for petition certification of a broader range of businesses and, following certification of a primary worker group, outreach can be directed towards any secondary worker groups that may be impacted. In effect, TAA staff are able to seek out potential worker groups by looking directly 'upstream' at a business's suppliers and 'downstream' to any impacted businesses that provide services to a petition-certified employer.

Alaska's petitions have historically been certified for worker groups in the oil, fishing, and logging industries. Program participants from those industries continue to receive training funds from certifications that were issued through previous iterations of the program. Future participation in the program and petition certification will hinge on continued research into trade changes and shifts in production, awareness of state and global business trends, and maintaining strong relationships with local employers. This continued team approach to service delivery through the myriad of employer and job seeker services is the best opportunity to gain program participation and achieve service delivery success.

### **Alaska Job Center Network**

Alaska's RR, Dislocated Worker, TAA, and Wagner-Peyser programs are all operated through the statewide network of 17 local AJC offices. TAA's central office staff maintain awareness of global trade and state business activities while working with Business Connection staff in the local AJCs to stay up-to-date on ground level employer activity and layoffs. This network of responders ensures that immediate action is taken when necessary to assist employers and workers who are impacted by trade and may be facing layoffs.

Following notification of potential layoffs, central office staff coordinate all of the RR activities, assist the employers or workers with filing TAA petitions, and bring a variety of local and state service providers together for interagency RR meetings individually tailored to meet each employer's needs. TAA staff foster this team approach throughout service delivery to human resources personnel and business owners prior to, during, and following layoffs. TAA staff may assist worker groups with filing a petition, file petitions on the workers' behalf, and appeal determinations when necessary. Upon certification of a petition, TAA staff conduct extensive outreach in-person, over-the-phone, and via mail (as options are available) to ensure that all workers receive detailed information regarding what programs and services are available, when they are available, and how to participate in those services.

### **TAA and RR**

Every worker group that files a TAA petition is offered RR early intervention services regardless of whether the TAA petition is certified or denied. Following the certification of a petition, TAA continues to serve as an integral part of the RR team and provides information regarding any benefits that may be available to the dislocated or affected workers. TAA funds pay for the time and efforts of the TAA coordinator to serve as a part of the RR team. If the TAA petition is denied, RR funds are used to fund continued service delivery by staff to the affected workers. RR funds are also utilized for periodic staff training.

Co-enrollment of TAA participants in the WIOA Dislocated Worker program as well as other programs for which they are deemed eligible is the standard practice. Alaska requires comprehensive assessment to develop an appropriate Individual Employment Plan and TAA services. All TAA customers are required to be referred to WIOA for co-enrollment. WIOA career planners emphasize the benefits of co-enrollment to allow the maximum benefit from all available resources. The TAA coordinators and WIOA career planners develop and share Individual Employment Plans for all customers, which identify barriers to employment and how they will be addressed. Individuals requiring additional assistance due to low income, a disability, or homelessness will be given POS. All veterans and eligible spouses also receive POS.

### **WIOA and Wagner-Peyser**

Both WIOA and Wagner-Peyser/Employment Service staff provide reemployment services. The TAA program utilizes Wagner-Peyser in finding jobs for workers, and often partners with Vocational Rehabilitation, veterans' services (both internal and with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs), and fidelity bonding, if appropriate. Services include workshops in resume writing and interviewing skills. All TAA customers have access to any resources provided by Wagner-Peyser and all customers co-enrolled with WIOA are able to partake in any workshops provided by WIOA staff. Case management continues until the worker has found suitable employment. Effective communication between TAA and WIOA staff is a constant priority. These shared components align with the governor's vision of developing and preparing Alaskans for good jobs that provide economic stability.

### **Data**

Administrative, fiscal, and data integrity are facilitated by the Trade Act System (TAS). The TAA coordinator enters worker information into TAS, the system from which the Trade Act Participant Report is obtained. All required data are collected and recorded in TAS throughout the life of the program for each individual. The coordinator oversees every aspect of each plan. The collected data are verified against USDOL/ETA/TAA's quarterly Data Integrity Result, and cross-checked in the WIOA ICM system against ALEXsys.

### **b. Adult and Dislocated Workers Program Requirements**

**1. If the State is utilizing work-based training models (e.g. On-the-job training, Incumbent Worker training, Transitional Jobs, and Customized Training) as part of its training strategy and these strategies are not already discussed in other sections of the plan, describe the State's strategies for how these models ensure high quality training for both the participant and the employer.**

#### **Workbased training**

The Division of Employment and Training Services (DETS) has several special training programs for targeted groups such as transitioning service members (TSMs) and incarcerated persons. To ensure TSMs achieve a successful transition from the military to the civilian sector, DETS partners with military transition centers to provide high-quality training for employment in targeted industries. To accomplish this, DETS leverages multiple resources including WIOA Adult, and Dislocated Worker grants, National Emergency grants, and State Training and Employment Program (STEP) funds. In PY14, DETS assisted in training TSMs on base in becoming commercial truck drivers. This is a high-demand occupation in Alaska, and in PY15, DETS expanded TSM training to other in-demand industry sectors including health care.

DETS also works with correctional centers across Alaska to provide employment and training services to individuals soon-to-be released from incarceration. DETS recently partnered with the Alaska Department of Corrections to receive contact information for individuals as they prepare for release. DETS staff recognize that suitable employment is a significant factor in reducing the recidivism rate, and they make every effort to contact these individuals to assist with their transition. DETS staff also provide employment workshops in correctional centers to guide soon-to-be job seekers with their employment search. Like services to TSMs, services under this initiative also leverage multiple resources and model a new focus on mobile service delivery of AJC services.

All special training programs follow specific grant requirements and federal guidance. Training is provided by organizations on the Eligible Training Providers List (ETPL) and by specially-trained AJC staff, who ensure training is high quality and meets the needs and expectations of employers through participant feedback, training success analysis, and soliciting information from employers.

## **2. Describe how the State will incorporate Registered Apprenticeship into its strategy and services.**

### **Registered Apprenticeship**

Governor Bill Walker issued Administrative Order No. 278 on November 10, 2015, which requires that Registered Apprentices perform at least 15 percent of the labor hours on any construction project of at least \$2.5 million that is advertised for bids by the Department of Transportation and Public Facilities or the Department of Administration.

DOLWD hired an Apprenticeship Coordinator to work with health care employers and the U.S. Office of Apprenticeship in Anchorage to expand the number of health care Registered Apprenticeship (RA) programs in the state. The Alaska Health Workforce Coalition has identified targeted occupations for which RA could be appropriate (e.g., home health aide, medical assistant, substance abuse counselor, surgical technician, medical lab technician, pharmacy assistant, and physical therapy aide). The Coalition will work with DOLWD and the Apprenticeship Coordinator to develop RA programs for those occupations in a variety of health care employers across the state. The state is also establishing a Health Care Training Cooperative to act as an RA sponsor for health care apprenticeships.

### **RA and Industry Sectors**

To expand Registered Apprenticeship programs to other industries, DOLWD will work with industry sector partnerships, i.e., Construction, Resource Extraction (including oil, gas, and mining), and Maritime, to identify and develop or expand RA programs for that industry. Each of these sectors has a workforce development plan that will be used as the basis for ongoing sector work in developing RA programs.

Information on RAs will be included in the regular ongoing training for all AJC staff, as well as training for new staff. AJCs will each have a Registered Apprenticeship Specialist who can provide in-depth RA services to job seekers and employers.

### **Pre-apprenticeship training**

The Alaska Health Care Academy and the Alaska Construction Academies will provide quality pre-apprenticeship programs to prepare individuals for entry into RA programs. The Construction Academies have been in existence for a decade and have become a model for high-quality pre-apprenticeship training at a variety of locations across the state. The Alaska Health Care Academy is being developed and implemented by AVTEC (Alaska Vocational Technical Education Center), starting with one location in Anchorage and branching out to additional locations over the next four years. AVTEC will also expand its existing maritime offerings to provide pre-apprenticeship programs.

### **Registered Apprenticeship College Consortium**

DOLWD will work with AVTEC, the University of Alaska, and private postsecondary providers to become members of the Registered Apprenticeship College Consortium (RACC). The University of Alaska Anchorage Community and Technical College has been accepted as the first Alaska RACC member. The University of Alaska system will review its Associate of Applied Science in Apprenticeship Technologies Degree and work to eliminate barriers for awarding of credit for completion of an RA program. The state will develop a system to offer employer incentives for use of RA.

### **3. Provide the procedure, eligibility criteria, and information requirements for determining training provider initial and continued eligibility, including Registered Apprenticeship programs (WIOA Section 122).**

#### **Eligible Training Providers**

Alaska has a detailed procedural guide for determining training provider eligibility, including Registered Apprenticeships (RA) and On-the-Job Training (OJT) programs.

The procedural guide provides information on Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) background, responsibilities, types of eligible training, exemptions, and out-of-state training information. The guide provides training program expectations including program quality, program outcomes, and the expectation that industry-recognized credentials will be utilized. The ETPL application process is described in the procedural guide and includes how initial and continued eligibility is determined.

The Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education plays a critical part in the ETPL process, and information regarding their requirements is included in the procedural guide.

The guide goes into detail about the minimum data requirements and state required performance levels. These are explained, and the calculations for performance measures and methodological protocols are clearly listed. Information on training program denials, removal from the list, and the appeal process is included and supported by ETPL Policy 07-501.

Registered Apprenticeship and other work based training programs are outlined in the ETPL Procedural Guide. All RA programs are contacted to determine if they wish to be listed on the ETPL. As long as an RA program is in good standing with the USDOL Office of Apprenticeship, it is automatically eligible to be listed on the ETPL.

ETPL initial and continued eligibility are based on training program performance. Program performance is determined by utilizing information provided by the training provider and from state UI wage records using the following methodology:

#### **Initial Eligibility**

##### **Participant-Specific Performance:**

**Employment Rate 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter after Exit:** Number of students who have exited the training program during the reporting period who are employed during the second quarter after exit (numerator) divided by the number of students who have exited during the reporting period (denominator), multiplied by 100, and reported as a percentage.

**Employment Rate 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter after Exit:** Number of students who have exited the training program during the reporting period who are employed during the fourth quarter after exit (numerator) divided by the number of students who have exited during the reporting period (denominator), multiplied by 100, and reported as a percentage.

**Median Earnings Rate:** The median earnings of students who are in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit from the program. Students' quarterly earnings will be obtained from UI wage records or through federal payroll records. The median earning amount reflects the wage at the midpoint between the highest and lowest wage earned in the second quarter after exit.

**Credential Attainment Rate:** The number of students who obtain a recognized postsecondary credential during participation or within one year after exit (numerator) divided by the total number of students exiting the program (denominator), multiplied by 100, and reported as a percentage.

**Completion Rate:** The number of participants who completed their training program (numerator) divided by the total number of students exiting the program (denominator), multiplied by 100, and reported as a percentage.

### Provider-Specific Performance

The degree to which the provider is in partnership with business. This may be shown by letters of support from business or other documentation of a partnership between the training provider and business. **Performance Goal:** Training provider is able to produce at least three letters from businesses showing that the business would hire job seekers with the type of credential provided by the training program.

The ability of the training provider to offer programs that lead to a recognized postsecondary credential. **Performance Goal:** Credentials offered by the provider are regionally and/or nationally recognized, stackable, and portable, or specific to an in-demand industry or occupation.

The degree to which the training program relates to in-demand industry sectors and occupations in the state. A list of in-demand industry sectors and occupations can be located on the AWIB website <http://labor.alaska.gov/awib/>; **Performance Goal:** The training program relates to occupations located on the in-demand industry and priority occupation list. If the training is not associated with these occupations, an exemption may be provided if the program serves participants with barriers to employment or if it provides training for specialized occupations or unique employer requests.

### Continued Eligibility

#### Participant-Specific Performance:

**Employment Rate 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter after Exit:** Number of students who have exited the training program during the reporting period who are employed during the second quarter after exit (numerator) divided by the number of students who have exited during the reporting period (denominator), multiplied by 100, and reported as a percentage.

**Employment Rate 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter after Exit:** Number of students who have exited the training program during the reporting period who are employed during the fourth quarter after exit (numerator) divided by the number of students who have exited during the reporting period (denominator), multiplied by 100, and reported as a percentage.

**Median Earnings Rate:** The median earnings of students who are in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit from the program. Students' quarterly earnings will be obtained from UI wage records or through federal payroll records. The median earning amount reflects the wage at the midpoint between the highest and lowest wage earned in the second quarter after exit.

**Credential Attainment Rate:** The number of students who obtain a recognized postsecondary credential during participation or within one year after exit (numerator) divided by the total number of students exiting the program (denominator), multiplied by 100, and reported as a percentage.

**Completion Rate:** The number of participants who completed their training program (numerator) divided by the total number of students exiting the program (denominator), multiplied by 100, and reported as a percentage.

### Program-Specific Performance

The ability of the training program to be accessed throughout the state, including rural areas and through the use of technology; **Performance Goal:** The training program is available via distance learning, if applicable, or deliverable in rural locations.

The degree to which the training program relates to in-demand industry sectors and occupations in the state. A list of in-demand industry sectors and occupations can be located on the AWIB website <http://labor.alaska.gov/awib/>; **Performance Goal:** The training program relates to occupations located on the in-demand industry and priority occupation list. If the

training is not associated with these occupations, an exemption may be provided if the program serves participants with barriers to employment or if it provides training for specialized occupations or unique employer requests.

The use of industry-recognized certificates and credentials; **Performance Goal:** The credential provided by the training program is regionally and/or nationally recognized, stackable, and portable, or specific to an in-demand industry or occupation.

The ability for individuals who are employed and individuals with barriers to employment to access the training program; **Performance Goal:** Participants who are employed or have barriers to employment will be determined by the participant data elements provided by the training provider.

The timely and accurate submittal of eligible training provider performance reports as required under WIOA sec. 116(d)(4). **Performance Goal:** Training program completer reports are complete, accurate and submitted by August 31 each year.

**Figure 21. Performance Levels for Initial and Continued ETPL Eligibility**

Rate and Earnings	Performance Level
Employment Rate 2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter after Exit	65%
Employment Rate 4 <sup>th</sup> Quarter after Exit	65%
Median Earnings 2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter after Exit	\$5,025
Credential Attainment Rate	65%
Program Completion Rate	65%

Alaska’s ETPL policy, applications and the procedural guide are located on the division website: <http://labor.state.ak.us/bp/etpl.htm> .

**4. Describe how the State will implement and monitor the priority for public assistance recipients, other low-income individuals, and individuals who are basic skills deficient in accordance with the requirements of WIOA sec. 134(c)(3)(E), which applies to individualized career services and training services funding by the Adult Formula program.**

**Priority of Service**

Policy 07-517 supports the adult priority populations. Staff responsible for the administration of WIOA Title I-B funds must give priority to recipients of public assistance, to low-income individuals, and individuals who are basic skills deficient, for the provision of individualized career services and training services.

Veterans and eligible spouses continue to receive Priority of Service (POS) for all DOLWD-funded job training programs. However, as described in TEGL 3-15, when programs are statutorily required to provide priority for a particular group of individuals, such as the WIOA Adult program priority population described above, priority must be provided in the following order:

First, to veterans and eligible spouses who are also included in the groups given statutory priority for WIOA adult formula funds. This means that veterans and eligible spouses who are recipients of public assistance, low-income, or basic skills deficient would receive first priority for services provided with WIOA adult formula funds; second, to non-covered persons, meaning individuals who are not veterans or eligible spouses, who are included in the groups given priority for WIOA adult formula funds; third, to veterans and eligible spouses who are not included in WIOA adult program’s priority groups; and last, to non-covered persons outside the groups given priority under the WIOA adult program.

The delivery of services to priority populations will be monitored through annual monitoring of the adult formula program by the AWIB.

**5. Describe the State’s criteria regarding local area transfer of funds between the adult and dislocated worker programs.**

**Transfer of funds**

The state’s Method of Funding Distribution Policy 07-518 outlines that the transfer of 100 percent of funds between Adult and Dislocated Worker for employment and training is allowable and requires the approval of the DETS Director. Transferring of funds to or from the Youth Program is not allowed. Reasons for the transfer of funds may happen when the quarterly expenditure evaluation indicates that a service area is under- or over-expending its funds, or there is an increased local demand for employment and training services for either a group of adults or a group of dislocated workers, including when a plant closing or mass layoff occurs.

**c. Youth Program Requirements**

With respect to youth workforce investment activities authorized in section 129 of WIOA,—

**1. Identify the state-developed criteria to be used by local boards in awarding grants for youth workforce investment activities and describe how the local boards will take into consideration the ability of the providers to meet performance accountability measures based on primary indicators of performance for the youth program as described in section 116(b)(2)(A)(ii) of WIOA in awarding such grants.\*** \* Sec. 102(b)(2)(D)(i)(V)

**Youth program**

Grants will be awarded through a competitive grant solicitation process using DOLWD’s online Electronic Grants Administration and Management System (EGrAMS); grant opportunities are posted on state’s online public notice website at <https://aws.state.ak.us/OnlinePublicNotices/>.

The state may develop or utilize auxiliary resources to advertise grant solicitations as necessary. Solicitations for program operators will occur bi-annually or, in certain situations, based on service delivery needs.

The DOLWD DETS manages the grant solicitation process, while the AWIB reviews the applications and offers recommendations to the Labor Commissioner, who is the final arbiter for approving or denying applications.

**Performance**

Per Section 116 (b) (2) (A) (ii) of WIOA, performance is based on the criteria listed below. The AWIB will assess each applicant on the ability to meet performance outcomes based on how well its infrastructure, project resources, partnerships, and program model enables the program to meet WIOA Youth performance measures, including:

- Percentage of program participants who are in education or training activities, or in unsubsidized employment during second quarter after exit;
- Percentage of participants who are in education or training activities or in unsubsidized employment during fourth quarter after exit;
- Median earnings in unsubsidized employment during second quarter after exit;
- Percentage of participants who obtain a recognized postsecondary credential, secondary school diploma or equivalent during participation or within one year after program exit; and
- Percentage of participants who during a program year are in education that leads to a recognized postsecondary credential or employment and who are achieving measurable gains towards those goals.

**2. Describe the strategies the State will use to achieve improved outcomes for out-of-school youth as described in 129(a)(1)(B), including how it will leverage and align the core programs, and Combined State Plan partner programs included in this Plan, required and optional one-stop partner programs, and any other resources available.**

**Outcomes for out-of-school youth**

To improve outcomes for out-of-school youth, the state will continue to develop comprehensive and integrated service delivery systems targeting this demographic. Partnerships with other core programs, businesses, and community partners will be enhanced. The competitive Youth Program solicitation has undergone changes to guarantee youth programs serve participants for the time necessary to ensure they are successfully prepared to enter postsecondary education and/or unsubsidized employment. A focus on career exploration and guidance, continued support for educational attainment, opportunities for skills training in in-demand industries and occupations, and appropriate support services will result in good jobs along a career pathway.

Youth projects focusing at least 75 percent of grant funds on serving out-of-school youth are given priority during the competitive solicitation process, and out-of-school youth who are engaged in postsecondary education will be co-enrolled with the WIOA Adult program to leverage resources, services and partnerships.

**Credentials**

In an effort to increase youth attainment of degrees and/or credentials to meet labor market demands, grant applicants will identify and partner with occupational training providers and apprenticeship programs that provide the necessary training to obtain an industry-recognized credential. Specific strategies to increase outcomes include:

- Creating a system-wide awareness of available services within the state WIOA core programs to foster co-enrollment of participants and resource leveraging;
- Ensuring project operators recruit and provide assessments that address youth employment and academic service needs, perform resource mapping to identify appropriate core partners, address support service needs, and develop a career service plan for postsecondary education or employment outcomes;
- Providing work experience and Adult Basic Education services based on the youth assessment and Individual Service Strategy;
- Partnering with occupational skills training centers to enroll youth in in-demand training opportunities that lead to industry-recognized credentials;
- Co-enrolling youth with one or more of the following for advanced training along a career pathway as appropriate:
  - o Registered Apprenticeship programs
  - o Job Corp
  - o One-Stop partners
  - o Vocational Rehabilitation
  - o Adult and Dislocated Worker program
- Increasing supportive services to youth while in follow up to improve positive outcomes.

**3. Describe how the State will ensure that all 14 program elements described in WIOA section 129(c)(2) are made available and effectively implemented.\***

**\* Sec. 102(b)(2)(D)(i)(I)**

The state ensures that all 14 basic elements are made available and effectively implemented using a variety of means through all stages of the grant cycle. During the solicitation process, all applicants must demonstrate the ability to deliver all 14 basic program elements either in-house or through a partner agency. If a partner is utilized to carry out a basic element, the name of the partner must be provided along with information regarding the type of agreement that is in place with the partner, e.g. letter of support, memorandum of agreement, contract, etc.

Once youth grants awards are reviewed by the AWIB and approved by the DOLWD Commissioner, a negotiation process between state grant staff and the sub award recipient takes place to review the terms of the grant, grant deliverables- including the 14 basic elements, and budget is agreed upon. Upon completion of the negotiation process, a grant agreement is entered into between the DOLWD and sub award recipient. The scope of work in the grant agreement lists the 14 basic elements and clearly defines the expectations to provide the 14 basic elements.

Grant Monitoring Policy 07-523 ensures monitoring is conducted annually by the AWIB to ensure sound financial management, Equal Employment Opportunity laws are adhered to and program activities are in line with statute and regulatory language. Monitoring ensures the grant recipients youth program operations are made available to all participants and: i. support activities to assure program quality and performance goals are achieved; ii. demonstrate alignment with the youth program design component of the Request for Grant Applications, and/or requirements outlined in legislation; iii. align with the policies, guidance and directions issued to support program performance; and, iv. reflect appropriate program practices and procedures including participant eligibility, assessment, planning, placement and other agreed upon activities and outcomes defined in the negotiated grant award. Program Year 2016 Youth sub-award recipients are:

• State of Alaska, Department of Health and Social Services, Division of Juvenile Justice • Yukon Delta Fisheries • Adult Learning Programs of Alaska • Nine Star Employment Services • Southeast Regional Resource Center • Alaska Military Youth Academy • AVTEC – Alaska’s Institute of Technology • Northwest Artic Borough School District • Alaska Primary Care Association • Ketchikan Indian Community • Kawerak, Inc.

**4. Provide the language contained in the State policy for “requiring additional assistance to enter or complete an educational program, or to secure and hold employment” criterion for out-of-school youth specified in WIOA section 129(a)(1)(B)(iii)(VIII) and for “requiring additional assistance to complete an education program, or to secure and hold employment” criterion for in-school youth specified in WIOA section 129(a)(1)(C)(iv)(VII).**

Definition

The definition of “requires additional assistance to complete an educational program, or to secure and hold employment” for in-school and out-of-school youth is outlined in WIOA Youth Eligibility Policy 07-502 and means any youth who:

- Lacks the employability skills to become or retain employment; or
- Lacks access to training opportunities due to geographic challenges; or
- Requires special accommodations for education or employment due to a disability; or
- Has cultural dissonance; or
- Is defined as a migrant youth; or
- Is currently attending an educational program; and
  - o has previously dropped out of an educational program; or
  - o has poor attendance patterns in an educational program during the last 12 calendar months; and
  - o has below average grades;
- Is not attending an educational program; and
  - o has no vocational/employment goal; and
  - o has a poor work history (including no work history), or has been fired from a job in the last six calendar months;

- Has completed full high school attendance; and
  - o failed comprehensive high school graduation tests; and
  - o was denied an Alaska high school diploma; and
  - o requests and requires intensive tutoring and/or remedial education to prepare for and retake the comprehensive examinations or the General Education Development (GED) examination.

**5. Include the State definition, as defined in law, for not attending school and attending school as specified in WIOA Section 129(a)(1)(B)(i) and Section 129(a)(1)(C)(i). If state law does not define “not attending school” or “attending school” indicate that is the case.**

**Definitions**

State law does not define “attending school” and “not attending school” but Alaska Statute 14.30.010 (a) states: “Every child between seven and 16 years of age shall attend school at the public school in the district in which the child resides during each school term.”

The state defines dropout in 4 AAC 06.895 (m) (3) as: "dropout" means an individual who was enrolled in the district at some time during the school year whose enrollment terminated; "dropout" does not include an individual who (A) graduated from high school or completed a state- or district-approved education program, as evidenced by receipt of a secondary school diploma from school authorities; (B) transferred to another public school district, private school, or state- or district-approved education program; (C) is temporarily absent due to suspension; (D) is absent due to an illness or a medical condition; or (E) died.

**6. If not using the basic skills deficient definition contained in WIOA Section 3(5)(B), include the specific State definition.**

**Definition**

The state’s definition of basic skills deficient is as follows:

a) Basic Skills Deficient means an individual who:

- Is a youth with English, reading, writing, or computing skills at or below the 8th grade level on the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE); or
- Is a youth or adult unable to compute or solve problems, or read, write, or speak English, at a level necessary to function on the job, in the individual’s family, or in society.

#### **d. Single-area State Requirements**

In States where there is only one local workforce investment area, the governor serves as both the State and local chief elected official. In such cases, the State must submit any information required in the local plan (WIOA section 106(d)(2)). States with a single workforce area must also include:

- 1. Any comments from the public comment period that represent disagreement with the Plan. (WIOA section 108(d)(3).)**
- 2. The entity responsible for the disbursement of grant funds, as determined by the governor, if different from that for the State. (WIOA section 108(b)(15).)**
- 3. The type and availability of WIOA Title I Youth Activities, including an identification of successful providers of such activities. (WIOA section 108(b)(9).)**

#### **Public comment process**

Public comment was solicited through public meetings, two online surveys, and a web-based comment form. Stakeholder groups that provided comments include Alaska Native organizations, chief elected officials, businesses, labor organizations, economic development entities, community-based organizations, adult and youth education and workforce development providers, institutions of higher education, disability service entities, youth-serving programs, veterans' service organizations, juvenile justice specialists, senior employment programs, individuals with disabilities, and the public. Comments focused on suggestions for strengthening partnerships and other improvements to ensure a robust and successful workforce system. Comments were incorporated into the final plan as much as possible. No comments indicated disagreement with the plan.

**(2) The entity responsible for the disbursement of grant funds, as determined by the governor, if different from that for the State. (WIOA section 108(b)(15).)**

#### **DOLWD responsible entity**

The Alaska DOLWD is responsible for the disbursement of grant funds.

**(3) The type and availability of WIOA title I Youth activities, including an identification of successful providers of such activities. (WIOA section 108(b)(9).)**

#### **Youth programs**

The WIOA Youth Program is federally funded to provide a comprehensive system of training and support services for in-school and out-of-school youth ages 14 to 24 in preparation for the workforce. The program partners with for-profit and nonprofit youth-serving organizations and core partners to carry out delivery of workforce development activities across the state to include the following:

- Objective assessment;
- Development of service strategies and goals directly linked to one or more of the performance indicators;
- Activities leading to the attainment of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, or a recognized postsecondary credential;
- Preparation for postsecondary educational and training opportunities;
- Strong linkages with academic instruction;
- Occupational education that leads to the attainment of recognized postsecondary credentials;
- Preparation for unsubsidized employment opportunities, in appropriate cases; and
- Effective connections to employers.

Workforce activity partners will be identified on DOLWD's Employment and Training Services youth training programs website.

**e. Waiver Requests (optional)**

States wanting to request waivers as part of their Title I-B Operational Plan must include a waiver plan that includes the following information for each waiver requested:

- 1. Identifies the statutory or regulatory requirements for which a waiver is requested and the goals that the State or local area, as appropriate, intends to achieve as a result of the waiver and how those goals relate to the Unified or Combined State Plan;**
- 2. Describes the actions that the State or local area, as appropriate, has undertaken to remove State or local statutory or regulatory barriers;**
- 3. Describes the goals of the waiver and the expected programmatic outcomes if the request is granted;**
- 4. Describes how the waiver will align with the Department's policy priorities, such as:**
  - A. supporting employer engagement;**
  - B. connecting education and training strategies;**
  - C. supporting work-based learning;**
  - D. improving job and career results, and**
  - E. other guidance issued by the Department.**
- 5. Describes the individuals affected by the waiver, including how the waiver will impact services for disadvantaged populations or individuals with multiple barriers to employment; and**
- 6. Describes the process used to:**
  - A. Monitor the progress in implementing the waiver;**
  - B. Provide notice to any local board affected by the waiver;**
  - C. Provide any local board affected by the waiver an opportunity to comment on the request;**
  - D. Ensure meaningful public comment, including comment by business and organized labor, on the waiver.**
  - E. Collect and report information about waiver outcomes in the State's WIOA Annual Report**

The Secretary may require that States provide the most recent data available about the outcomes of the existing waiver in cases where the State seeks renewal of a previously approved waiver;

**Waiver Request to Allow the State Board to Carry Out the Roles of a Local Board *(NOTE: THIS WAIVER REQUEST WAS SUBSEQUENTLY APPROVED BY ETA ON JUNE 27, 2016, WITH THE FOLLOWING CONDITIONS: "THE STATE MUST CONTINUE TO INCLUDE LOCAL INPUT IN ITS ACTIVITIES, ALLOCATE FUNDING TO THE LOCAL AREAS FOR WHICH THE STATE BOARD IS CARRYING OUT LOCAL BOARD FUNCTIONS, AND MOVE TOWARDS INCLUDING TWO CHIEF LOCAL ELECTED OFFICIALS ON ITS BOARD. THE WAIVER IS APPROVED THROUGH JUNE 30, 2018".)***

- (1) Identifies the statutory or regulatory requirements for which a waiver is requested and the goals that the State or local area, as appropriate, intends to achieve as a result of the waiver and how those goals relate to the Unified or Combined State Plan;**

## Statutory requirements

20 CFR 661.300(f).

## Goals

- Streamline Alaska’s governance and reporting structure;
- Streamline the process and timeliness of awarding grants by the elimination of multiple layers of administrative entities;
- Establish consistent eligibility standards across the state; and
- Improve accountability of workforce programs.

One of the main goals of this Combined Plan is to improve the efficiency and performance of Alaska’s workforce system. Allowing the Alaska Workforce Investment Board (AWIB) to also carry out the roles of a local board for the state will streamline the governance structure at the state level by having one board overseeing the workforce investments across the state. The AWIB includes a diverse geographic representation, and members bring their local/regional perspectives to the table as they oversee workforce investments and advise the governor on workforce issues for the state.

In 2003, ETA allowed the state to do away with the two previous local areas (Anchorage/Mat-Su and Balance of State). By allowing AWIB to act as the local board, the state will be able to continue to report as a single area (Local Area Reporting Number 2025).

### **(2) Describes the actions that the State or local area as appropriate, has undertaken to remove State or local statutory or regulatory barriers;**

The governor has designated Alaska as a statewide area and planning region for WIOA purposes. There are no state or local barriers to implementation of this waiver.

### **(3) Describes the goals of the waiver and the expected programmatic outcomes if the request is granted;**

The waiver will continue to streamline Alaska’s governance structure and make it responsive to the uniqueness of the state’s economy and geography, especially given current fiscal challenges.

The waiver will also streamline the process for awarding grants by eliminating multiple layers of administrative entities and processes. The AWIB, functioning as both the local and the state board, and housed under the Commissioner of Labor, will work closely with DOLWD in determining grant criteria, reviewing grant applications, and evaluating sub-recipients.

The waiver will allow DOLWD to continue implementing consistent standards across the state, instead of having multiple boards with a variety of eligibility and performance standards in different parts of the state.

The waiver will result in improved accountability of workforce investment programs, as one board will oversee all workforce programs for consistency in the evaluation and oversight process. DOLWD will be able to continue to report as a single area.

### **(4) Describes how the waiver will align with the Department’s policy priorities, such as:**

- (A) supporting employer engagement;
- (B) connecting education and training strategies;
- (C) supporting work-based learning;
- (D) improving job and career results, and

(E) other guidance issued by the Department.

The majority of AWIB members are representatives of business. They come from a variety of industries and from all parts of the state and are committed to bringing the voice of employers to the table and to reaching out to others in their respective industries to engage them in the workforce system. AWIB is developing a strategic plan, which will include using the industry sector approach to workforce development. Using that approach, AWIB will be focusing not only on employer engagement but on connecting education and training strategies through building career pathways; supporting work-based learning; and improving career results for all job seekers and employers alike.

**(5) Describes the individuals affected by the waiver including how the waiver will impact services for disadvantaged populations or individuals with multiple barriers to employment; and**

All WIOA-eligible participants, including disadvantaged populations and those with multiple barriers to employment, as well as employers, are positively impacted by this waiver. Participants and employers need not look to a different local area in the hopes of finding more resources, because the state functions and reports as a single statewide designation.

**(6) Describes the processes used to:**

(A) Monitor the progress in implementing the waiver;

(B) Provide notice to any local board affected by the waiver;

(C) Provide any local board affected by the waiver an opportunity to comment on the request;

(D) Ensure meaningful public comment, including comment by business and organized labor, on the waiver.

(E) Collect and report information about waiver outcomes in the State's WIOA Annual Report.

DOLWD solicited input on this waiver from local officials and employers across the state. They were invited to the public WIOA planning meetings held in November 2015; given the opportunity to provide comments via a web-based survey in October/November 2015; and provided the draft of the local area designation request process for review and comment from September 17 through October 20, 2015. There were no local officials who requested designation as a local area, and DOLWD received no comments on the draft local area designation and waiver process.

The AWIB will continue to solicit feedback from local officials and employers in two ways: 1) outreach by individual AWIB members to their local officials; and 2) opportunities for input at each meeting, which are held at various locations around the state. The AWIB will be focusing on statewide strategies and their linkage to the state's regional economic and workforce development needs.

**Policy and Procedure**

The outline of the policy and procedure to request designation as a local area is:

**POLICIES**

The chief elected official and local governing board from any unit of general local government or combination of units may submit a request for designation as a workforce development area. The AWIB, in consultation with DOLWD staff, will review the request and recommend approval or denial to the governor.

Designation as a new local area will be based on the extent to which the proposed area demonstrates that it:

- Is consistent with local labor market areas; and
- Has a common economic development area; and
- Has the federal and non-federal resources, including appropriate education and training institutions, to administer activities under the Youth, Adult, and Dislocated Worker formula programs under WIOA Title I-B; and
- Has the fiscal, administrative, and reporting capacity and systems in place to report on participant outcomes as required by WIOA and the Alaska WIOA Combined Plan.

The governor may approve or deny the request for designation. In either case, DOLWD will notify the applicant in writing. If the request is denied, the written notification will include the reasons for the denial.

If the request for local area designation is denied, the applicant may appeal. Appeals must be made to the AWIB and must address each issue cited in the denial notification.

If a decision on the appeal is not made within 60 days or if the appeal to the AWIB does not result in designation of the local area, the applicant may request a review by the Secretary of Labor in accordance with 20 CFR Section 683.640 of the WIOA statute.

## PROCEDURES

A request for local area designation must be made on a form supplied by DOLWD. A completed and signed request must be submitted by 5:00 p.m. on May 1 of the year preceding the Program Year for which the request is being made.

Any local area wishing to appeal the decision by the governor must be made in accordance with the appeal procedures described in Policies Section above.

Incomplete or unsigned requests will be returned; review of the application will be delayed.

The governor will monitor the progress of this waiver by reviewing information provided by DOLWD and the AWIB on costs, processes for awarding grants, eligibility standards, and performance on accountability measures. This information will also be used to report about the waiver outcomes in the state's annual WIOA reports.

**Waiver Request for High Concentration of Youth *(NOTE: THIS WAIVER REQUEST WAS SUBSEQUENTLY DENIED BY ETA ON JUNE 27, 2016)***

**(1) Identifies the statutory or regulatory requirements for which a waiver is requested and the goals that the State or local area, as appropriate, intends to achieve as a result of the waiver and how those goals relate to the Unified or Combined State Plan;**

### Statutory requirements

WIOA Section 129(b)(2)(F) and 20 CFR 652 §682.200(k) require provision of additional assistance to areas that have high concentrations of eligible youth.

### Goals

The goal is to ensure that the governor has the flexibility to prioritize the use of reserve funds for the required activities deemed most essential to the basic functions of the workforce investment system and to initiate youth activities in areas with the most need.

One of the main goals of the Combined Plan is to improve the efficiency and performance of Alaska's workforce system. This waiver will provide the state with flexibility in directing the governor's reserve funds to those activities that best preserve functions of the system.

**(2) Describes the actions that the State or local area as appropriate, has undertaken to remove State or local statutory or regulatory barriers;**

There is no state or local statutory or regulatory barrier. The AWIB carries out the roles and responsibilities of the local area encompassing the state. The AWIB supports this waiver request to allow for flexibility in directing funds to areas that have the most need for additional support to serve youth participants.

**(3) Describes the goals of the waiver and the expected programmatic outcomes if the request is granted;**

The WIOA allotment for the governor's reserve funds restricts the state's ability to effectively fund and carry out all of the required statewide workforce investment activities, as the majority of the state has a high concentration of eligible youth. The state requests the flexibility to fund special projects to address the state's specific youth needs rather than being tied to the high concentration of youth criterion. The goal in seeking this waiver is to ensure that the governor has the flexibility to prioritize the use of reserve funds for the required activities deemed most essential to the basic functions of the workforce investment system and to initiate youth activities that will further the goals outlined in Alaska's Combined State Plan. Based on the formula allocation factor that allocates one-third of program funds on the basis of relative number of disadvantaged youth, funding is already directed at workforce areas with high concentrations of eligible youth.

This intent mirrors that of WIOA: to simplify and streamline an integral part of a reformed workforce development system. The flexibility this waiver will provide will positively affect all stakeholders and customers involved in WIOA youth program services.

**(4) Describes how the waiver will align with the Department's policy priorities, such as:**

- (A) supporting employer engagement;
- (B) connecting education and training strategies;
- (C) supporting work-based learning;
- (D) improving job and career results, and
- (E) other guidance issued by the Department.

The waiver aligns with DOLWD's priorities and will provide Alaska with more flexibility in directing the governor's reserve funds to activities that support the workforce investment system in maintaining services for all eligible individuals, including youth. The flexibility of the waiver will allow for projects that support employer engagement, connect education and training strategies, support apprenticeship and other work based learning strategies, and will ultimately lead to improving job and career results.

**(5) Describes the individuals affected by the waiver including how the waiver will impact services for disadvantaged populations or individuals with multiple barriers to employment; and**

All youth program participants will be affected in a positive way. The waiver will allow the flexibility to use the governor's reserve funds for projects targeting specific youth needs in all areas, not just in areas of high concentration of eligible youth. Youth program participants generally possess multiple barriers to employment, which can be addressed in innovative ways with these funds.

**(6) Describes the processes used to:**

- (A) Monitor the progress in implementing the waiver;
- (B) Provide notice to any local board affected by the waiver;
- (C) Provide any local board affected by the waiver an opportunity to comment on the request;
- (D) Ensure meaningful public comment, including comment by business and organized labor, on the waiver.
- (E) Collect and report information about waiver outcomes in the State’s WIOA Annual Report.

The AWIB will monitor the implementation and results of this waiver ensuring performance information is recorded accurately, AJC operations are made more efficient and responsive to customers, and the youth programs receive additional technical assistance. Alaska will also ensure accountability for federal funds in connection with this waiver by reviewing monthly expenditure, performance and other reports through regular contact with the U.S. Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration, Region VI State Liaison, and through its monitoring and performance accountability system. Notice of public comment regarding this waiver will be issued and all waiver outcomes will be included in Alaska’s WIOA Annual Report.

## **Title I-B Assurances**

The State Plan must include assurances that:

1. The State has implemented a policy to ensure Adult program funds provide a priority in the delivery of training services and individualized career services to individuals who are low income, public assistance recipients and basic skills deficient; **Yes**
2. The state has implemented a policy to ensure local areas have a process in place for referring veterans with significant barriers to employment to career services provided by the JVSG program’s Disabled Veterans’ Outreach Program (DVOP) specialist; **Yes**
3. The state established a written policy and procedure that set forth criteria to be used by chief elected officials for the appointment of local workforce investment board members. **Yes**
4. The state established written policy and procedures to ensure local workforce investment boards are certified by the governor every two years in accordance with WIOA section 107(c)(2). **Yes**
5. Where an alternative entity takes the place of a State Board, the State has written policy and procedures to ensure the alternative entity meets the definition under WIOA section 101(e) and the legal requirements for membership. **Yes**
6. The State established a written policy and procedure for how the individuals and entities represented on the State Workforce Development Board help to determine the methods and factors of distribution, and how the state consults with chief elected officials in local areas throughout the state in determining the distributions. **Yes**
7. The State will not use funds received under WIOA Title I to assist, promote, or deter union organizing in accordance with WIOA section 181(b)(7). **Yes**

8. The State distributes adult and youth funds received under WIOA equitably throughout the State, and no local area suffers significant shifts in funding from year-to-year during the period covered by this plan. **Yes**

9. If a State Workforce Development Board, department, or agency administers state laws for vocational rehabilitation of persons with disabilities, that board, department, or agency cooperates with the agency that administers Wagner-Peyser services, Adult and Dislocated Worker programs and Youth Programs under Title I. **Yes**

10. The State agrees to report on the impact and outcomes of its approved waivers in its WIOA Annual Report. **Yes**

11. The State has taken appropriate action to secure compliance with the Uniform Guidance at 2 CFR 200 and 2 CFR 2900, including that the State will annually monitor local areas to ensure compliance and otherwise take appropriate action to secure compliance with the Uniform Guidance under section WIOA 184(a)(3); **Yes**

## **Program-Specific Requirements for Wagner-Peyser Program (Employment Services)**

All program-specific requirements provided for the WIOA core programs in this section must be addressed for either a Unified or Combined State Plan.

### **A. Employment Service Professional Staff Development.**

**1. Describe how the State will utilize professional development activities for Employment Service staff to ensure staff is able to provide high quality services to both jobseekers and employers.**

#### **Professional Development**

Employment Service (ES) staff funded under Wagner-Peyser receive professional development training during their first year of employment and on an as-needed basis to ensure staff are prepared to provide high-quality employment and training services to job seekers, workers, and employers. Areas of staff training include policies, procedures, and information on employment- and training-related programs and services like Rapid Response (RR), Fidelity Bonding, various tax credits, federally-funded training, and disability awareness. ES staff also receive training on customer service skills, conducting a job search, Priority of Service (POS) for veterans, and how to use ALEXsys to assist both job seekers and employers.

All ES staff participate in the Alaska Foundations of Workforce Professional Certification program. These are professional competency courses developed around the National Association for Workforce Development Professionals core competency defined areas.

ES staff who work closely with employers are provided with the Business and Employer Services - Professional Certification professional development program. These professional competency courses were developed around the National Association for Workforce Development Professionals seven core defined areas of competency for Business and Employer Services. Employer services staff also receive regular training including: employer outreach, hiring incentives, incumbent worker training, Registered Apprenticeship, the benefits of hiring veterans, and adherence to state and federal regulations that affect employers.

Staff performance is monitored closely; as needs arise, training is provided to correct areas of deficiency. Such training can include one or more of the following: classroom instruction, webinars, and one-on-one training.

**2. Describe strategies developed to support training and awareness across core programs and the Unemployment Insurance program, and the training provided for Employment Services and WIOA staff on identification of UI eligibility issues and referral to UI staff for adjudication.**

**Support of training and awareness**

Alaska uses several strategies to ensure that core program, WIOA, and UI staff are trained to recognize and respond to UI eligibility issues. All ES and WIOA staff have a working knowledge and awareness of the UI requirement that claimants must register for work in ALEXsys, maintain an online resume, and conduct weekly work searches. UI Technical Unit staff routinely provide UI eligibility issue training to ensure ES staff are able to recognize barriers and forward potential issues to UI staff to investigate through a dedicated email address. UI policy, procedure, and instructional manuals are also available to all ES staff. Only UI staff are authorized to make the eligibility determination regarding resolution of potential UI issues. ES/WIOA staff located in the Alaska Job Centers (AJCs) can guide claimants toward understanding and satisfying the UI requirements listed above and assist them to contact the UI Claim Center for in-depth answers regarding UI eligibility.

Cross-training of staff occurs regularly, allowing employer services staff to easily assist in the ES resource rooms to help job seekers. In addition to field staff training by UI and ES Technical Unit staff, for continuity and clarity, AJC managers also receive training and are responsible for ensuring that their staff members are aware of and adhere to new procedures, regulations, and service delivery models. Having all ES, UI, and Career Support and Training Services (CSTS) staff in one division greatly increases the atmosphere of sharing a common goal for common customers.

Alaska's RR team is one of the best examples of an integrated workforce system. This team is comprised of staff from different units that work toward a common goal. The RR team is led by the ES Technical Unit and comprised of UI, ES resource room, Career Support and Training Services (CSTS), Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA), and Employer Services staff. The team is trained collectively so that each person learns and understands the roles of the other team members and how the services offered by each unit to the employers and workers complement and build off each other.

Another example of different units working together is the Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) team led by a combination of UI and ES Technical Unit staff. These staff work together to develop strategies that ensure UI claimants, particularly veterans and those deemed most likely to exhaust UI benefits, receive a combination of meaningful financial and job-search support while they are in transition. Development of these strategies necessitates a sound level of understanding of both programs. If the claimant appears to need training, ES staff will contact WIOA staff for an eligibility and suitability assessment. If the claimant is also a veteran, veteran specialist staff are also contacted to offer tailored assistance in terms familiar to their fellow veterans. They also work with ES staff to match the veteran with jobs and take advantage of state and federal hire incentives offered to employers who hire veterans.

**B. Explain how the state will provide information and meaningful assistance to individuals requesting assistance in filing a claim for unemployment compensation through One-Stop centers, as required by WIOA as a career service.**

**UI information**

UI claimants and employers are priority customers at Alaska's AJCs. All AJCs have phone banks for UI purposes. The phone banks are in a separate dedicated queue for AJC customers, whose calls are given priority over the general queue and are answered immediately by knowledgeable UI claim center staff. ES staff promptly assist claimants and employers to meet filing requirements for UI purposes as well as providing dedicated resources such as computers, telephones, facsimile machines, and printed materials regarding eligibility requirements and filing for UI benefits. ES staff have general knowledge and awareness of UI eligibility requirements and report potential issues to UI staff for follow-up.

**C. Describe the state's strategy for providing reemployment assistance to Unemployment Insurance claimants and other unemployed individuals.**

**Reemployment Assistance**

Wagner-Peyser-funded Employment Service (ES) staff located in the 17 Alaska Job Centers (AJCs) serve all job seekers and employers. In addition, Alaska has made UI claimants a priority population. As such, AJC staff are charged with improving claimants' services, training options, and support programs. One of the state's top priorities is the RESEA program. The goal of the program is to reduce the number of UI benefit weeks paid to claimants by fast-tracking them into the right combination of reemployment services, resources, and opportunities designed to promote rapid reemployment. RESEA is offered in Alaska's six largest AJCs, which also have the highest percentage of UI claimants: Anchorage-Midtown, Mat-Su, Juneau, Fairbanks, Kenai, and Ketchikan. RESEA focuses on targeted assistance to two types of UI claimants - recently separated veterans and the most-likely-to-exhaust UI benefits. For selection criteria, UI uses wage data and a USDOL ETA-approved statistical model that uses claimant characteristics and economic indicators to assess the likelihood of a claimant exhausting UI benefits.

Staff and public awareness of the mandatory nature of RESEA and the substantial benefits that participation offers to claimants is the key to the program's success. Alaska accomplishes this task using several channels.

**Staff training**

Formal and on-going training is provided to staff in all AJCs participating in RESEA. As a best practice, field staff who have conducted past reemployment service programs participate in the development of new staff training materials, particularly during the transition period from one reemployment services version to another. Their input is crucial, as they are the ones who become the experts at eliciting and reading the reemployment needs of the claimants they interview.

Each week, UI mails notifications to selected claimants who have received a first payment of mandatory participation in RESEA and advises self-registration and completion of requirements immediately to ensure continued eligibility for UI benefits. In addition, to alert AJC RESEA staff, UI auto-transmits RESEA selection data to ALEXsys. To ensure that all selected claimants receive notification of the mandatory participation, AJC RESEA staff also receive an electronic list with the contact information of selected claimants. Staff then personally call all claimants to remind them of their responsibility to participate in the program in order to promote rapid reemployment. These calls also help to facilitate immediate registration into the mandatory in-person workshop to ensure all RESEA obligations are fulfilled timely. Extensive outreach will use the media, press releases, reminder postcards, and booklets strategically placed in military installation resource rooms.

**Claimants**

Each claimant selected for RESEA is required to participate in a 90-minute, in-person, reemployment services and eligibility assessment workshop with RESEA staff. Based on the eligibility assessment, the orientation to AJC resources, the claimant's work search efforts combined with real-time labor market information, and the assessment of the unique reemployment needs of each claimant, an Individual Reemployment Plan is developed with the claimant. The claimant actively participates in the development of the Individual Reemployment Plan, lending credence to the likelihood it will be completed. Recommended services are explored and at least one service is provided during the 90-minute session, while others may be referred for completion at a later date using other reemployment and training resources including those funded under Wagner-Peyser, Dislocated Worker, Adult, and Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JVSG).

A large percentage of claimants selected for RESEA will be military veterans, a group who are always a top priority in Alaska. Some of the veterans will be recently separated from the military and others will be veterans who meet the criteria associated with the most likely to exhaust UI benefits. The latter are veterans who are homeless, disabled, or have other significant barriers to reemployment. In the three RESEA AJCs with on-site Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP)

staff, a personal introduction and referral to the DVOP will be the norm. In other AJCs, RESEA staff will telephonically introduce the RESEA participant to the DVOPs who serve veterans itinerantly for that region.

All of the resources offered to claimants selected for RESEA are also available to other UI claimants including those funded under Wagner-Peyser, Dislocated Worker, Adult, and JVSG. Service strategies include awareness through UI and ES outreach and reemployment assistance through comprehensive, readily available resources. All claimants receive notification from the UI program that reemployment services are offered from statewide job centers to help them find work. The notification is standard to all UI claimants and is viewable on the UI website from which claimants file claims, on mailed documents generated at the point of filing, by telephonic voice message on the system from which claimants file weekly benefits, and during telephonic interviews with UI claims-takers. All claimants are advised to register for work in ALEXsys. Upon registration, the menu of our many reemployment services is readily viewable by claimants and includes a link to the online Reemployment Services Orientation (also available by ES workshop) which describes the in-person and online reemployment and training resources available through Alaska Job Centers. Job seekers self-identify as UI claimants upon registration in ALEXsys and when entering a job center. Job center walk-in claimants are greeted by frontline staff and asked to complete an assessment form describing their circumstances and reemployment needs. ES staff are trained to guide claimants through the reemployment process which includes registration, online resume, and job search requirements. All Alaska Job Centers have clearly marked, dedicated telephones in the resource rooms for use by UI claimants. In addition, awareness of employment and training resources is enhanced by information posted in resource rooms and on our public website. Large stand-up banners, located at the entrances of the participating RESEA job centers describe how UI claimants can take advantage of reemployment and training resources.

**D. Describe how the State will use W-P funds to support UI claimants, and the communication between W-P and UI, as appropriate, including the following:**

**1. Coordination of and provision of labor exchange services for UI claimants as required by the Wagner-Peyser Act;**

**Communication**

Alaska's UI program is dedicated to providing unemployed workers fast and accurate payment of UI benefits. With the seasonal nature of much of the state's workforce and Alaska's vast remoteness, UI benefits serve to not only bridge the economic gap for the individual worker, but also as a stabilizing influence on local economies. Workers who have become unemployed or are working less than fulltime are encouraged to apply for UI benefits as soon as possible. Application for a UI claim is easy and can be conducted using the same familiar online account (myAlaska) that Alaska residents use to file their Permanent Fund Dividend and access other state services. In addition to UI staff, ES staff are familiar with myAlaska and can guide claimants through the application process.

To help claimants with their job search efforts, Alaska uses Wagner-Peyser funds to maintain ALEXsys, which provides registered job seekers access to state and local jobs advertised by Alaska employers. Both UI and ES online systems require a claimant's email address; both UI and ES staff can assist a claimant in establishing an email address for these purposes. The application for the UI claim generates comprehensive information to the claimant including their rights and responsibilities, eligibility requirements, how to file biweekly claims, and how payment may be received. Unless specifically exempted by UI, all claimants must be physically able and available to seek and accept suitable, fulltime work. ES staff have a basic understanding of this requirement.

**2. Registration of UI claimants with the State's employment service if required by State law;**

**Registration**

In Alaska, unless specifically exempted by UI, claimants filing for benefits are responsible for registering for work and posting at least one online resume on ALEXsys within seven days of filing a new or reopened claim for UI benefits. Claimants must maintain the online resume and ensure it is current and accessible to employers by regularly checking that it is in

online status. The registration and resume stay active while the claimant is actively engaged in job search and referral activities in ALEXsys and while receiving reemployment services from AJC staff. Instructions for registering in ALEXsys are provided to all claimants in the UI Claimant Handbook. The online UI Filing Guide also provides registration instructions and includes a live link to ALEXsys.

**3. Administration of the work test for the State unemployment compensation system, including making eligibility assessments (for referral to UI adjudication, if needed), and providing job finding and placement services for UI claimants; and**

**Work test**

Claimants required to register and post an on-line resume in ALEXsys are also required to perform work search contacts for each week they claim UI benefits. For the claimant and UI staff, applications for jobs posted on ALEXsys serve as an easily verifiable record of the number of job searches being conducted each week. The record also provides ES and RESEA staff with a way to ascertain the suitability and validity of claimant work searches. This information is one component that helps build the foundation for a solid reemployment plan. Work search efforts can be recorded and accepted on any template as long as the record is verifiable; however, both UI and ES provide a formal Work Search Log with clear instructions, and they encourage claimants to use it. If it becomes apparent to ES or RESEA staff that a claimant is not seeking work or has refused suitable work, ES staff will promptly notify their UI counterparts to alert them of the potential issue. In addition, all UI staff are trained to maneuver through ALEXsys to verify that a claimant is registered, has an online resume, and is conducting work searches.

**4. Provision of referrals to and application assistance for training and education programs and resources.**

**Referrals**

ES, RESEA, UI, State Training and Employment Program (STEP), and CSTS staff all work for the Division of Employment and Training Services (DETS). CSTS staff determine eligibility and suitability for training. Referrals to training typically come from ES and RESEA staff. UI staff are also aware that some claimants may be eligible for WIOA or other federally funded training and may advise the claimant to contact the appropriate AJC for more information. Referrals may also come from partners such as ABE, SCSEP, or DVR. In this way, Alaska maintains the “no wrong door” approach to serving job seekers, including claimants.

Job seekers interested in training are guided through the process by CSTS staff who also help them with their applications to training providers approved on the Eligible Training Provider List.

**E. Agricultural Outreach Plan (AOP). Each State agency must develop an AOP every four years as part of the Unified or Combined State Plan required under sections 102 or 103 of WIOA. The AOP must include--**

**1. Assessment of Need**

Provide an assessment of the unique needs of farmworkers in the area based on past and projected agricultural and farmworker activity in the State. Such needs may include but are not limited to: employment, training, and housing.

Alaska is not a significant Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker (MSFW) state and has a limited agricultural industry, primarily confined to the Mat-Su Borough. Although Alaska’s agricultural activity is low, per 20 CFR 653.18 (d) (1), DOLWD will apply to have a State Monitor Advocate (SMA) with less than full-time duties to monitor Alaska’s commercial agricultural activity.

In recent years, Alaska has had only one employer utilize the H-2A Temporary Agricultural program to pursue visas for foreign workers. In order to apply for these visas, the employer is required to recruit for U.S. workers. Pending a demonstrated shortage of available U.S. workers, the employer is then able to gain certification of the H-2A visas. Many of

Alaska's other agricultural employers continue to use word of mouth, placement of job orders in ALEXsys, or other methods of public recruitment to pursue workers.

**a. An assessment of the agricultural activity in the State means: 1) identifying the top five labor-intensive crops, the months of heavy activity, and the geographic area of prime activity; 2) Summarize the agricultural employers' needs in the State (i.e. are they predominantly hiring local or foreign workers, are they expressing that there is a scarcity in the agricultural workforce); and 3) Identifying any economic, natural, or other factors that are affecting agriculture in the State or any projected factors that will affect agriculture in the State.**

Alaska is not a significant Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker (MSFW) state and has a limited agricultural industry, primarily confined to the Mat-Su Borough. Although Alaska's agricultural activity is low, per 20 CFR 653.18 (d) (1), DOLWD will apply to have a State Monitor Advocate (SMA) with less than full-time duties to monitor Alaska's commercial agricultural activity.

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**b. An assessment of the unique needs of farmworkers means summarizing Migrant and Seasonal Farm Worker (MSFW) characteristics (including if they are predominantly from certain countries, what language(s) they speak, the approximate number of MSFWs in the State during peak season and during low season, and whether they tend to be migrant, seasonal, or year-round farmworkers). This information must take into account data supplied by WIOA Section 167 National Farmworker Jobs Program (NFJP) grantees, other MSFW organizations, employer organizations, and State and/or Federal agency data sources such as the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) Employment and Training Administration.**

Alaska is not a significant Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker (MSFW) state and has a limited agricultural industry, primarily confined to the Mat-Su Borough. Although Alaska's agricultural activity is low, per 20 CFR 653.18 (d) (1), DOLWD will apply to have a State Monitor Advocate (SMA) with less than full-time duties to monitor Alaska's commercial agricultural activity.

DOLWD provides outreach and assessments through the state's 17 AJCs. These offices are part of the state's One-Stop system, serving as either a comprehensive One-Stop center or an affiliated One-Stop. Staff will establish a list of available resources and develop partnerships with local organizations to serve Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers (MSFWs). Resources can include: Chambers of Commerce, TANF, health programs, community food banks, and entities that provide Adult Literacy, ESL, and GED services to MSFWs. DOLWD will work with grantees, MSFW organizations, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture to summarize the characteristics and identify the unique needs of farmworkers in Alaska.

## **2. Outreach Activities**

The local offices outreach activities must be designed to meet the needs of MSFWs in the State and to locate and contact MSFWs who are not being reached through normal intake activities. Describe the State agency's proposed strategies for:

DOLWD staff will conduct outreach by referring MSFWs to both seasonal agricultural employment and nonagricultural employment. This will provide additional career opportunities and lengthen the period of employment for MSFW workers. DOLWD can also provide outreach to MSFWs for participation in local job fairs targeted to them and their families. DOLWD can develop multi-lingual posters to show AJC services.

**A. Contacting farmworkers who are not being reached by the normal intake activities conducted by the employment service offices.**

DOLWD staff will conduct outreach by referring MSFWs to both seasonal agricultural employment and nonagricultural employment. This will provide additional career opportunities and lengthen the period of employment for MSFW workers. DOLWD can also provide outreach to MSFWs for participation in local job fairs targeted to them and their families. DOLWD can develop multi-lingual posters to show AJC services.

**B. Providing technical assistance to outreach workers. Technical assistance must include trainings, conferences, additional resources, and increased collaboration with other organizations on topics such as one-stop center services (i.e. availability of referrals to training, supportive services, and career services, as well as specific employment opportunities), the employment service complaint system, information on the other organizations serving MSFWs in the area, and a basic summary of farmworker rights, including their rights with respect to the terms and conditions of employment.**

Staff will coordinate with agricultural employers to match the labor needs of employers with workers qualified to fill the jobs. Staff can aid by scheduling visits throughout the agricultural community. DOLWD staff can provide assistance and support to MSFWs to include onsite review of local services. AJCs will consider conducting workshops in other languages, introducing MSFWs to office technology, and offering translation assistance within local communities.

The new State Monitor Advocate (SMA) will perform a variety of advocacy activities, including, but not limited to, overseeing the operation and performance of the MSFW complaint system, reviewing reports of outreach workers, participating in public meetings throughout the state, and meeting with farmworker groups and employers to promote DOLWD services.

To urge those farmworkers to go to the local AJC to obtain the full range of employment and training services, staff will ensure outreach contacts with MSFWs are made primarily during the peak activity period. Using available resources, contacts will be made at locations where MSFWs live and congregate. Written and oral presentations can be provided in the language(s) readily understood by workers.

The menu of services may include the following:

- Information regarding the full array of services offered in the AJCs;
- Referral to agricultural, H-2A orders, and non-agricultural employment;
- Referral to training;
- Referral to supportive services;
- Career counseling;
- Unemployment Insurance information;
- Information on the DOLWD complaint system;
- Job development; and
- Summaries of farmworker rights.

If an MSFW client cannot or does not wish to visit a physical AJC location, outreach staff can help the client complete an application for services, provide referrals to appropriate employment opportunities, assist them in preparing complaints, or make appointments for needed services. Staff can then carry out follow-up contact with MSFW customers.

**C. Increasing outreach worker training and awareness across core programs including the Unemployment Insurance (UI) program and the training on identification of UI eligibility issues.**

DOLWD will provide increased outreach, worker training, and awareness across core programs, including Unemployment Insurance.

**D. Providing State merit staff outreach workers professional development activities to ensure they are able to provide high quality services to both jobseekers and employers.**

DOLWD will provide merit staff workers with professional development activities in order to provide job seekers and employers high quality service.

**E. Coordinating outreach efforts with NFJP grantees as well as with public and private community service agencies and MSFW groups.**

DOLWD will coordinate outreach efforts with agencies such as the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Alaska Department of Natural Resources, and with the DOLWD Research & Analysis Section.

**3. Services provided to farmworkers and agricultural employers through the one-stop delivery system.**

Describe the State agency's proposed strategies for:

**(A) Providing the full range of employment and training services to the agricultural community, both farmworkers and agricultural employers, through the one-stop delivery system. This includes:**

- i. How career and training services required under WIOA Title I will be provided to MSFWs through the one-stop centers;**
- ii. How the State serves agricultural employers and how it intends to improve such services.**

**(i) How career and training services required under WIOA Title I will be provided to MSFWs through the one-stop centers;**

The Wagner-Peyser program provides services for job seekers and employers. Services for job seekers, including MSFWs, include an extensive online job bank for researching job openings; referrals to job openings, training or other employment services; job search consulting and workshops; aptitude, interest and proficiency tests; career guidance; area business job fairs; special services to veterans, migrant seasonal farm workers and individuals with disabilities; and re-employment services to claimants identified through the state's Unemployment Insurance system as high-risk for exhausting benefits prior to re-employment, including recently separated veterans.

**(ii) How the State serves agricultural employers and how it intends to improve such services.**

DOLWD staff will assist agricultural employers with their labor needs. When local workers are not available, staff will provide technical assistance to the employers to aid them in accessing other workers. Local office staff will assist farm labor contractors in preparing application for certification with the U.S. Department of Labor.

Employers, including agricultural employers, are valued customers of the Wagner-Peyser program. Program funds are leveraged to expand employer participation in the statewide workforce investment system. Some examples include: AJC staff structure specifically dedicated to business services; connecting employers to system resources; AJC facilities to provide a professional atmosphere for employers to conduct customized recruitment and hiring events; processing of job orders; and recruiting/matching applications from local, state, and national labor pools. Business Services specialists in the AJCs are trained to work with and understand the skill needs of employers so they can make quality referrals of job seekers who meet those needs.

**(B) Marketing the employment service complaint system to farmworkers and other farmworker advocacy groups.**

Alaska has no identified MSFWs and has not identified farmworker advocacy groups. The SMA, when selected, will work with the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Alaska Department of Natural Resources to identify those groups and market the employment service complaint system to them.

**(C) Marketing the Agricultural Recruitment System to agricultural employers and how it intends to improve such publicity.**

The SMA will work with agricultural employers and farmworker advocacy groups to market DOLWD's comprehensive services for agriculture-related employment.

**4. Other Requirements**

**(A) Collaboration**

Describe any collaborative agreements the state workforce agency (SWA) has with other MSFW service providers including NFJP grantees and other service providers. Describe how the SWA intends to build upon/increase collaboration with existing partners and in establishing new partners over the next four years (including any approximate timelines for establishing agreements or building upon existing agreements).

Alaska has no documented MSFWs, and the state has not collected that information from previous years. The state will apply for a part-time SMA, who will work with other entities such as the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Alaska Department of Natural Resources, and the DOLWD Research & Analysis Section to identify MSFWs and provide services to them. DOLWD will also work with those entities to develop a way to capture data on agricultural employees and MSFWs in the state.

**(B) Review and Public Comment.**

In developing the AOP, the SWA must solicit information and suggestions from NFJP grantees, other appropriate MSFW groups, public agencies, agricultural employer organizations, and other interested organizations. In addition, at least 45 calendar days before submitting its final AOP, the SWA must provide a proposed plan to NFJP grantees, public agencies, agricultural employer organizations, and other organizations expressing an interest and allow at least 30 days for review and comment. The SWA must: 1) Consider any comments received in formulating its final proposed AOP; 2) Inform all commenting parties in writing whether their comments have been incorporated and, if not, the reasons therefore; and 3) Transmit the comments and recommendations received and its responses with the submission of the AOP. The AOP must include a statement confirming NFJP grantees, other appropriate MSFW groups, public agencies, agricultural employer organizations and other interested employer organizations have been given an opportunity to comment on the AOP. Include the list of organizations from which information and suggestions were solicited, any comments received, and responses to those comments.

Alaska has no National Farmworker Jobs Program (NFJP) grantees, MSFW groups, or agricultural employer organizations to review and comment on the plan. When Alaska applies to have the SMA and after the groups have been established, the SMA will ask for suggestions and comments.

**(C) Data Assessment.**

Review the previous four years Wagner-Peyser data reports on performance. Note whether the State has been meeting its goals to provide MSFWs quantitatively proportionate services as compared to non-MSFWs. If it has not met these goals, explain why the State believes such goals were not met and how the State intends to improve its provision of services in order to meet such goals.

Alaska will establish reports and procedures in order to capture information on MSFWs and agricultural employers to meet future goals and assess progress.

**(D) Assessment of progress**

The plan must include an explanation of what was achieved based on the previous AOP, what was not achieved and an explanation as to why the State believes the goals were not achieved, and how the State intends to remedy the gaps of achievement in the coming year.

Alaska will establish reports and procedures to capture information on MSFWs and agricultural employers to meet future goals and assess progress.

**(E) State Monitor Advocate**

The plan must contain a statement confirming the State Monitor Advocate has reviewed and approved the AOP.

Alaska does not have a State Monitor Advocate (SMA) at this time but will apply for a part-time statewide SMA.

**(F). Wagner-Peyser Assurances**

The State Plan must include assurances that:

1. The Wagner-Peyser Employment Service is co-located with one-stop centers or a plan and timeline has been developed to comply with this requirement within a reasonable amount of time. (sec 121(e)(3)); **Yes**
2. The State agency is complying with the requirements under 20 CFR 653.111 (State agency staffing requirements) if the State has significant MSFW one-stop centers; **Yes**
3. If a State Workforce Development Board, department, or agency administers State laws for vocational rehabilitation of persons with disabilities, that board, department, or agency cooperates with the agency that administers Wagner-Peyser services, Adult and Dislocated Worker programs and Youth Programs under Title I; and **Yes**
4. State agency merit-based public employees provide Wagner-Peyser Act-funded labor exchange activities in accordance with Department of Labor regulations. **Yes**

# Program-Specific Requirements for Adult Education and Family Literacy Act Programs

The State Plan must include a description of the following as it pertains to Adult Education and Literacy programs under Title II, the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA).

## A. Aligning of Content Standards

Describe how the eligible agency will, by July 1, 2016, align its content standards for adult education with State-adopted challenging academic content standards, as adopted under section 1111(b)(1) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended (20 U.S.C. 6311(b)(1)).

The Alaska Adult Basic Education (ABE) Program adopted College and Career Readiness (CCR) standards for Adult Education. The CCR standards, the product of a project funded by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education, reflect broad agreement among experts about what is desirable for adult students to know in order to be prepared for the rigors of postsecondary education and training. In 2012, the Alaska State Board of Education & Early Development adopted new K–12 academic standards for English Language Arts and Mathematics. The adoption process involved two years of work on the new standards with rural and urban Alaskans, including representatives of universities, career and technical education programs, industry, and teachers of diverse student populations. The content and rigor of Alaska's proposed K-12 standards were compared to the content and rigor to K-12 standards from across the country. Few differences were found between other states' standards and the standards adopted by Alaska. Thus the final K-12 standards are similar to those adopted in other states. The State ABE Director attended the K-12 standards meetings in November 2010 and was part of the team that analyzed the state's K-12 standards. The State ABE office compared Alaska's new K-12 standards to the CCR standards for Adult Education, and found that the CCR standards align with the standards adopted by the Alaska State Board of Education & Early Development under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. The CCR standards are now in use in Alaska's ABE regional programs.

## B. Local Activities

Describe how the State will, using the considerations specified in section 231(e) of WIOA, fund each eligible provider to establish or operate programs that provide the adult education and literacy activities, including programs that provide such activities concurrently. The Unified or Combined State Plan must include at a minimum the scope, content, and organization of local activities.

### Adult Education and Literacy Activities (Section 203 of WIOA)

- Adult education;
- Literacy;
- Workplace adult education and literacy activities;
- Family literacy activities;
- English language acquisition activities;
- Integrated English literacy and civics education;
- Workforce preparation activities; or
- Integrated education and training that—
  1. Provides adult education and literacy activities, concurrently and contextually with both, workforce preparation activities, and workforce training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster, and
  2. Is for the purpose of educational and career advancement.

The Alaska Adult Basic Education (ABE) local activities will consist of those listed in Section 203 of WIOA. • Adult education; • Literacy; • Workplace adult education and literacy activities; • Family literacy activities; • English language acquisition activities; • Integrated English literacy and civics education; • Workforce preparation activities; or • Integrated education and training that— 1. Provides adult education and literacy activities, concurrently and contextually with both, workforce preparation activities, and workforce training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster, and 2. Is for the purpose of educational and career advancement. The activities listed above will be funded directly with Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) funds or with leveraged funding from other sections of WIOA or from other funding sources. For example, due to the limited amount of ABE funding, historically Alaska ABE funds have not supported stand-alone family literacy programs. Rather, ABE regional programs have provided AEFLA-funded adult education instruction in local family literacy programs that were supported with funds other than AEFLA. Scope, Content, and Organization of Local Activities

Alaska ABE regional programs [i.e., “eligible providers” in Section 203(5)] will be funded according to their capacity to conduct the activities defined in Section 203 of WIOA and the considerations in 231(e) of WIOA. The Alaska ABE Regional Program Application will require that Regional Program applicants describe in detail the activities that they will conduct to:

- (a) Meet the regional needs under Section 108 and serve individuals (1) with low levels of literacy skills, including eligible adults with learning disabilities, and (2) who are English language learners. Alaska ABE Regional Program applicants in geographical areas serving Alaskans, mostly Native Alaskans, in villages will be required to describe the activities they will undertake to address the challenges of providing to this population of learners evidence-based instruction that is aligned to the CCR standards and that facilitates learners’ transition to further education or employment;
- (b) Demonstrate their past experience in delivering ABE services to AEFLA target populations and in improving ABE learners’ skills to meet Alaska’s performance levels for the indicators of performance in Section 116;
- (c) Form active partnerships with local workforce development providers and align their proposed activities with those described in Section 108 and with the services of Alaska’s one-stop providers in the regions, which may be electronic access in some cases. In some regions the ABE partnership may be with an employment service available through the local Native organization.
- (d) Form active partnerships with secondary education, higher education, social services, business and industry, vocational rehabilitation, and other partners that can provide supportive services, information, and resources to facilitate adult learners’ participation in and completion of ABE, and transition to further education and employment;
- (e) Deliver ABE services for a minimum of 30 hours per week, four days per week, and for at least nine months per year;
- (f) Provide instruction in:
  - (1) mathematics, reading, writing, speaking, and listening instruction using the content and methods from the most current research, as disseminated during the state’s professional development conferences held two times each year and in online resources made available by the State ABE office;
  - (2) reading that includes the key components of reading instruction and is taught using evidence-based methods such as direct instruction, particularly for low-literacy learners;
  - (3) mathematics using the State ABE mathematics courses that are delivered using distance learning combined with local instruction; and
  - (4) English-language development using Cambridge University Press’s Ventures series or other resources that are aligned with evidence-based instruction;
- (g) Use technology-based products for instruction that are available from regional partners such as career and technical training centers and that the State ABE office disseminates to ABE Regional Programs;
- (h) Use a career pathways approach in delivering ABE services that includes:
  - (1) Creating a career pathways systems flow chart for the Regional ABE program that specifies the public and private-sector partners with whom the ABE Regional program will coordinate, the target populations of adult learners who will be recruited, the orientation and intake activities that the Regional Program will conduct, including the use of the State ABE Intake Form and the delivery of the Career and College Awareness (CCA) course or a similar career and college awareness activity, the types of instruction that will be offered to prepare learners to earn a GED®, enroll in postsecondary education or training, or obtain employment, and the types of transition activities that the Regional Program will conduct to support adult learners’ movement from ABE to a next step;
  - (2) Using contextualized instruction to teach foundational skills, particularly teaching foundational skills in the occupational contexts that are aligned with learners’ career goals;
  - (3) Providing opportunities for learners to participate in concurrent ABE and workforce preparation;
  - (4) Identifying opportunities for the delivery of integrated education and training through coordination with regional career and technical training centers; and
  - (5) Integrating work readiness skills in the teaching of foundational skills, such as the use of team simulations and other activities in teaching math, reading, and writing.
- (i) Provide staff to work in the ABE Regional Program who meet the State ABE office’s requirements for prior education and experience, and commit to participating in the ABE State office’s professional development conferences and other professional development (e.g., LINC and other online training) that the State ABE office identifies as critical to implementing quality ABE Regional Programs; and
- (j) Provide a plan for using the State ABE Database on at least a bi-weekly schedule to (1) enter learner data (2) monitor the progress of ABE learners, and (3) identify issues in learner attendance or data quality.

## Special Rule

Each eligible agency awarding a grant or contract under this section shall not use any funds made available under this title for adult education and literacy activities for the purpose of supporting or providing programs, services, or activities for individuals who are under the age of 16 and are enrolled or required to be enrolled in secondary school under State law, except that such agency may use such funds for such purpose if such programs, services, or activities are related to family literacy activities. In providing family literacy activities under this title, an eligible provider shall attempt to coordinate with programs and services that are not assisted under this title prior to using funds for adult education and literacy activities under this title for activities other than activities for eligible individuals.

## C. Corrections Education and other Education of Institutionalized Individuals

**Describe how the State will establish and operate programs under section 225 of WIOA for corrections education and education of other institutionalized individuals, including how it will fund, in accordance with the requirements of Title II, subtitle C, any of the following academic programs for:**

- a. **Adult education and literacy activities;**
- b. **Special education, as determined by the eligible agency;**
- c. **Secondary school credit;**
- d. **Integrated education and training;**
- e. **Career pathways;**
- f. **Concurrent enrollment;**
- g. **Peer tutoring; and**
- h. **Transition to re-entry initiatives and other post release services with the goal of reducing recidivism.**

**Each eligible agency using funds provided under Programs for Corrections Education and Other Institutionalized Individuals to carry out a program for criminal offenders within a correctional institution must give priority to serving individuals who are likely to leave the correctional institution within 5 years of participation in the program.**

The Alaska Adult Basic Education (ABE) local academic activities funded by the Corrections Education grant will be determined from those listed in Section 225 (b) of WIOA: a. Adult education and literacy activities; b. Secondary school credit, GED®; c. Special education, as determined by the eligible agency; d. Integrated education and training; e. Career pathways; f. Concurrent enrollment; g. Peer tutoring; and h. Transition to re-entry initiatives and other post release services with the goal of reducing recidivism. Alaska issues one Request for Proposal (RFP) for all AEFLA funded grants, which includes the grant which will serve ABE students in Alaska Correctional Centers. Notice of availability of funds for Title II is published on the State of Alaska Public On-line Notice System. The RFP is attached as a PDF to the announcement, thus ensuring that all potential grantees have access to the same application. The rubric to score all of the applications is included in the RFP and the rubric gives specific consideration to eligible applicants for the correction award that indicate priority of service to individuals who are likely to leave the correctional institution within five years of participation in the program. An announcement that the RFP is being published on the State of Alaska Public On-line Notice System is emailed to eligible providers that participated in the most recent statewide competition. Eligible providers, for the purposes of the RFP, are defined in Title II Section 203 (5). Due to the limited amount of funds in the AEFLA funded grant for the corrections award, the corrections narrative will focus on how adult education and literacy activities will be delivered. Priorities for ABE students in correctional centers are increasing the number of incarcerated adults completing a GED® and increasing the number transitioning into the postsecondary education and training provided in the various individual correctional centers. Priority of service will be given to individuals likely to leave the correctional centers within five years. Non AEFLA funded programs in the correctional centers address other academic programs listed above. In some cases, ABE teachers may concurrently teach basic reading, writing, math, and ESL to students participating in one of the other programs listed above.

## **D. Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education Program**

### **1. Describe how the State will establish and operate Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education programs under Section 243 of WIOA, for English language learners who are adults, including professionals with degrees and credentials in their native countries.**

The state establishes and operates Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education programs in accordance with Title II Section 243. Programs receiving money from this section will prepare adults who are English language learners for employment, and help them to get jobs in unsubsidized employment in an in-demand occupation that will lead to economic self-sufficiency. To perform these activities, the ABE programs will work with the local workforce development system to carry out the activities of the program.

The programs focus instruction on literacy and English acquisition and on the rights and responsibilities of citizenship and civic preparation, including preparation for citizenship tests. The career and college awareness course will be taught and augmented with sections of textbooks. One example is Ventures from Cambridge Press, which also teaches workplace skills. English language acquisition learners with professional degrees in their native countries will learn how Alaska universities and Alaska Job Centers (AJCs) can help them to continue their careers.

All Title II funded program students will participate in career pathways training. Students will be encouraged to be co-enrolled in other workforce development programs to receive services concurrently from several partners, where appropriate. All programs funded with Title II money will work with their local AJC staff to ensure that ABE students know what is available there to help them on their career pathway trajectory.

### **2. Describe how the State will fund, in accordance with the requirements of title II, subtitle C, Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education services and how the funds will be used for those services.**

Alaska issues one Request for Proposal (RFP) for all AEFLA funded grants, which includes the Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education (IELCE) program. Notice of availability of funds for Title II is published on the State of Alaska Public On-line Notice System. The RFP is attached as a PDF to the announcement, thus ensuring that all potential grantees have access to the same application. The rubric to score all of the applications is included in the RFP. The rubric includes specifically for all eligible applicants' applying for IELCE funds a weighted consideration for the description of how IELCE students will be concurrently receiving occupational specific training. An announcement that the RFP is being published on the State of Alaska Public On-line Notice System is emailed to eligible providers that participated in the most recent statewide competition. Eligible providers, for the purposes of the RFP, are defined in Title II Section 203 (5). Due to the limited amount of AEFLA funds given for IELCE in Alaska, one sub award will be made.

## **E. State Leadership**

### **1. Describe how the State will use the funds to carry out the required State Leadership activities under section 223 of WIOA.**

The State will use the State Leadership funds for required activities include aligning adult education with other WIOA core programs and AJC partners, establishing high quality professional development programs to improve instruction, providing technical assistance to the local programs, and providing monitoring and evaluation of the quality of the local programs. ABE will continue working with the other WIOA partners to build a career pathway model, which includes adult education as a vital entry point for Alaskans needing to improve their basic academic skills. ABE participates in WIOA partner meetings concerning the state's strategic vision for WIOA and to better understand what the state's in-demand jobs and current employment trends are.

**2. Describe how the State will use the funds to carry out permissible State Leadership Activities under section 223 of WIOA, if applicable.**

Professional development includes two annual meetings in Anchorage, where staff from all ABE programs receive training. Dissemination of information about models and proven promising practices is a part of the biannual training. In addition, Alaska ABE is looking into on-line training to help teachers. Currently, teachers are participating in trainings offered by Center for Applied Linguistics, GEDTS®, and the Alaska Career Information System. During FY17, the state will be investigating more on-line training and analyzing how it could augment the professional needs of Alaska's ABE instructional staff.

Providing technical assistance to the local programs is an ongoing, every day activity for the State of Alaska ABE Director.

Programs funded under WIOA Title II will be monitored using a formal monitoring document, which will be regularly updated. In addition, programs' statistics are monitored on a regular basis and desk audits of student records are conducted. Success of the local programs in meeting the performance indicators negotiated with the Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education is routinely monitored with each program. A plan for increased technical assistance for programs not meeting the negotiated levels will be developed. In SFY17, research will be conducted into possible performance funding as an additional incentive. By not improving their performance, programs will be at a disadvantage, as future funding is judged on past effectiveness of the program to improve the literacy of individual students.

Other examples of potential leadership activities that are permissible include development and implementation of technology applications and assisting eligible providers in developing and implementing programs that achieve the objectives of Title II.

**F. Assessing Quality**

**Describe how the eligible agency will assess the quality of providers of adult education and literacy activities under title II and take actions to improve such quality, including providing the activities described in section 223(a)(1)(B) of WIOA.**

A. The State ABE Director will assess the quality of ABE local programs in the following ways: (1) The completeness and quality of learner data submitted by ABE programs will be assessed through ongoing desk monitoring of the ABE State database that contains learners' intake data, TABE and BEST pre-and post-assessment data, and learner' attendance data. The State ABE Director will review monthly a sample of learners' data across the state's 13 ABE programs for accuracy and completeness; (2) The quality of ABE programs' recruitment processes will be assessed by (a) the extent to which the ABE programs meet the learner enrollment goals that the program sets each program year, (b) the types of public relations and recruitment activities that the ABE programs conducts, as described in ABE programs' biannual Program Improvement Report; and (c) the types of local partnerships that the ABE staff have developed (e.g., One-Stop Centers, career and technical education training centers, Health and Human Services offices) to facilitate learner referrals to ABE and to conduct the other components of ABE program operations described. (3) The effectiveness of ABE programs' intake, orientation, assessment, and placement processes will be evaluated by the ABE State Director's quarterly review of (a) learners' attendances data and the percentage of learners who attend ABE for 12 or fewer hours; and (b) the timeliness of the administration of the TABE and BEST pre-test assessments as measured by the test date compared to the intake form date. The ABE State Director also will review the processes used by ABE programs in orientation and placement in the biannual review of the ABE Program Improvement Report and through observations and interviews that she conducts during site visits to the ABE programs; (4) The effectiveness of ABE programs' instruction will be assessed by the ABE State Director's quarterly review of learners' average attendance, post-test rate, educational functional level gain, and GED® completion, as well as the annual review of ABE learners' postsecondary education outcomes and job attainment or advancement. The quality of instruction also will be assessed through the ABE State Director's observation of instruction and review of program materials during site visits. B. The State ABE Director will use the results from the assessment of the quality of ABE program operations to improve the quality of ABE programs in the following ways: (1) Based on the results of the ABE State director's review of data and information about ABE program operations, ABE programs will be given an audit report and low-performing programs will be asked to submit a program improvement plan. (2) To support ongoing ABE program

improvement, the areas of program operations and learner outcomes that are identified as needing improvement though the quarterly review process will be the focus of the biannual professional development conferences that are held each year. The ABE State Director also will identify extant resources available through LINCS and other venues that can be utilized by ABE directors and instructors to strength instruction and the transition from ABE to postsecondary education and employment. (3) As part of the activities conducted during the biannual professional development conferences, each ABE program prepares and submits to the state a Program Improvement Plan that is based on the information and skills ABE program participants acquired during the conference. The activities that the ABE programs carry out to implement the Program Improvement Plan are then reported in the programs' ABE Program Improvement Report. C. The State ABE office will assess the quality of its professional development programs designed to improve: (1) instruction in the essential components of reading instruction, (2) instruction related to the specific needs of adult learners, (3) instruction provided by volunteers or paid personnel, and (4) dissemination of information about models and promising practices in the following ways: (1) Multiple professional development sessions have been conducted for ABE program staff in the essential components of reading instruction based on the STAR materials and extensive adult reading research that has been conducted, including training on the research-based Making Sense of Decoding and Spelling curriculum which was developed and evaluated under the NICHD/OVAE/NIFL reading research network. The effectiveness of the professional development on reading has been evaluated through (a) the State's ongoing review of TABE reading test results, (b) the review of reading instructional plans developed by ABE instructors during the professional development conferences, (c) the ABE State director's observation of reading instruction, and (d) participant evaluations of the training sessions and the ways in which participants plan on using the materials. New activities to increase the quality of reading instruction will be focused on reading and writing in occupational contexts, and this training will be evaluated by the (a) State's review of TABE reading scores, (b) the State's review of the pass rate on the GED® Language Arts test, (c) the quality of the exercises that reading instructors will be asked to complete during the training to assess their ability to develop reading lessons, and (4) the use of a training evaluation form. (2) The State ABE office will assess the quality of the other professional development content and delivery provided during the biannual conferences through (a) the quality of ABE programs' Improvement Plans that are prepared after the conferences and the extent to which they incorporate the strategies discussed during the professional development sessions, (b) pre-post assessments of conference participants on the key concepts and methods addressed during the training sessions, (c) the State's review of the key indicators of effective ABE program operations, such as learner attendance, educational functional level gain, completion of GED® academic tests and GED® attainment, and ABE learners' transition to next steps, and (d) conference participants' evaluation forms.

## **Certifications**

States must provide written and signed certifications that

1. The plan is submitted by the State agency that is eligible to submit the plan. **Yes**
2. The State agency has authority under State law to perform the functions of the State under the program. **Yes**
3. The State legally may carry out each provision of the plan. **Yes**
4. All provisions of the plan are consistent with State law. **Yes**
5. A State officer, specified by title in the certification, has authority under State law to receive, hold, and disburse Federal funds made available under the plan. **Yes**
6. The State officer who is submitting the plan, specified by the title in the certification, has authority to submit the plan. **Yes**
7. The agency that is submitting the plan has adopted or otherwise formally approved the plan. **Yes**
8. The plan is the basis for State operation and administration of the program. **Yes**

## **Certification Regarding Lobbying**

Certification for Contracts, Grants, Loans, and Cooperative Agreements

The undersigned certifies, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:

(1) No Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid, by or on behalf of the undersigned, to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of an agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with the awarding of any Federal contract, the making of any Federal grant, the making of any Federal loan, the entering into of any cooperative agreement, and the extension, continuation, renewal, amendment, or modification of any Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement.

(2) If any funds other than Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," in accordance with its instructions.

(3) The undersigned shall require that the language of this certification be included in the award documents for all subawards at all tiers (including subcontracts, subgrants, and contracts under grants, loans, and cooperative agreements) and that all subrecipients shall certify and disclose accordingly. This certification is a material representation of fact upon which reliance was placed when this transaction was made or entered into. Submission of this certification is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required certification shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than \$10,000 and not more than \$100,000 for each such failure.

## **Statement for Loan Guarantees and Loan Insurance**

The undersigned states, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:

If any funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this commitment providing for the United States to insure or guarantee a loan, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," in accordance with its instructions. Submission of this statement is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required statement shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than \$10,000 and not more than \$100,000 for each such failure.

Applicant's Organization    **Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development**

Full Name of Authorized Representative:    **Heidi Drygas**

Title of Authorized Representative:    **Commissioner, Department of Labor and Workforce Development**

SF LLL Form – Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (only if applicable)  
(<http://www2.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/appforms.html>). If applicable, please print, sign, and email to OCTAE\_MAT@ed.gov

## Assurances

The State Plan must include assurances that:

1. The eligible agency will expend funds appropriated to carry out title II of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) only in a manner consistent with fiscal requirements under section 241(a) of WIOA (regarding supplement and not supplant provisions). **Yes**
2. The eligible agency will ensure that there is at least one eligible provider serving each local area, as defined in section 3(32) of WIOA. **Yes**
3. The eligible agency will not use any funds made available under title II of WIOA for the purpose of supporting or providing programs, services, or activities for individuals who are not “eligible individuals” within the meaning of section 203(4) of WIOA, unless it is providing programs, services or activities related to family literacy activities, as defined in section 203(9) of WIOA. **Yes**
4. The Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education program under section 243(a) of WIOA will be delivered in combination with integrated education and training activities; **Yes**
5. The Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education program under section 243(a) of WIOA will be designed to (1) prepare adults who are English language learners for, and place such adults in, unsubsidized employment in in-demand industries and occupations that lead to economic self-sufficiency and (2) integrate with the local workforce development system and its functions to carry out the activities of the program; and **Yes**
6. Using funds made available under title II of WIOA to carry out a program for criminal offenders within a correctional institution, the eligible agency will give priority to serving individuals who are likely to leave the correctional institution within five years of participation in the program. **Yes**

# Program-Specific Requirements for Vocational Rehabilitation

The Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Services Portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan\* must include the following descriptions and estimates, as required by section 101(a) of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by WIOA:

\* Sec. 102(b)(D)(iii) of WIOA

## a. Input of State Rehabilitation Council

All agencies, except for those that are independent consumer-controlled commissions, must describe the following:

### **1. input provided by the State Rehabilitation Council, including input and recommendations on the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, recommendations from the Council's report, the review and analysis of consumer satisfaction, and other Council reports that may have been developed as part of the Council's functions;**

The State of Alaska has a State Rehabilitation Council consistent with Section 105 of the Act and 34 CFR 361.17. The State Vocational Rehabilitation Committee (SVRC) serves as the State Rehabilitation Council. The SVRC meets quarterly at various locations throughout the state and invites local partner agencies, employers, and the public to speak and/or present at the meetings. This enables the SVRC to gain a comprehensive, first-hand understanding of the statewide vocational rehabilitation program. One meeting is held in a very rural/remote community to ensure the SVRC has a chance to learn about the unique socio-economic and cultural elements of rural/remote Alaska. Knowledge gained through these experiences assists the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) to continuously improve its service delivery.

In addition, the Council:

- Started an award series recognizing Alaska employers who, through their actions, policies and procedures, recognize the value employees with disabilities bring to their business and who make exceptional efforts to employ people with disabilities. The first awards were presented at the Society of Human Resources Managers Conference in Anchorage in September, 2015;
- Collaborated with the DVR on development of the State Plan and State Plan for Assistive Technology (AT);
- Will collaborate with DVR on the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment due in 2016, which will include analyzing all collected information for the purpose of defining strategic goals for upcoming years;
- Reviewed and gave input on the on-going consumer satisfaction survey of individuals who received services under an Individualized Plan for Employment;
- Held meetings in Anchorage, Fairbanks, Juneau and Kenai to hear from partner agencies on their experience working with the local DVR office, heard presentations from local business and economic development representatives, and held public forums where consumers shared their experiences with DVR services;
- Conducted outreach efforts to recruit new members to the SVRC;
- Educated and provided information on DVR and the employment of people with disabilities to the Alaska State Legislature;

- Convened a one–day meeting focusing on AT. Participants included AT providers, the AT subcommittee, individuals who use AT, and others;
- Heard presentations from:
  - o Previous Director Walsh on the WIOA expected impacts on DVR;
  - o In Fairbanks, the Fairbanks North Star Borough Chief of Staff and Economic Development Special Assistant to the Mayor on economic opportunities and challenges; the Fairbanks Economic Development Corporation of the Fairbanks economy; the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority on their Employment Initiative;
  - o In Anchorage, Assistive Technologies of Alaska Director on implementing the AT Act Grant; The Alaska Center for the Blind Director; the program director for the postsecondary transition project, “Tapestry;”
  - o In Kenai, the interim Director of Hope Community Resources, the Rehabilitation Director for Frontier Community Services, and Peninsula Community Health Services on their work as PETS providers for DVR; Mayor Navarre on Kenai’s economic development and the Kenai Borough School District; and
  - o In Juneau, DOLWD’s legislative liaison on guidance for speaking with and educating legislators. Members were invited to speak with and meet several legislators.

**2. the Designated State unit's response to the Council’s input and recommendations; and**

The SVRC made no formal, written recommendations to DVR during FY2015. Through discussion and questioning of DVR practices and programmatic results, the SVRC provides on–going support to DVR and offers suggestions that do not always rise to the level of a formal recommendation. Following are examples of the more notable informal recommendations made by the SVRC during FY2015. These suggestions were discussed in detail regarding the applicability and impact they would have on DVR and services to consumers. All suggestions were considered and reviewed to determine if they warranted being accepted, modified in part or whole, or rejected. Examples of informal recommendations and DVR responses include:

- Both the SVRC Evaluation and Policy and PR subcommittees reviewed the revised Consumer Satisfaction Survey questions and presented their analyses to the full committee. The full committee then reviewed the proposed questions and made some suggestions. DVR’s Response: DVR reviewed the proposed changes and made changes as appropriate. The new Consumer Satisfaction Survey was sent out in June 2015 and has been used every month thereafter;
- After reviewing public testimony from previous meetings, the Evaluation Subcommittee found there may be a disconnect between the expectations of individuals coming in for VR services and what services were available. They recommended that DVR consider additional staff training, possibly bringing in other agencies to provide information on other available supports. DVR’s Response: DVR will consider if additional staff training and/or bringing in other agencies to provide information might help reduce the confusion about its services;
- The SVRC recommended that DVR provide updates on its Pre–Employment Transition Service (PETS) as a regular agenda item at future SVRC meetings. DVR’s Response: DVR agreed to provide this information in a variety of ways, such as through the Chief of Services and transition specialist reports, or having PETS providers and participants as guest speakers.

**3. the designated State unit’s explanations for rejecting any of the Council’s input or recommendations.**

Alaska DVR did not reject any of the Council’s input or recommendations.

**b. Request for Waiver of Statewideness**

When requesting a waiver of the statewideness requirement, the designated State unit must identify the types of services to be provided by the program on a non-statewide basis. The waiver request must also include written assurances that:

**1. a local public agency will provide the non-Federal share of costs associated with the services to be provided in accordance with the waiver request;**

DVR will not be requesting a waiver of Statewideness.

**2. the designated State unit will approve each proposed service before it is put into effect; and**

N/A

**3. All State plan requirements will apply**

requirements of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan will apply to the services approved under the waiver.

N/A

**c. Cooperative Agreements with Agencies Not Carrying Out Activities Under the Statewide Workforce Development System.**

Describe interagency cooperation with and utilization of the services and facilities of agencies and programs that are not carrying out activities through the statewide workforce development system with respect to:

**1. Federal, State, and local agencies and programs;**

DVR continues to work with the population within the Anchorage Mental Health Court. Their mission is to divert people with mental disabilities, charged with misdemeanor offenses, from incarceration and into community treatment and services including mental health counseling and vocational rehabilitation as appropriate. The hope is to prevent further contacts with the criminal justice system.

DVR is a partner of the Alaska Tribal Vocational Rehabilitation Consortium, composed of 11 American Indian Vocational Rehabilitation Services (AIVRS) sub-recipients, with a current MOU and Contingency Plan in place. DVR continues to be a member of the Consortia of Administrators for Native American Rehabilitation.

DVR actively participates with, and has a cooperative agreement with, the Alaska Integrated Employment Initiative (AIEI), which is made up of a consortium of agencies committed to working together to improve employment outcomes for youth and young adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) and the Employment First Initiative.

DVR continues to work with Access Alaska in Anchorage to coordinate case management services for individuals with Traumatic Brain Injury.

DVR maintains working partnerships with a variety of community providers and partner agencies throughout Alaska, such as the Division of Behavioral Health (DBH) and the Division of Senior and Disabilities Services Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Unit, to enhance coordination, number of referrals, and quality of services provided to individuals receiving Supported Employment (SE) services, independent living, and other waiver-based services.

DVR has representation on the Alaska Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) Steering Committee. This is an interagency group including the Alaska Court System, Alaska Department of Corrections (DOC), Division of Juvenile Justice (DJJ), Division

of Public Assistance (DPA), Division of Behavioral Health (DBH), American Indian Vocational Rehabilitation Services (AIVRS) programs, and DVR. The goal of the group is to increase the state's capacity to help individuals with FASD to become successfully independent.

DVR participates in offender re-entry initiatives occurring in Juneau, Anchorage, and the Mat-Su Borough, as well as a statewide re-entry committee. These efforts are intended to improve the transition of the inmate population returning into society, especially as it relates to successfully finding and retaining good employment.

DVR continues to work with the Department of Administration, Division of Personnel and Labor Relations, the Governor's Council on Disabilities and Special Education and the State of Alaska as a Model Employer for Individuals with Disabilities. This work included completing an extensive survey of state employees to create a baseline of how many individuals working for the state self-disclosed they have a disability, as defined currently by ADA, and some indicators on how the State of Alaska is making reasonable accommodations for those employees. DVR continues to see considerable progress in expanding and improving Alaska's Provisional Hire program as part of this effort and has seen Provisional Hire placements double in the past two years.

DVR continues to have an Interagency Agreement in place with the Department of Veterans Affairs Vocational Rehabilitation & Education (VR&E) to cooperate, coordinate, and collaborate to create a powerful force within the rehabilitation community to increase vocational opportunities for veterans of the military service in the United States, regardless of the level of disability, by including DVR as a partner in a comprehensive system of case management. DVR's Chief of Services attends monthly meetings with VR&E to strengthen collaboration and coordination of services for this population.

## **2. State programs carried out under section 4 of the Assistive Technology Act of 1998;**

DVR continues to maintain a Collaborative Agreement with the Assistive Technologies of Alaska (ATLA) to carry out the required activities of the Assistive Technology Act of 1998.

As the AT Act lead agency, DVR performs administrative functions for ATLA, who is the AT Act implementing agency.

As part of its administrative role, DVR facilitates an AT Advisory Council, which is required by the AT Act. DVR staff hold monthly teleconferences attended by DVR, AT Council members and ATLA's director. DVR staff also facilitate a face-to-face meeting of the full AT Council and the ATLA director once a year. The purpose of these meetings are to provide consumer input and over-site of ATLA's AT Act activities.

## **3. Programs carried out by the Under Secretary for Rural Development of the United States Department of Agriculture;**

N/A

## **4. Noneducational agencies serving out-of-school youth; and**

N/A

## **5. State use contracting programs.**

N/A

## **d. Coordination with Education Officials**

Describe:

## **1. DSU's plans**

The designated State unit's plans, policies, and procedures for coordination with education officials to facilitate the transition of students with disabilities from school to the receipt of VR services, including pre-employment transition services, as well as procedures for the timely development and approval of individualized plans for employment for the students.

DVR currently has a Transition Services policy and plans to draft a new policy once final regulations are released. In the interim, DVR has released Business Practice Revisions, which provide specific guidance to staff in order to carry out the Pre-Employment Transition Services within WIOA. Once new policies are finalized, DVR will coordinate with education officials to facilitate transition of students with disabilities from education services to provision of VR services including Pre-Employment Transition Services as well as services to youth with disabilities seeking subminimum wage. DVR ensures individualized plans for employment are developed within 90 days and prior to graduation.

## **2. Information on the formal interagency agreement with the State educational agency with respect to:**

### **A. consultation and technical assistance to assist educational agencies in planning for the transition of students with disabilities from school to post-school activities, including VR services;**

DVR has cooperative agreements with all levels of educational institutions within the state, including local school districts, the Department of Education & Early Development (EED), and the University of Alaska statewide system. The purpose of these agreements is to outline the responsibilities of all entities involved with either the transition from high school or the education of those individuals with disabilities.

DVR participates in the annual Alaska Statewide Special Education Conference. This conference attracts over 400 special education administrators, teachers, and para-professionals from across the state. DVR utilizes this conference to provide information and training on referral information and coordination of services. The 2016 Alaska Statewide Special Education Conference will feature a two-day Basic SE Training and cross-training designed to provide teachers and paraprofessionals with tools and strategies for developing and supporting students in work experience activities.

### **B. transition planning by personnel of the designated State agency and educational agency that facilitates the development and implementation of their individualized education programs;**

EED's Special Education Unit and DVR have an interagency agreement that is designed to facilitate the transition of students with disabilities from receipt of educational services in school to the receipt of vocational rehabilitation services.

The agreement includes:

- DVR's assurance of the development and implementation of an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) for each student determined to be eligible for vocational rehabilitation services before the student leaves school;
- Designation of a regional DVR contact who is responsible for clarifying questions and concerns relating to the implementation of the agreements with local school districts; and
- DVR's assurance that the core tenets, principles, and career goals stated in each student's Individual Education Program (IEP) will be incorporated into the development of their Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE). EED's Special Education Unit also provides funding for members of the State Vocational Rehabilitation Committee to travel to events related to transition students such as the annual Statewide Special Education Conference.

**C. roles and responsibilities, including financial responsibilities, of each agency, including provisions for determining State lead agencies and qualified personnel responsible for transition services;**

MOU between Department of Education and Early Development (DEED) and DVR states that DEED, through the Division of Teaching and Learning Support (TLS), will designate a lead person to ensure that communication between TLS, DVR and School districts is maintained and policies are developed and revised at the state department level, to promote effective transition for students with disabilities from school into adulthood. This lead person is Samuel Jordan, Administrator I, DEED MOU further states that DVR will designate a staff member responsible for the continuation of communication and policy development between DVR, TLS (DEED) and school districts to improve transition services statewide to students with disabilities. This lead person is Jim Kreatschman, Program Coordinator II, Youth Transition, DVR. DEED contracts with Southeast Regional Resource Center (SERRC) under the Alaska Transition Outreach Project (ATOP) grant to provide continuing teacher training on transition and transition camps for students. Teacher training- DEED staff monitor school district for compliance with Indicator 13. Utilizing their own staff, and through the ATOP grant, the district directly funds all teacher instruction time, travel and lodging directed for compliance with indicator 13. Transition Camps- DEED identifies school districts (6) through its monitoring efforts which need additional Technical Assistance delivering transition planning directly to students. DEED covers the cost of coordinating the camp, travel and lodging for the SERRC team facilitating the camps. DVR contracts with SERRC, a Certified Rehabilitation Provider (CRP), to deliver directly to the students the Pre-Employment Transition Services that are the content of the transition camps. DVR's Youth Transition Coordinator is responsible, along with the CRP, for developing the content of all camps. The CRP is responsible for actual delivery of services. DVR has expanded transition camps beyond its partnership with DEED to provide Pre-Employment Transition Services through the transition camp model to additional school districts, juvenile justice facilities and foster youth in state custody. For these camps the CRP contracts directly with the school district, DJJ facility or state agency for the coordination, travel and lodging costs. DVR funds the direct delivery to students of the Pre-Employment Transition Services as the content for the camp. • DEED - ATOP grant - \$250,000 • DVR- Cost per student - average \$850 • Other organizations - Costs depending on geographic location and requested content

Coordinating delivery of general outreach/instruction- Both the DEED lead and DVR lead coordinate outreach activities that promote best practices for transition planning. Both agencies participate in the annual special education teacher's conference and annual special education directors training conference. Each agency assumes its own costs.

**D. procedures for outreach to and identification of students with disabilities who need transition services.**

DVR is working with EED to update its current cooperative agreement to include WIOA requirements, especially in regards to the provision of Pre-Employment Transition Services (PETS). Activities to date include 1) a DVR/EED survey of all school districts to identify the needs of students in regards to PETS and the gaps in school district services; and 2) joint participation in intensive technical assistance through a three-year partnership agreement with National Technical Assistance Center on Transition.

DVR implemented the simplified Secondary Transition Referral form in 2014 in coordination with EED. Efforts to encourage referrals through this refined process include DVR/EED joint training to special education directors at the annual Special Education Director Training and to teachers at the Alaska Statewide Special Education Conference. The form provides teachers with an easy and efficient way to connect a student with the VR counselor serving the school and provides the teacher with an avenue to request a joint conference with the student and counselor. Teachers can access the referral form directly through links on EED's IEP form, EED's transitions resources web page, and DVR's Transition Tools for Teachers web page.

DVR is planning to expand the ATOP project to reach an additional six sites and to include coordination with the DJJ, Office of Children's Services (OCS), and tribal vocational rehabilitation partners.

#### **e. Cooperative Agreements with Private Nonprofit Organizations**

(Formerly known as Attachment 4.8(b)(3)). Describe the manner in which the designated State agency establishes cooperative agreements with private non-profit VR service providers.

DVR has signed agreements with Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRPs) to provide specific vocational rehabilitation services. Only CRPs who meet the qualifications described in DVR's Standards for CRPs and the CRP application, and have a signed agreement with DVR, are eligible to provide such services. CRP applications may be submitted at any time, but every three years all CRPs are required to reapply. The agreement has recently been revised and includes optional cost of living differentials, additional CRP services, and new minimum training, education, and experience requirements for each specific service DVR purchases from CRPs. The CRP payment rate structure has been finalized and requires that all rates are justified based upon staff education, training, and experience. In FFY2015, the number of approved CRPs increased significantly by approximately 30 percent. During this period, the regional technical assistance and training center that provided the majority of CRP training in Alaska stopped providing CRP training. The absence of this training provider spurred a stronger partnership between DVR and the University of Alaska Anchorage (UAA). DVR collaborated and partnered with UAA to ensure ongoing training is available to CRPs throughout the state. UAA is in the process of gaining national accreditation from the Association of Community Rehabilitation Educators (ACRE) to provide employment services training. DVR requires CRPs complete a minimum of 40 hours of ACRE accredited training to meet the minimum requirements to provide basic vocational rehabilitation services.

The service provider application and agreement:

- Requires a fingerprint background check for all CRP staff who may have unsupervised contact with DVR consumers, as well as a summary of the education and employment experience of each staff person who works directly with DVR consumers;
- Establishes specific fees for each service, including an optional cost of living differential for CRPs that serve consumers in remote areas;
- Outlines the conditions and guidelines under which the division and the CRP will provide services for individuals with disabilities, specifying the responsibilities of each party, the scope of services, the evaluation criteria, and reporting and billing requirements; and
- Outlines standards for service providers including: organizational structure; personnel; fiscal management; health, safety, and accessibility; and indemnity and insurance requirements.

DVR's CRP Specialist is responsible for approving the agreements. Changes in key personnel and fees are reported to and negotiated with DVR. Following the principles of informed choice, information on the CRPs, including their services and fees, are available to DVR's consumers and are posted on DVR's website.

#### **f. Arrangements and Cooperative Agreements for the Provision of Supported Employment Services**

(Formerly known as Attachment 4.8(b)(4)). Describe the designated State agency's efforts to identify and make arrangements, including entering into cooperative agreements, with other State agencies and other appropriate entities in order to provide supported employment services and extended employment services, as applicable, to individuals with the most significant disabilities, including youth with the most significant disabilities.

DVR, the Division of Behavioral Health (DBH), the Governor's Council on Disabilities and Special Education, the University of Alaska affiliated program (the Center for Human Development), and the Division of Senior and Disability Services (DSDS) continue to collaborate in order to provide extended services to Supported Employment (SE) consumers leaving the VR program.

The Governor's Council on Disabilities and Special Education functions as the State Council on Developmental Disabilities and builds capacity, plans for systems change, and advocates for change for people with disabilities. System changes include housing, employment, early intervention, special education, lifelong learning, independent living, and inclusion in the community. DVR's Assistant Chief of Rehabilitation Services is appointed to this council. DSDS maintains the developmental disability register, which is in essence the wait list for long-term support services. DVR is in the process of renewing the MOU with DSDS.

The Mental Health Board and the Governor's Advisory Board on Alcohol and Drug Abuse have combined to plan and advocate for policies, programs, and services that help Alaskans who have a mental illness or substance abuse issues. DVR's Assistant Chief of Rehabilitation Services will be an active member of this board. In addition, DVR has an on-going commitment to quality SE services, as evidenced by the recent formation and active participation in several cross-agency SE related initiatives such as the Alaska Integrated Employment Initiative. DVR has sustained the principles of the system change customized employment grant that focused on wrap-around services for the most severely disabled.

DVR is working with different organizations focusing on groups that often require SE services, such as those individuals with traumatic brain injury and those diagnosed with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD). The traumatic brain injury service delivery system is focused on collaboration with the Alaska Brain Injury Network. The FASD Steering Committee recognizes the long-term effects FASD has on those affected and the increasing need of long-term supports.

#### **g. Coordination with Employers**

(Formerly known as Attachment 4.8(b)(5)). Describe how the designated State unit will work with employers to identify competitive integrated employment and career exploration opportunities in order to facilitate the provision of:

##### **1. VR services; and**

DVR partners with employers to promote the hiring of individuals with disabilities. DVR implemented the dual customer model to deliver services to employers. DVR created a Business Employment Services Team (BEST) that is tasked with providing employers four core services as outlined in WIOA.

Training and Technical Assistance in:

- Understanding the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and its application to a workplace situation; referral to the ADA partners project;
- Disability awareness training provided to HR, managers, staff, boards, and other interested groups;
- Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs regulations;
- U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission regulations;
- Balancing the application of federal, state, and local employment laws and regulations.

Creating Opportunities for Placement by:

- Developing opportunities for both adults and youth to provide a full range of unpaid work experiences, informational interviews, job shadows, and On-the-Job Training (OJT);
- Offering recruitment supports, assisting in workforce development including placement, OJT, Schedule A, and Provisional Hire;

- OJT, Job Coaching, and external training (not at worksite).

Network Development through:

- Connecting with community partners and employers, locally and nationally. The BEST has connected over 50 employers with the Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs staffers, the Governor’s Council on Disabilities & Special Education, the AJC’s Business Connection, and the VA VR&E’s employment support team.

- Linking to Financial Support offered through:

- o Work Opportunity Tax Credit

- o Workplace accessibility assessment

- o Other employer incentives

## **2. transition services, including pre-employment transition services, for students and youth with disabilities.**

DVR partners with employers to promote the hiring of youth and students with disabilities. DVR implemented the dual customer model to deliver services to employers. DVR created a Business Employment Services Team (BEST) that is tasked with providing employers four core services as outlined in WIOA.

Training and Technical Assistance in:

- Understanding the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and its application to a workplace situation; referral to the ADA partners project;
- Disability awareness training provided to HR, managers, staff, boards, and other interested groups;
- Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs regulations;
- U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission regulations;
- Balancing the application of federal, state, and local employment laws and regulations.

Creating Opportunities for Placement by:

- Developing opportunities for both adults and youth to provide a full range of unpaid work experiences, informational interviews, job shadows, and On-the-Job Training (OJT);
- Developing work-based learning experiences for students with disabilities through the implementation of PETS;
- Offering recruitment supports, assisting in workforce development including placement, OJT, Schedule A, and Provisional Hire;
- OJT, Job Coaching, and external training (not at worksite).

Network Development through:

- Connecting with community partners and employers, locally and nationally. The BEST has connected over 50 employers with the Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs staffers, the Governor’s Council on Disabilities & Special Education, the AJC’s Business Connection, and the VA VR&E’s employment support team.

- Linking to Financial Support offered through:

- o Work Opportunity Tax Credit

- o Workplace accessibility assessment

- o Other employer incentives

#### **h. Interagency Cooperation**

Describe how the designated State unit will collaborate with the State agency responsible for administering each of the following programs to develop opportunities for competitive integrated employment, to the greatest extent practicable:

##### **1. the State Medicaid plan under title XIX of the Social Security Act;**

DVR currently has a Cooperative Agreement with the Division of Public Assistance (DPA); however, the agreement is substantially outdated. DVR has begun discussions with the DPA Director to begin drafting a new cooperative agreement that will outline how both agencies can coordinate the delivery of employment–related services to individuals with disabilities.

##### **2. the State agency responsible for providing services for individuals with developmental disabilities; and**

DVR does not have a current cooperative agreement in place with the Division of Senior and Disability Services (DSDS); however, both agencies’ staff collaborate frequently given that many Supported Employment consumers typically receive services under DSDS’s Intellectual and Developmental Disability (I/DD) waiver. Additionally, DVR and DSDS, along with the Governor’s Council on Disabilities and Special Education, are working to develop an Employment Service Options Guide for both agency staff to understand the proper definition and sequencing of DVR and DSDS employment services for DSDS I/DD waiver recipients to move into integrated and competitive employment. Due to Employment First legislation, a cooperative agreement will be developed to specifically outline opportunities for competitive integrated employment.

##### **3. the State agency responsible for providing mental health services.**

DVR and the Division of Behavioral Health (DBH) have entered into an MOU in which both agencies agree that assisting individuals with behavioral health disorders to explore and attain employment is integral to the overall missions of both DVR and DBH, and thus is inherent in the responsibilities of its entire staff and providers. High quality employment and support services for individuals with behavioral health disorders are high priorities for both agencies. DVR and DBH will draft a new agreement in FFY2017 to more clearly outline agency responsibilities.

#### **i. Comprehensive System of Personnel Development; Data System on Personnel and Personnel Development**

(Formerly known as Attachment 4.10)). Describe the designated State agency's procedures and activities to establish and maintain a comprehensive system of personnel development designed to ensure an adequate supply of qualified State rehabilitation professional and paraprofessional personnel for the designated State unit, including the following:

## **1. Data System on Personnel and Personnel Development**

### **A. Qualified Personnel Needs.**

Describe the development and maintenance of a system for collecting and analyzing on an annual basis data on qualified personnel needs with respect to:

#### **i. the number of personnel who are employed by the State agency in the provision of VR services in relation to the number of individuals served, broken down by personnel category;**

In order to assess and identify the need for qualified personnel, DVR accesses three systems:

1. DVR has developed and maintains a database through AWARE case management system, which includes information on the number of VR professionals providing VR services statewide;
2. The Department of Administration provides an updated Workforce Profile in each fiscal year. The profile represents demographics such as age, ethnicity distribution, and retirement projections with job titles and categories. These data become an important step in the workforce planning process and are used to predict personnel needs for the next five years;
3. Effective November 7, 2011, the Division of Personnel began to transition Human Resources staff back to each department; therefore, DVR, under DOLWD, has its own personnel system for collecting and analyzing data for maintaining personnel needs and evaluating and managing employee performance. Currently, the ratio of the number of vocational rehabilitation counselors (VRC) to the number of clients being served is approximately one VRC I for every 60 clients, one VRC II for every 75 clients, and one VRC III for every 90 clients.

In FFY2015, DVR served 3,802 individuals with disabilities, utilizing the staff of 96 full time vocational rehabilitation (VR) professionals. These consist of:

- 1 Director
- 1 Chief
- 1 Assistant Chief
- 5 Regional Managers
- 41 VR Counselors
- 26 VR Assistants
- 1 VR Evaluator
- 17 Administrative and Support Staff
- 1 CRP Specialist
- 1 Business Enterprise Program (BEP) Coordinator
- 1 ASL Interpreter

**ii. the number of personnel currently needed by the State agency to provide VR services, broken down by personnel category; and**

DVR finds present staffing levels sufficient to serve all eligible participants. DVR experienced an average rate of turnover during FFY2015.

**iii. projections of the number of personnel, broken down by personnel category, who will be needed by the State agency to provide VR services in 5 years based on projections of the number of individuals to be served, including individuals with significant disabilities, the number of personnel expected to retire or leave the field, and other relevant factors.**

DVR anticipates job vacancies will increase in the next four years through client services staff retirements or attrition. DVR will experience roughly 12 percent of staff retiring or resigning by 2020.

(Projected vacancies over the next four years: 12; total number of full-time employees: 96).

The projected number of people with disabilities is expected to continue the trend of two to three percent increases. The continued movement of rural individuals, particularly over 60 years of age, to urban environments will continue to impact DVR services. At this time, DVR is not on an Order of Selection, but that could change with continued increases in the population of those individuals with disabilities. Position Projected Vacancies

VR Counselor 7

VR Assistant 0

VR Evaluator 1

VR Manager 1

Other Management Staff 2

Admin Support Staff 1

CRP Specialist 0

BEP Coordinator 1

ASL Interpreter 0

**B. Personnel Development**

Describe the development and maintenance of a system for collecting and analyzing on an annual basis data on personnel development with respect to:

**i. a list of the institutions of higher education in the State that are preparing VR professionals, by type of program;**

Educational institutions within the State of Alaska currently lack Bachelor's and Master's level programs in Rehabilitation Counseling. The University of Alaska offers academic programs in related disciplines, such as Associate and Bachelor's degrees in Human Services, Psychology, and Social Work, as well as Master's degrees in education, Counseling, and Counselor Education. DVR diligently ensures that all employees are fully qualified to provide vocational rehabilitation services; those who do not meet CSPD conditions at the time of hire are mandated to enroll in rehabilitation counseling

programs (full length or post-graduate certificates), offered via distance delivery through Virginia Commonwealth University, University of Kentucky, and University of Massachusetts Boston.

In FY2015, six VR counselors participated in accreditation of Master's-level Rehabilitation Counselor Education; two VR counselors completed a graduate program, and one VR counselor successfully passed the Certified Rehabilitation Counseling (CRC) exam. In FFY2016, DVR employs 41 VR Counselors; of those, 90 percent have fully met the Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD) requirements.

**ii. the number of students enrolled at each of those institutions, broken down by type of program; and**

N/A

**iii. the number of students who graduated during the prior year from each of these institutions with certification or licensure, or with the credentials for certification or licensure, broken down by the personnel category for which they have received, or have the credentials to receive, certification or licensure.**

N/A

**2. Plan for Recruitment, Preparation and Retention of Qualified Personnel**

Describe the development and implementation of a plan to address the current and projected needs for qualified personnel including, the coordination and facilitation of efforts between the designated State unit and institutions of higher education and professional associations to recruit, prepare, and retain personnel who are qualified, including personnel from minority backgrounds and personnel who are individuals with disabilities.

DVR evaluates its personnel needs annually as part of the strategic planning process. The recruitment of qualified rehabilitation personnel has been historically challenging in Alaska due to lack of rehabilitation counseling programs within Alaska's university system, as well as Division of Personnel regulations, which mandate several unsuccessful in-state recruitments before out-of-state recruitment becomes an option. To overcome these difficulties, DVR developed positive relationships with several Rehabilitation Counseling Education (RCE) programs to enable entry level and journey level counselors to obtain the necessary qualifications through distance education and intensive on-the-job supervision. This strategy is effective with paraprofessional staff as well. DVR recruits from various entities, including tribal vocational rehabilitation and human service agencies, and offers paid and non-paid internships to rehabilitation counseling graduate students who are interested in relocating to Alaska.

In accordance with Title I of the ADA, DVR offers provisional hire to individuals with disabilities to enhance their access to meaningful and gainful employment, and to ensure that individuals with disabilities receive employment services in the most community-integrated setting. Alaska relies upon educational institutions that deliver curriculums via distance education. Relationships with educational institutions fluctuate based on availability of long-term training grants and staff needs. However, DVR has developed a strong working relationship with Virginia Commonwealth University, University of Kentucky, and University of Massachusetts Boston. In order to reach a wider applicant market outside of the traditional in-state recruitment, DVR vacancies are advertised at the UAA Career Development Center, University of Washington Center for Continuing Education in Rehabilitation (CCER), and Western Washington University. Qualified individuals are identified through the on-going relationship with academic programs throughout the nation.

**3. Personnel Standards**

Describe the State agency's policies and procedures for the establishment and maintenance of personnel standards consistent with section 101(a)(7)(B) and 34 CFR 361.18(c) to ensure that designated State unit professional and paraprofessional personnel are adequately trained and prepared, including:

**A. standards that are consistent with any national or State-approved or -recognized certification, licensing, registration, or other comparable requirements that apply to the profession or discipline in which such personnel are providing VR services; and**

The State of Alaska does not currently mandate licensure for rehabilitation counselors; as a result, DVR has adopted the Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification academic degree requirements as its standard. Strategies that DVR employs to ensure an adequate supply of qualified vocational rehabilitation professionals are:

- Participating in local job/career fairs;
- Formation of an in-house training and staff development team;
- Offering paid and non-paid graduate internships;
- Supporting rehabilitation counseling as an employment goal for DVR participants;
- Supporting staff in fulfilling academic requirements to qualify for CRC certification;
- Seeking out training to help staff achieve CRC recertification and professional growth;
- Utilizing training resources and support of CCER;
- Arranging presentations to graduate level counseling students at the local university; and
- Developing a career advancement system that integrates educational and credentialing required for initial hire and future promotion — DVR successfully modified rehabilitation counselor position descriptions to comply with CSPD provisions/mandates.

**B. the establishment and maintenance of education and experience requirements, in accordance with section 101(a)(7)(B)(ii) of the Rehabilitation Act, to ensure that the personnel have a 21st century understanding of the evolving labor force and the needs of individuals with disabilities.**

Employees who do not meet the qualifying standard must now fulfill all academic requirements necessary to qualify for the CRC examination within six years of hire (for VRC I) or three years of hire (for VRC II). Additionally, these employees will receive more intensive supervision and ongoing review of all non-delegable functions (i.e. eligibility determination, individualized plan for employment, plan amendment approval, and closure). As part of DVR's strategic planning process, an annual evaluation of the effectiveness of recruitment and training practices is completed, and areas of improvement are then identified and incorporated into the plan.

**4. Staff Development.**

Describe the State agency's policies, procedures, and activities to ensure that, consistent with section 101(a)(7)(C) of the Rehabilitation Act, all personnel employed by the designated State unit receive appropriate and adequate training in terms of:

**A. System of staff development**

a system of staff development for professionals and paraprofessionals within the designated State unit, particularly with respect to assessment, vocational counseling, job placement, and rehabilitation technology, including training implemented in coordination with entities carrying out State programs under section 4 of the Assistive Technology Act of 1998; and

DVR recognizes and supports the efforts of employees to upgrade their skills and knowledge through staff development. Training is provided on a continual basis in order to ensure professional enhancement. Training may be provided to groups or to individuals based on specific staff expectations and duties. Throughout the year, staff are provided professional development opportunities in assessment, vocational counseling, job placement, rehabilitation technology, and Assistive Technology (AT). Additionally, DVR continues to coordinate with AT of Alaska to increase training opportunities to DVR staff in AT.

## **B. Acquisition and dissemination of significant knowledge**

procedures for the acquisition and dissemination of significant knowledge from research and other sources to designated State unit professionals and paraprofessionals.

Training and development are guided by issues identified during needs assessment, and takes into account budget availability, new federal initiatives, and outcome of program evaluation. Needs assessment involves individual/regional case reviews, client satisfaction surveys, consumer forums, performance appraisals, performance skill rating tools, employee development plans, Client Assistant Program annual reports, and supervisor/employee training needs surveys.

During FFY2015, DVR staff participated in several conferences, including:

- Building State Capacity Summit (working with transitioning youth who are deaf/hard of hearing);
- Brain Institute: Putting Together the Pieces: Understanding Complex Issues After Brain Injury;
- Annual school on addictions and behavioral health;
- Statewide Special Education Conference;
- Elders in Training; and
- Reducing Recidivism Through Successful Reentry.

Other major training activities consisted of:

- Department-wide WIOA training;
- Annual in-service training focused on AWARE Case Management New Release & Applications;
- Evaluation trends, ethics, techniques, tools, and reporting for DVR's Statewide Assessment Team;
- Deaf Workshop for DVR's Deaf/Hard of Hearing Team;
- Blind Services Workshop for DVR's Blind/Visually Impaired Team;
- When violence shows up in the workplace;
- Hearing voices that are distressing;
- Substance abuse and sex offender treatment;

- Ethics for rehabilitation professionals;
- Tier 1 benefit planning/financial work incentive navigator;
- FASD & Gatekeepers; and
- National Certificate in Employment Services.

Throughout the year, DVR staff participated in different continuing education and web-based workshops, including:

- Ethical and legal issues in the workplace;
- Traumatic brain injury;
- Trauma and crisis intervention;
- Mental health first aid;
- Innovative employment;
- Serving individuals with autism spectrum disorder through vocational evaluation;
- Sec 503 – changing the rules for federal contractors and employers;
- Employment after traumatic brain injury;
- Effective supervision with difficult employees;
- Case documentation;
- Autism spectrum disorders: lifespan issues;
- Accommodating employees with mental health impairments; and
- Tough customers – dealing with difficult people in VR services.

All new VR assistant staff participate in on-line training within their first year of employment, learning about:

- The history of VR;
- Basic ethical considerations for VR professionals;
- Navigating sticky situations;
- Developing collaborative relationships and;
- Cultivating cultural competence.

Training activities occur on a continuous basis and many are delivered via teleconference and through webinars offered by CCER. Virginia Commonwealth University Rehabilitation Research & Training Center publishes an electronic newsletter, which provides updates regarding relevant research efforts and is disseminated to all DVR personnel. VR counselors utilize the services of medical/psychiatric consultants to regularly update their disability–related knowledge. Evidence–based best practices and advances in the field, presented by the Institute on Rehabilitation Issues, National Rehabilitation Association, and the National Rehabilitation Counseling Association, are regularly distributed to the field staff. The DVR leadership team receives regular updates from the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA), and maintains active communication with CCER in order to keep pace with the changes in the field of vocational rehabilitation.

## **5. Personnel to Address Individual Communication Needs**

Describe how the designated State unit has personnel or obtains the services of other individuals who are able to communicate in appropriate modes of communication with or in the native language of applicants or eligible individuals who have limited English speaking ability.

DVR employs a full–time staff member, who is fluent in American Sign Language (ASL), to facilitate communication with the hard of hearing and deaf consumers/staff. The agency supports employees who are interested in becoming proficient in ASL to increase communication with hard of hearing and deaf participants. Tele–interpreting is widely used. VR counselors who serve this population are allowed to use the text message function as a form of accommodating their consumers’ needs. For individuals with limited English proficiency, DVR maintains a roster of employees fluent in various languages; staff may utilize the services of a professional interpreter when needed. DVR relies heavily on tribal vocational rehabilitation programs to educate state staff regarding culturally appropriate methods of communication with Alaska Native participants.

## **6. Coordination of Personnel Development Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act**

As appropriate, describe the procedures and activities to coordinate the designated State unit’s comprehensive system of personnel development with personnel development under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

DVR consistently collaborates with the State of Alaska Department of Education and Early Development (EED) on numerous staff development and training initiatives.

DVR Transition Services – DVR reaches out to students with disabilities throughout Alaska in order to foster their smooth transition from secondary school into vocational/academic training and into the world of work. VR counselors within each regional office are assigned to specific schools to streamline the referral process, ensure counselor participation in Individualized Employment Plan (IEP) development, and ensure that all schools are informed of DVR services. Contact with schools is carried out, at a minimum, on a monthly basis. Rural and village schools communicate with DVR through their special education staff, as well as DVR staff who are assigned and travel to that particular rural region. The transition coordinator holds monthly teleconferences with all VR counselors involved in transition initiatives. These monthly teleconferences allow staff to share information, brainstorm ideas, and develop effective strategies for service delivery. Tapestry, which is administered through the University of Alaska’s Center for Human Development, caters to young adults with intellectual disabilities with the goal of teaching them appropriate personal, social, and vocational skills in fostering a successful transition to employment. DVR actively collaborates with the Center for Human Development and other community agencies to ensure that these young individuals with disabilities access the full array of vocational rehabilitation services.

Statewide Special Education Conference – DVR strongly encourages counselor presence and participation in this annual conference to establish/maintain an ongoing dialogue with school districts and stay abreast of new developments in the field of special education (i.e. disability issues, AT, classroom accommodations, new legislation, Individuals with Disabilities Education Act requirements, etc.). Sixteen DVR staff attended this conference in FFY2015.

Special Education Director Conference – The DVR transition coordinator participates in this conference annually. The transition coordinator is a regular presenter at the conference and maintains a vendor booth, which offers special education professionals from Alaska’s 54 school districts a chance to learn about DVR services.

DVR’s transition coordinator is a member of the following youth boards: the University of Alaska Anchorage Center for Human Development (Tapestry Project), Governor’s Council on Disability & Special Education, and the Integrated Education Initiative.

#### **j. Statewide Assessment**

(Formerly known as Attachment 4.11(a)).

##### **1. Provide an assessment of the rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities residing within the State, particularly the VR services needs of those:**

###### **A. with the most significant disabilities, including their need for supported employment services;**

Analysis of DVR data from FFY2012–FFY2014 showed that 37 percent of participants receiving services were most severely disabled. For FFY2015, this number is trending upwards, with 40 percent of participants with Most Significant Disabilities (MSD). SE has always been a need for many of the MSD participants.

###### **B. who are minorities;**

The racial distribution of those receiving services has been relatively stable over the last few years, reflecting the racial breakdown for the state. The largest minority population is Alaskan Native, which is approximately 14 percent of the state’s population. For SFY2015, 22 percent of those who received services were Alaska Native. DVR is not underserving individuals from a minority background. DVR has consistently met the Federal Performance Indicator 2.1 that measures equal access to VR services. In the most recent CSNA, DVR participants identified the primary barriers to employment as a loss of benefits (Social Security and Medicaid), physical limitations and lack of training, work experience or education. While the respondents to the survey were not broken down into groups by severity of disability, the results can be generally applied across all participants. DVR staff and CRPs identified the three primary barriers to employment as housing, behavioral health services and transportation. Rural Alaska was identified as an underserved area of the state in the most recent CSNA. Rural Alaska encompasses an area larger than many states with much of it inaccessible via roads. DVR defines rural as a community that is not connected by road to a community with a DVR office or is at least 50 miles outside of a community with a DVR office. Rural Alaska presents challenges for all state agencies to serve. DVR has counseling offices in the more densely populated areas of the state while providing VR services to the remote/rural areas on an itinerant basis. The 11 TVR programs have offices in most of the itinerant locations. DVR’s data shows a 7 percent decline in the number of the above defined rural DVR participants from those reported in the 2010 CSNA. For the same period, the Social Security Administration reports a 29 percent decline in Ticket to Work (TTW) certificates issued to rural Alaskans. TTW data is a strong indicator of where Alaskans who experience a disability are living and there appears to be a movement of TTW participants from rural to non-rural communities. This coincides with the data reported by DOL Research and Analysis, which suggests a migration to the more urban areas of the state due to more employment opportunities and the availability of more services. DVR also acknowledges that in general the needs of Alaska Natives are closely aligned with the needs of rural residents.

###### **C. who have been unserved or underserved by the VR program;**

Both the 2013 Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA) and statistics pulled from DVR’s case management system have shown that the rural population continues to be underserved. This has been an on–going challenge for the rural development team as there are so few jobs within some of the smaller communities. Available employment and employers are much more numerous in the urban areas.

**D. who have been served through other components of the statewide workforce development system; and**

The USDOL Employment and Training Administration (ETA) Sector Partnership - National Emergency Grant (SP-NEG) promotes workforce planning with industry partners and development of career education and training paths for students and adults in high-demand jobs in the state's economic regions. DVR will work with the Division of Employment and Training Services DETS to ensure the target population of dislocated workers, the long-term unemployed, and veterans and transitioning service members include those with disabilities who may benefit from training programs for in-demand occupations and expanding Registered Apprenticeship with industry employers.

Additionally, the American Apprenticeship Initiative grant will increase the number of Registered Apprentices in Alaska's health care industry. The project will significantly increase career awareness, strengthen existing career pathways, introduce new career pathways, and significantly help employers fill entry-level positions in high-demand health care sector occupations. DVR will promote the availability of this project to individuals with disabilities who are interested in pursuing occupations in the health care industry.

The Disability Employment Initiative (DEI) "Alaska Youth Works" grant will build a cohesive system with DVR and other partners to meet the needs of Alaska's youth with disabilities, ages 14 to 24, by expanding access to employment and career pathways to prepare for in-demand careers. The Alaska Youth Works project will complement DVR services through coordination, resource leveraging, and blending and braiding of funds to increase access to Pre-Employment Transition Services, career pathway programs and ultimately lead to self-sustaining employment.

In order to ensure these activities are carried out to the maximum extent possible, DVR will: - Ensure DETS staff are regularly trained or made aware of DVR and its services. This is especially true of DETS locations that are served by DVR on an itinerant basis. - DVR leadership team and managers continue to identify functional DETS issues that require on-going work at all levels of the division including integration and the local management teams. - Work with DETS staff to develop a means to provide information about DVR to individuals who self-identify as having a disability and who receive job training services through DETS programs. - Develop a referral process to the DETS employment networks. - Train DVR staff to use DETS services.

**E. who are youth with disabilities and students with disabilities, including, as appropriate, their need for pre-employment transition services or other transition services.**

The need for pre-employment transition services for students in school is well documented. Alaska's 2013-2014 school year special education statistics indicated that the statewide percent of students who have enrolled in higher education was 13.7 percent, and only 43.4 percent were enrolled in higher education or competitively employed within one year of leaving high school. Additionally, under WIOA, agencies have been mandated to set aside 15 percent of their budget to fund specific transition services for the 16-21 age youth currently in school. This population will be surveyed directly to obtain input into needs and goals for transition information.

**2. Identify the need to establish, develop, or improve community rehabilitation programs within the State; and**

In order to address the needs of transition students, new contracts were developed for these services and put out for bid. The Rural Team is strategizing ways to get more CRPs in rural areas, which are traditionally underserved. CRPs provide services, like benefits analysis, which enable participants to have informed choice. These services could not be offered by staff, as they lack training and time.

**3. Include an assessment of the needs of individuals with disabilities for transition career services and pre-employment transition services, and the extent to which such services are coordinated with transition services provided under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act .**

One major group that will be included in the 2016 Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA) will be youth in school who may be potentially eligible for DVR services. These transition students will be queried for their perceptions of services available to them both now as high school students, and later in postsecondary programs. This is a population that has not been extensively surveyed by DVR, and formulating both appropriate and useful questions to give more understanding about the needs of this group is proving challenging. In addition, DVR also continues to survey local Special Education teachers and directors and current agency staff to give input into how DVR, as an agency, can more effectively partner to provide transition and career services to these individuals.

**k. Annual Estimates**

(Formerly known as Attachment 4.11(b)). Describe:

**1. The number of individuals in the State who are eligible for services;**

The 2014 American Community Survey 1–Year Estimate, estimates there are approximately 44,674 individuals, or 9.8 percent of the Alaskan population between the ages of 18 to 64, with a disability.

**2. The number of eligible individuals who will receive services under:**

**A. The VR Program;**

In FFY2015, Alaska DVR provided services to 2,204 individuals.

**B. The Supported Employment Program; and**

For the FFY2015, the SE Program provided services to 257 participants for a cost of \$293,852 or approximately \$1,143 per participant.

**C. each priority category, if under an order of selection;**

DVR was not operating under an Order of Selection during FFY2015, as there was adequate funding and qualified staff to provide services identified in IPEs to all eligible individuals. DVR anticipates this availability of qualified staff and funding will continue during FFY2016 through FFY2020. Throughout the year, DVR will continue to closely monitor expenditures and obligations in relationship to VR participant numbers as well as staffing patterns to ensure DVR’s ability to provide VR services to all eligible individuals.

**3. The number of individuals who are eligible for VR services, but are not receiving such services due to an order of selection; and**

DVR is not on an Order of Selection.

**4. The cost of services for the number of individuals estimated to be eligible for services. If under an order of selection, identify the cost of services for each priority category.**

Analysis of Funding:

- The SFY2016 budget beginning July 1, 2015 has DVR funded at the same level as prior years for client services;
- During FFY2015, DVR collected \$939,216 in Social Security Reimbursements. These reimbursements have been averaging about \$950,000 for several years. To continue this level of reimbursement, DVR will be purchasing specific "Ticket Tracking" software. This software will track all tickets currently outstanding and file the reimbursement paperwork;
- There continues to be adequate Title VI, Part B funding for SE services, including the 50 percent set-aside for youth with the most significant disabilities;
- DVR was able to obtain \$600,000 in additional federal funds through the re-allotment process for use during FFY2016 and expects to request additional federal funds to be used for FFY2017 through FFY2020;
- Eligible receiving Title I: 1,947; estimated funds \$5,000,000; average cost of services, \$2,568; and
- Eligible receiving Title VI: 257; estimated funds \$350,000; average cost of services, \$1,362.

**I. State Goals and Priorities**

The designated State unit must:

**1. Identify if the goals and priorities were jointly developed**

Identify if the goals and priorities were jointly developed and agreed to by the State VR agency and the State Rehabilitation Council, if the State has a Council, and jointly agreed to any revisions.

DVR and the SVRC, including representatives of the American Indian Vocational Rehabilitation Services (AIVRS) programs and the Statewide Independent Living Council, developed goals and priorities for the state vocational rehabilitation (VR) program during the strategic planning process. DVR's strategic plan is tied to the three-year cycle of the CSNA with interim progress assessments regarding goals and priorities.

The strategic planning process is comprehensive and includes defining the agency's mission, principles, goals, priorities, strategies, and measurements. Input for the development of the goals, priorities, and strategies came from the CSNA; public comment taken at the SVCR's quarterly meetings; ongoing consumer satisfaction surveys; and other program evaluation activities including the case file review, management information system reports, and monitoring activities. DVR continuously monitors its progress towards meeting the standards and indicators and makes necessary adjustments to priorities and strategies as required. The goals, priorities, and progress are reviewed quarterly by the DVR management team and discussed with the SVRC at their quarterly meetings. Adjustments are made as required.

## 2. Identify the goals and priorities in carrying out the VR and Supported Employment programs.

### Goal 1: Service Delivery –

**DVR will deliver high quality vocational rehabilitation services to people with disabilities to assist them in obtaining employment consistent with their career goals.**

- Improve VR services to transition age youth (age 24 and younger).
- o Explore the use of social media to connect youth to VR services.
- o Newly designed Facebook–DOLWD web page <https://vimeo.com/88207351>.
- o Counselors are using texting to communicate with youth.
  - Enhance web page with youth focus.
- o New web page primarily for transition students in school:
  - Participate in Project Search, Tapestry and AIEI grants.
- o DVR participated in Project Search and the Tapestry program.
- o The Transition Coordinator is on the AIEI committee.
  - Through participation in the AIEI grant, increase the employment hours of youth with I/DD and percentage of youth served.
- o On–going; currently analyzing data.
  - Connect with DOLWD Youth First sub–recipients.
- o Transition Coordinator gave a presentation in August 2015.
  - Outreach to alternative schools and youth correctional facilities such as the McLaughlin Youth Center.
- o Coordination meetings with both OCS and the DJJ have been held.
- o Presented at a statewide conference.
- o Currently working on Group Orientation project with Juneau OCS.
  - Expand the DVR transition work group to include Section 504 students.
- o Current marketing efforts targeting this group are being developed. A new referral form and guidance includes 504 populations.
  - Expand the DVR transition work group to include youth from the DJJ system.

o On-going. Counselors have been assigned to DJJ system.

- Annually identify 504 coordinators and Special Education staff for each school.

o Completed.

- Include guidance counselors and school nursing staff in DVR outreach activities.

o Completed.

- Explore developing a transition planning guide for 504 students.

o In process.

- Maintain DVR presence at Special Education conferences and continue outreach to special education teachers.

o Transition Coordinator presented at 2014 Special Education & Youth Summit conference.

- Convene focus group made up of youth with an emphasis on communication and engagement strategies.

o After analyzing the results of the CSNA, specific areas will be determined and strategies developed for targeting this population.

- Develop a strategic plan for transition services.

o Refine PETS Projects as a method to engage large numbers of students in PETS activities leading to an IPE; build a stronger CRP infrastructure to serve students; and build the capacity to coordinate services with Local Education Agencies (LEAs).

o Expand the number of Transition Camps available to LEAs in rural areas to ensure that all students with disabilities have the opportunity to benefit from pre-employment transition activities.

o Coordinate with EED to ensure that planning, direction, and training of special education administrators and teachers promote LEAs and DVR coordinating the provision of pre-employment transition services and the referral of transition age youth.

o Expand development and training of CRPs, including developing contracts with schools and/or teachers as CRPs, to deliver pre-employment transition services.

o Coordinate with Department of Juvenile Justice, child protection/foster care, tribal vocational programs, behavioral health and I/DD agencies to implement system change/system alignment efforts towards developing pathways to connect transition age youth with DVR and other necessary postsecondary supports.

o Develop a vocational track within the Statewide Special Education Conference as the method to bring information and training to LEAs that promotes:

§ better transition planning towards employment, postsecondary education and/or training; and

§ methods for coordinating the provision of pre-employment transition services.

o Continue collaboration with EED in intensive technical assistance through National Technical Assistance Center on Transition to develop and implement a joint plan for coordinating with LEAs to address:

§ improving graduation rate of students with disabilities;

§ increasing the availability of pre–employment transition services;

§ developing a system for providing navigation services for postsecondary services; and

§ increasing parent involvement and engagement in transition planning in accessing postsecondary supports.

o Research RSA’s emerging practices for youth services.

§ Evolutionary process that will be monitored for new developments; may be a specific area of interest once new TA center is up and running.

- Partner with the Division of Senior and Disability Services to improve the employment opportunities for youth with I/DD or with a traumatic brain injury.

o Collaboration on–going.

- Use existing information from schools for eligibility.

o On–going.

- Work with school staff to obtain good referrals from schools.

o On–going; new referral process in place.

o Improve VR services in Rural Alaska.

- Continue DVR rural work group to identify realistic goals for rural services; develop strategies for meeting these goals; and convey this information to VR field staff.

o On–going meetings with Rural Services team to discuss best practices and strategies around challenges. Meetings have been increased from quarterly to every other month.

- Maintain strong relationships with Tribal Vocational Rehabilitation (TVR) and AJC partners. TVR programs to draft new MOU to present to DVR.

o This was completed in June 2015.

- Develop partnerships with other state agencies providing rural services in Alaska.

o Currently collaborating with Tribal programs and school districts throughout the state.

- Coordinate DVR participation in South East Regional Resource Center Rural Transition Camps.

o First camp completed at a DJJ facility in which Pre–Employment Transition Services were delivered to potentially eligible students with disabilities. Plan to hold multiple transition camps throughout 2016.

- Identify locations and establish a travel schedule for rural areas other than the hub communities, currently monitoring the need in different communities.

o Have expanded services to Petersburg and Prince of Wales Island specifically due to the increased need.

o Have also expanded services to Haines due to increased need, and increased the number of counselors within the agency that are providing rural services.

- Developed and implemented a Trip Planning/Reporting tool (form).

o The form was finalized and sent to staff on March 13, 2013.

- Develop tools and resources to assist VR staff in rural services delivery.

o Work is on–going through continued meetings with Rural Services team, as well as collaboration with the agency AT team. This collaboration has enabled utilization of some of the functions of the State of Alaska WebEx video conferencing system. On–going research as to the benefits of the State Libraries Online With Libraries system.

- Develop CRPs in rural Alaska.

o The number of CRPs serving rural Alaska has increased due to providing Pre–Employment Transition Services.

- Establish qualifications for CRPs serving rural locations. Work is progressing through counselor contacts in rural areas.

o On–going. Continues to be challenging to find qualified CRPs in rural areas.

- Review MOA with TVR Consortium annually.

o TVR Consortium plans to review MOU and present draft to DVR after spring 2016 meeting.

- Maximize the use of technology for service delivery.

o Collaboration with AT team is increasing knowledge of available technology and possible ways to incorporate technology within the agency to increase productivity and case management.

- SVRC to travel to a rural location once a year.

o One meeting a year is scheduled in a rural location.

- Ensure funds are available for VR counselors to travel to rural areas.

o Funding has increased to accommodate additional trips as requested by counselors.

- Transition Coordinator and AT coordinator have joined rural team.

- o Ensure support for services to individuals who experience blindness or a visual impairment.
  - Continue to support the Alaska Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired (the Center) and other efforts within DVR to ensure all obligations as a combined agency are met.
- o On-going, although it continues to be a challenge for the Center to maintain qualified staff.
  - Expand use of the Center's funds. Completed January 6, 2014. Business practice now allows staff to access Center funds for Rehabilitation Centers that are out of state, supporting informed choice of consumers.
  - Continue division support for the Blind Services Team with monthly teleconference & periodic trainings.
- o On-going.
  - Maintain membership in Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired.
- o On-going.
  - Remain active in the National Council of State Agencies for Blind.
- o On-going.
  - Contract with the Technical Assistance and Continuing Education (TACE) to provide an overall analysis of statewide VR in-house services including the level of provision including statewide access, the overall effectiveness of the services and their place in the statewide WIOA system.
- o This contract was not developed. Program Evaluator will perform on-going evaluation of in-house services.
  - Review current statewide standards and modify/develop as needed: standards for workshops, definitions of services, and level of services including use compared to capacity.
- o Definitions of services have been implemented. DVR's Statewide Assessment Team continues to meet regularly to ensure consistency of standards and level of services.
  - Analyze the relationship of in-house VR services to case movement.
- o Utilization of the division's case management system to evaluate relationship of effectiveness of in-house services.
  - Develop mechanisms for matching evaluation to outcomes.
- o Ongoing development.
  - Ensure all staff have required knowledge for use of in-house services.
- o Staff continues to remain knowledgeable about in-house services available to consumers.
  - Research practices of other public VR programs in timely IPE development.
- o On-going with additional staff training. Timely IPE development (within 90 days) has been the standard since February 2014.

- Increase outreach to individuals with minority backgrounds

o DVR continues to liaison with the AIVRS Tribal Consortium. On-going training about referral process and comparable benefits.

- Chief of Field Services is liaison to the Alaska Vocational Rehabilitation Tribal Consortium.

o On-going.

- Develop a mechanism for matching CRP services to outcomes.

o On-going. This has proven to be a challenge as PETS participants have used CRP services. Those outcome expectations will cover a longer period. In addition, many CRPs aid in the goal of successful employment, but not with a one-to-one relationship. DVR is in the process of developing measures that will assist in determining effectiveness of CRP services.

- Share information with VR staff and CRPs for continued input and improvement.

o On-going. Information and data are shared with the Field Service Council on a regular basis. VR Managers contact the CRP Specialist when issues arise with CRPs. DVR hosted three statewide CRP teleconferences this past year regarding WIOA, CRP training, DVR field service needs, and the CRP application process. CCER facilitated statewide CRP quarterly teleconferences through the spring of 2015. DVR will start hosting scheduled statewide quarterly CRP teleconferences in the spring of 2016.

- Ensure an adequate number of CRPs and/or DVR staff who are trained to provide benefit analysis in order for Social Security beneficiaries to understand the impact of work on their benefits.

o On-going. DVR has and continues to partner closely with UAA to guarantee there is an adequate pool of certified Community Work Incentives Coordinators (CWICs) in Alaska. Currently there are eight CWICs who work as CRPs. Because quality assurance is so critical in benefit analysis, UAA (via an RSA) reviews a sample of CWIC reports throughout each year, provides and tracks ongoing training, develops and conducts recertification examinations annually, and notifies DVR of any quality assurance, training/ or performance issues.

o Based (in part) on VR's request/need, UAA developed new training for CRPs on financial management and work incentive advisement. CRPs that complete the training will be qualified to provide a very basic review of an individual's financial situation and identify various work incentives the individual may be eligible to receive. They will also provide financial management training and advisement and recommend if additional services (e.g., benefits analysis) are needed. Financial and work incentive advisement is a brand new CRP service.

- Market CRP as a career to current Direct Service Professionals through presentations at Full Lives Conferences and collaboration with the Alaska Alliance for Direct Service Careers.

o On-going. Presentations have been conducted at the Full Lives Conference and the Statewide Special Education Conference.

- Provide staff training on CRP identified needs.

o On-going and as required/requested.

- Work with rural VR counselors to identify potential rural CRPs.

o On-going. CRP Specialist participates in the Rural Services Committee meetings and has assisted in developing flyers for traveling counselors to post and distribute when traveling to rural areas. DVR still needs more CRPs in rural areas.

- DVR continues to evaluate CRPs for quality services and areas to improve services to DVR participants.

o On-going as a part of program quality improvement and evaluation of effectiveness.

- CRP Facilities Specialist facilitates discussion between CRPs on promising practices, issues, etc.

o On-going through teleconferences, webinars, and annual meetings with CRPs.

o Deliver quality AT services consistently statewide.

- Develop a strategic AT plan to develop strategies to deliver AT services.

o On-going. The AT Counselor Team continues to meet, identify areas of need, and propose strategies to meet the needs.

- Work with Assistive Technologies of Alaska (ATLA) to improve relationships and service delivery.

o On-going. Developed a "Guide to ATLA Services" with ATLA for DVR staff to take advantage of all the services including those that are free or low cost. Has been emailed to staff and posted on intranet.

- Continue to consider AT services for clients throughout the rehabilitation process.

o Identified captioning phone that works with state system and accommodates state workers who are deaf or hard of hearing. Developing process to share this information statewide. On-going evaluation of how DVR staff currently provide AT services. Developing an agency-wide needs assessment to specifically address providing quality AT to participants.

- Improve service delivery for individuals who are Social Security beneficiaries and ensure compliance with federal regulation(s).

o Evaluate use of Presumption of Eligibility, specifically around timeliness of services, per federal regulation.

- Develop procedures for referring individuals exiting DVR employed, who are Social Security Ticket to Work holders, to Employment Networks using the Partnership Plus model. (AJCs, Employment Networks (ENs), and others as they become available).

o DVR has partnered with DEI to refer individuals to AJCs for extended services.

**Goal 2 – Staff Development: DVR will recruit, employ, retain, and train the most qualified and highly skilled rehabilitation staff.**

2.1 Recruit and retain qualified staff.

- Develop consistent statewide tools for evaluating employee performance, annual review, training needs, and for promotional purposes.

o A performance evaluation guide has created consistency between regions, and a self-evaluation tool was provided to managers to use when writing evaluations. Training needs are determined using results from case review, discussions, and

current events. The division continues to support leadership training for staff, including participation in the Emerging Leaders Series through University of Washington (UW).

- Maximize training funds to support VR Counselors in graduate level rehabilitation programs.

o DVR continues to support graduate level training for those who do not meet the division's standards. Five staff were pursuing graduate level course work in FFY2015.

- Provide relevant training opportunities to staff such as Motivational Interviewing.

o The division continues to support counselors with meeting their continuing educational unit requirement by funding registrations to attend trainings, allowing staff work time to attend trainings, and by awarding continuing educational units when the division develops/hosts a training activity.

## 2.2 Leadership development and succession planning.

- Support staff participation in leadership training programs such as Emerging Leaders, the National Rehabilitation Leadership Institute (NRLI), etc.

o On-going. One staff completed the NRLI, one completed EL, and an additional staff member has been selected to attend the next EL series.

- Develop a succession plan.

o Many leadership staff changes have impacted this goal and emphasize the need for this plan. However, with new staff, the need for this plan will be delayed to FFY2017.

- Make staff aware of educational and long-range employment opportunities within DVR.

o On-going.

## **Goal 3 – DVR will maintain/improve the efficiency and effectiveness of organizational systems**

### 3.1 Revise the Case Review process to ensure adherence to standards and fidelity within the program statewide.

- Review purpose of the process to determine what requires evaluation during case review.

o This is an on-going quality improvement process, with improvements made to both the process and the instrument, when needed. Training issues are identified and addressed; policies and procedures updated if any issue is identified.

- Examine components (fiscal, CRP and case files) and specific needs.

o Part of the on-going process improvement.

- Revise current process and tools as appropriate (for case, financial, and CRP components).

o Review changing the process to be all electronic to eliminate the need for hand-written notes and storage for those notes.

- Establish standards

o Standards have been established, as has the Inter–reliability Review process, which ensures fidelity in the review process.

### 3.2 Implement federally required RSA–911 changes to the AWARE case management system.

- Staff actively participate in AWARE user groups.

o Staff participate in user group meetings to offer suggestions and to be a part of the development process for new software releases.

- Thorough analysis of impact to field and accounting staff.

o Help Desk staff thoroughly test new releases to be able to annotate any impact to staff.

- Thorough analysis of data changes as related to current data usage.

o Help Desk staff analyze and thoroughly test new release data to ensure operability and impact on policies and procedures.

- Training of field and other staff in timely manner.

o Documentation developed to inform staff of changes in the software that may impact their daily use. Further training is developed and given to staff when changes are significant.

### 3.3 Implement the new state accounting system – Integrated Resource Information System.

- Coordinate with Alliance Enterprises and Alaska Department of Administration to adapt current accounting interface.

o Accounting interface was built and deployed just prior to go–live on July 1, 2015. The new accounting system continues to challenge DVR processes, and the interface is updated as new requirements are discovered. This is on–going and expensive.

- Explore opportunities for collaboration between state agencies.

o The advent of the Participant Individual Record Layout reporting requirements under WIOA are opening up collaboration between state agencies.

### 3.4 Use technology to deliver high quality services to all customers including VR program participants and vendors.

- DVR staff will be trained on the technological tools available such as features of VOIP, video/captioning phone systems, AWARE and AWARE report functionality, DVR intranet, DVR web page, State of Alaska website employee resources, Microsoft Lync, iPad applications, and training platforms.

o On–going and constant.

- Continually evaluate emerging technologies.

o Work closely with Alliance Enterprises in the development of new applications within the case management system AWARE to take advantage of new technology.

3.5 Evaluate Social Security Reimbursement & Ticket Tracker for efficiencies.

- Work with Alliance and Ticket Tracker to determine the best software option for the agency.

o Agency will be purchasing Ticket Tracker to better manage the Ticket to Work process. Planned implementation will be early in 2016.

#### **Goal 4 – DVR will provide leadership in the workforce system**

4.1 Maintain a leadership role in expanding vocational opportunities for Alaskans with disabilities.

- Establish criteria for support and participation in new initiatives.

o On-going effort supported by upper management and leadership staff.

- Ensure AJC staff are regularly made aware of DVR and VR services.

o On-going. More collaboration with the Division of Employment & Training Services (DETS) and development of a shared referral system are required by WIOA.

- DVR leadership team and managers continue to identify functional AJC issues that require on-going work at all levels of the division including the AJC Integration Committee and the local AJC management teams.

o On-going.

- Work with AJCs to obtain information on individuals who self-identify as having a disability.

o On-going,

- Support the National Governors Association Chair's initiative – "A Better Bottom Line: Employing People with Disabilities." Special Assistant to the Governor helped make Provisional Hires (PH) more visible to hiring managers during the recruitment process, thus increasing PHs substantially in FFY2015.

o On-going.

- Partner with other service providers to maximize resources and coordinate services for individuals who are in need of long-term SE services.

o On-going.

- Support the Employment First Initiative.

o Initiative was enacted in May of 2014, making Alaska an Employment First state.

- Support efforts to establish vocational services from community behavioral health providers.

o Managers document successes/challenges of mental health services in regions.

- Continue Chief of Rehabilitation Services participation in the Vets Success meetings

o On-going.

- Continue support for DVR business point of contact to the Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation National Employment Team.

o On-going.

- Examine the role of DVR staff on boards, councils, and advisory groups.

o On-going. Complete review to be completed with new Assistant Chief when hired.

- Seek membership or stronger representation on the Alaska Workforce Investment Board.

o On-going. New WIOA regulations may ease the way for DVR to be represented.

- Support the State as a Model Employer Initiative and serve on the steering committee.

o On-going.

- Support the Alaska Integrated Employment Initiative and serve on the advisory board.

o On-going. Currently the Transition Coordinator sits on this board.

- Support current Project Search sites and serve on the steering committee.

o On-going. Assistant Chief will be sitting on this committee.

- Support the Tapestry project and serve on the advisory board.

o On-going. Currently the Transition Coordinator sits on this board.

- Serve on the Governor's Council on Disabilities and Special Education.

o On-going. This seat is assigned to the Assistant Chief.

- Serve on the Alaska Mental Health Board.

o On-going. This seat is assigned to the Assistant Chief.

- Serve on the Statewide Independent Living Council.

o On-going. This seat will be staffed by the CRP Coordinator.

- Serve on the Community and Public Transportation Advisory Board.

o On-going. This seat will be assigned to the Director of DVR.

- Attend the Alaska Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired board meetings.

o On-going. Currently the Blind Services Coordinator for the state sits on this board.

Strategic goals set for FFY2016 with input and approval from the SVRC. Additional planning sessions will be set with the SVRC to draft strategic goals for FFY202017 – FFY2020 once the WIOA regulations have been published and data from the CSNA have been analyzed.

**The following are the goals set for FFY2016**

**Goal 1 – Service Delivery**

**DVR will deliver high quality vocational rehabilitation services for people with disabilities to assist them in obtaining employment consistent with their career goals.**

Objective	Activity	Who	Indicator of success
Expand Pre-Employment Transition Services to students 16–21	Sponsor transition camps throughout Alaska	Transition Coordinator	15% PETS set aside budget fully spent
Contract with CRPs to provide PETS activities	Transition Coordinator, CRP Specialist	Increase in provision of PETS activities	
Work with Special Education teachers to ensure appropriate referrals	Transition Coordinator	Student referrals increase	
Outreach to alternative schools and youth correctional facilities	Transition Coordinator	Number of students in these facilities increases	
Provide quality assurance oversight to ensure PETS expenditures are being correctly captured and recorded	Program Evaluator	Accurate accountability of 15% PETS set-aside	
Provide all services required under WIOA	Thorough review, implementation and adherence of new WIOA regulations (when available)	Planning, Policy and Performance Evaluation (PPP) Team, Leadership Team	
Review of policy manual	PPP Team, Leadership Team	Policies are updated as necessary and disseminated to staff	
Review of Technical Manual	PPP Team, Leadership Team	Manual is updated as necessary and disseminated to staff	
Training is provided to staff around new WIOA requirements	Program Evaluator, Chief	Staff understands their role in implementation of WIOA through training	

Objective	Activity	Who	Indicator of success
Develop training module to ensure staff captures and documents services to employers, once regulations are published	Chief, Program Evaluator, Training Specialist	Training developed and provided to staff	
Continue to provide services in rural Alaska	Budget travel funds for counselor travel	Regional Managers, Leadership Team	Counselors are able to travel to their assigned rural hubs or other areas as needed
Counselors are assigned to rural hubs	Regional Managers	Counselors are assigned specific rural areas in which they provide VR services	
Counselors have access to case management software when out in the field	Assistive Technology Coordinator, PPP Team	Counselors access case management software while in rural areas	
Rural Team tasked with developing strategies and goals for meeting the needs of rural clients	Rural Team	Increased rural participants	
Maintain relationships with Tribal VR programs and AJCs	Rural Team	Increased referrals and collaboration	
Identify strategies to increase CRPs in rural areas	Rural Team, Regional Managers, CRP Specialist, Leadership Team	Increase in CRPs serving rural areas	
Maximize the use of technology to offer services remotely	AT Coordinator, Rural Team	Successful use of technology and increased services to rural areas	
State Vocational Rehabilitation Committee continues to meet at least once a year in a rural location	SVRC, SVRC Liaison	Meeting held in a rural location	

<b>Objective</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Who</b>	<b>Indicator of success</b>
Ensure services to individuals who experience blindness or visual impairments	Support the Alaska Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired (the Center) and other efforts within DVR to ensure all obligation as a combined agency are met	Chief, Blind & VI Team	The Center continues to receive support, and blind and VI participants receive appropriate services
Maintain membership in Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the blind and Visually Impaired.	Blind & VI Team	Membership maintained	
Provide evaluation of services offered through DVR	QA activities performed with results used to determine training needs or to clarify policies and procedures	PPP team	Changes are made as necessary to policies and technical manual. Training delivered as necessary
Program evaluation results reviewed by Leadership Team	PPP Team	Policies and practices are developed and implemented	
CSNA data are collected and used to establish strategic goals for FFY2017	PPP Team, Leadership Team	Assessment data are collected, analyzed and disseminated to Leadership Team	
CSNA results are disseminated to SVRC and combined strategic goal meeting scheduled	Leadership Team, SVRC	Strategic goals for FFY2017 are developed.	
Consumer Satisfaction responses are analyzed and disseminated to Leadership Team and SVRC	PPP Team, SVRC	Analyzed data are reviewed and needed changes are made to ensure quality delivery of services	
Meet or exceed state and federal performance standards	Establish baseline data for all WIOA required data elements	Program Evaluator	Baseline data will be available for all required elements of the Participant Individual Record Layout and the RSA-911
Update case management software AWARE to capture all new required data elements	Program Evaluator, Software Vendor	Software captures all new required data elements	
<b>Objective</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Who</b>	<b>Indicator of success</b>

Negotiate new targets for required performance standards (when published)	Leadership Team	RSA and DVR have new targets for performance measures	
Develop relationships with other VR agencies to share best practices	Director, Chief, Asst. Chief, Program Evaluator	Network available for sharing information	
Monitor case activities to ensure program fidelity	Program Evaluator, Regional Managers, Chief	Information provided to regional managers for staff performance evaluations	
Effective CRP performance and outcomes	Monitor and evaluate CRP performance to ensure fidelity, effectiveness and quality of service outcomes	Program Evaluator, CRP Specialist, Regional Managers	Yearly evaluation done for each CRP to determine continued usage
Share information with VR staff and CRPs for continued input and improvement	CRP Specialist, Staff	Continued involvement between staff and CRPs	
Work with rural VR counselors to identify potential rural CRPs	Rural Team, CRP Specialist	Additional rural CRPs recruited and providing services	
Deliver quality AT services consistently statewide	Continue to work with ATLA to improve relationship and service delivery	AT Coordinator, AT Counselor Team	Service delivery improves
Develop guide for using ATLA services	AT Coordinator, AT Counselor Team	Guide completed	
Provide quality service delivery for individuals who are Social Security beneficiaries and ensure compliance with federal regulation	Ensure staff is aware of presumption of eligibility of beneficiaries	Chief, Training Specialist	Expedited eligibilities or development of Trial Work Experiences
Ensure all beneficiaries are provided with a benefits analysis to fully understand how employment will impact their benefits	Regional Manager, Counselors	Informed choice	

**Goal 2 – Staff Development.**

**DVR will recruit, employ, retain, and train the most qualified and highly skilled rehabilitation staff.**

Objective	Activity	Who	Indicator of success
Recruit and retain qualified staff	Develop consistent statewide tools for training needs	Training Specialist	Tools are developed and disseminated
Schedule an “all–staff” training session	Training Specialist, Leadership Team	Training occurs	
Ensure funding for the support of VR counselors in graduate level rehabilitation courses	Leadership Team	Funding is available	
Develop an internship program	Training Specialist	Internship program is developed	
CRC credit is provided for trainings	Training Specialist	Counselors are able to obtain continuing education CRC credits	
Ensure staff are aware of educational and long range employment opportunities with DVR	Leadership Team	Staff take advantage of education and employment opportunities within DVR	
Leadership development and succession planning	Support staff participation in leadership training programs such as Emerging Leaders, the National Rehabilitation Leadership Institute, etc.	Leadership Team	Staff are participating at a level to meet VR Leadership needs
Develop a succession plan	Leadership Team	Plan is developed and implemented	

**Goal 3**

**DVR will continuously evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of organizational systems and identify opportunities to develop innovative solutions for necessary changes**

Objective	Activity	Who	Indicator of success
Review and revise as necessary the case review process	Develop the case review process electronically, using <i>Survey Monkey</i> to record all results	PPP Team	New process will be utilized
Develop streamlined, electronic process for randomly selecting the appropriate number and type of cases to review	PPP Team, Chief	New process will be utilized	
Analyze results of new process and revise as necessary	PPP Team, Chief	Results will be used to make improvements or to solidify new process	

Implement all federally mandated changes to RSA–911 report	Fully test and implement all changes to case management software	Help Desk Team	All updates are installed and working appropriately
Analyze impact on field staff	Help Desk Team, Regional Managers	Staff adequately notified of changes	
Develop training materials on new components of data collection	Training Specialist, Help Desk Team, Chief	New materials developed and training delivered to field staff	
Prepare and upload federal reports accurately and on–time	Program Evaluator, Help Desk Team	Reports are submitted on time and meet all requirements	
Evaluate Social Security Reimbursement Process	Implement new Ticket Tracking software	Program Evaluator, Ticket Project Assistant	New software works as expected
Train additional staff on process	Program Evaluator, Ticket Project Assistant and staff	Program Evaluator has backup and knowledge of software is shared	
Continue to collect Social Security Reimbursements	Ticket Tracker staff	Social Security Reimbursements continue at least at current levels	

#### Goal 4

##### DVR will provide leadership in the workforce system

Objective	Activity	Who	Indicator of success
Maintain a leadership role in expanding vocational opportunities for Alaskans with disabilities	Become a member of the AWIB	Director	Hold a seat on the AWIB
Partner with other core DOLWD programs to develop Combined State Plan	Director, Leadership Team	Combined Plan includes VR input	
Collaborate with core programs authorized by WIOA to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of services			
Work with AJCs to ensure referrals to and from DVR are occurring	Leadership Team	On–going dialogue with AJCs to ensure appropriate referrals	
Encourage DVR presence on appropriate boards, i.e. Alaska Mental Health Trust, Governor’s Council on Disabilities and Special Education, etc.	Director, Asst. Chief	Presence on boards increases	

### 3. Ensure that the goals and priorities are based on an analysis of the following areas:

#### A. The most recent comprehensive statewide assessment, including any updates;

DVR conducted a CSNA in 2013. The Strategic Goals for FFY2013–2015 were developed based on the findings of the CSNA. In order to determine the needs of Alaskans with disabilities, the CSNA looked at:

- What are the rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities, particularly the vocational rehabilitation services needs of individuals with most significant disabilities, including their need for SE services?

- What are the vocational rehabilitation services needs of individuals with disabilities who are minorities or who are in unserved or underserved populations?
- What are the vocational rehabilitation services needs of individuals with disabilities who are served through other components of the statewide workforce investment system?
- What is the need to establish, develop, or improve community rehabilitation programs (CRPs) within the state?

**B. the State's performance under the performance accountability measures of section 116 of WIOA; and**

DVR has collected baseline data on employment status at second and fourth quarter after exit as well as median wage at second quarter after exit. DVR does not have reliable data on educational attainment, measurable skill gain, and effectiveness in serving employers; therefore, DVR is unable to identify targets in these areas.

**C. other available information on the operation and effectiveness of the VR program, including any reports received from the State Rehabilitation Council and finding and recommendations from monitoring activities conducted under section 107.**

DVR has not had a monitoring review since 2010. The SVRC publishes an annual report, which helps shape policy by reviewing strategic planning, needs assessment, consumer satisfaction surveys, and ongoing program evaluation. The SVRC has had no significant concerns regarding DVR's operation and effectiveness.

**m. Order of Selection**

Describe:

**1. Whether the designated State unit will implement and order of selection. If so, describe:**

**A. The order to be followed in selecting eligible individuals to be provided VR services.**

DVR is not on an Order of Selection.

**B. The justification for the order.**

DVR is not on an Order of Selection.

**C. The service and outcome goals.**

DVR is not on an Order of Selection.

**D. The time within which these goals may be achieved for individuals in each priority category within the order.**

DVR is not on an Order of Selection.

**E. How individuals with the most significant disabilities are selected for services before all other individuals with disabilities; and**

DVR is not on an Order of Selection.

**2. If the designated State unit has elected to serve eligible individuals, regardless of any established order of selection, who require specific services or equipment to maintain employment.**

DVR is not on an Order of Selection.

**n. Goals and Plans for Distribution of title VI Funds.**

**1. Specify the State's goals and priorities for funds received under section 603 of the Rehabilitation Act for the provision of supported employment services.**

- Utilize 50 percent of SE funds for youth with the most significant disabilities;
- Collaborate with the DEI regarding youth transition programs in the state;
- Partner with the Center for Human Development to expand postsecondary education options; and
- Collaborate with the Governor's Council on Disabilities and Special Education and the Center for Human Development on transition handbooks for multiple stakeholder groups.

**2. Describe the activities to be conducted, with funds reserved pursuant to section 603(d), for youth with the most significant disabilities, including:**

**A. the provision of extended services for a period not to exceed 4 years; and**

- Develop cooperative agreement with Senior and Disability Services regarding individual plans of care to ensure long-term funding for those with the most significant disabilities; and
- Explore funding options for comparable benefits including Medicaid waiver funds.

**B. how the State will leverage other public and private funds to increase resources for extended services and expanded supported employment opportunities for youth with the most significant disabilities.**

- Increase the number of Community Work Incentives Coordinators (CWICs) through collaborative CWIC training opportunities;
- Work with the Center for Human Development, the Alaska Mental Health Trust, the Governor's Council on Disabilities and Special Education, and other partners to increase provider capacity for employment services and supports; and
- Partner to disseminate information on resources available for people with disabilities to obtain and maintain employment through job fairs, conferences, and other events.

**o. State's Strategies**

Describe the required strategies and how the agency will use these strategies to achieve its goals and priorities, support innovation and expansion activities, and overcome any barriers to accessing the VR and the Supported Employment programs (See sections 101(a)(15)(D) and (18)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act and section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA)):

### **1. The methods to be used to expand and improve services to individuals with disabilities.**

DVR works closely with local school districts, hospitals and CRPs to implement the national Project SEARCH model in the Matanuska–Susitna and Fairbanks school districts. A collaborative internship model was developed in FFY2012 to provide youth with developmental or intellectual disabilities opportunities to learn real job skills in one–year school–to–work internship positions set up throughout the three hospitals involved. Sites were at Mat–Su Regional Medical Center, Central Peninsula Hospital, and Fairbanks Memorial Hospital. Total workplace immersion facilitates a seamless combination of classroom instruction, career exploration, and OJT and support through internships or worksite rotations. The goal for each participant is obtaining integrated employment using the skills learned through the internships. The State of Alaska has adopted this model for student interns with developmental disabilities. For FY15, 15 youth participated in Project SEARCH, and 14 successfully completed their internships at the hospitals with seven of those individuals now working in paid, competitive employment. Project SEARCH is no longer being funded by the Governor’s Council on Disabilities and Special Education. The Project SEARCH model will be used to provide Pre–Employment Transition Services to Students with Disabilities under the Client Services Component. The model will be used for all disability types rather than only developmental disabilities and will expand to other types of worksites.

DVR supports and participates in the Tapestry Postsecondary Transition Program through the University of Alaska Center for Human Development. The purpose of the program is to provide students (ages 18 to 21) who have intellectual and cognitive disabilities with a postsecondary college experience to develop self–advocacy skills, engage in career exploration, develop work readiness skills, and engage in work experience that leads to employment in a career field or enrollment in a postsecondary educational program. Now in its 6th year, the retention rate is approximately 80 percent. Nineteen people have graduated from the program and 14 of those were employed at graduation. Twelve of the 14 were employed in competitive employment with an average wage of \$9.34/hour, higher than Alaska’s minimum wage.

### **2. How a broad range of assistive technology services and devices will be provided to individuals with disabilities at each stage of the rehabilitation process and on a statewide basis.**

The Division has a policy on Assistive Technology (AT) service delivery throughout the VR process.

DVR has established an AT team that examines the use of AT throughout DVR for all individuals. Additionally, this team also looks at how AT can be used to deliver VR services to remote and rural Alaska.

### **3. The outreach procedures that will be used to identify and serve individuals with disabilities who are minorities, including those with the most significant disabilities, as well as those who have been unserved or underserved by the VR program.**

DVR’s most underserved population is rural Alaskans. This has been an on–going challenge for the Rural Development Team, as there are so few jobs within some of the smaller communities. Available employment and employers are much more numerous in the urban areas. The Rural Team is strategizing ways to get more CRPs in rural areas, which are traditionally underserved. The Business Employment Services Team has been created specifically to outreach and provide training and services to employers, with the goal of encouraging more employers to provide employment opportunities for people with disabilities. DVR has expanded services to Petersburg, Haines, and Prince of Wales Island due to increased need and has increased the number of counselors within the agency that are providing rural services. Collaboration with the AT team has enabled utilization of available electronic tools and video conferencing. DVR has increased the number of CRPs serving rural Alaska due to providing Pre–Employment Transition Services. Work is on–going on developing qualifications for rural CRPs, as it is difficult to find qualified CRPs in rural areas.

### **4. The methods to be used to improve and expand VR services for students with disabilities, including the coordination of services designed to facilitate the transition of such students from school to postsecondary life (including the receipt of VR services, postsecondary education, employment, and pre-employment transition services).**

DVR issued an invitation to submit a proposal to CRPs across the state in FFY2015 to provide pre–employment transition services to students with disabilities in coordination with Local Education Agencies (LEAs). DVR funded nine PETS Projects for funding, in both urban and rural locations, with a goal of providing 125 youth with intensive PETS activities that lead toward an Individualized Plan for Employment. This project resulted in expanding CRPs to include Independent Living (IL) Centers and Behavioral Health organizations and increasing DVR’s ability to provide substantial services in rural locations.

The Transition Coordinator is providing Transition Camps in conjunction with several partners. In November 2015, a camp was run by a CRP, and enrollees were inmates in the Juvenile Justice System. The University of Alaska Southeast provided one college credit for attending the all–day session. Transition age students were given presentations by an array of employers, DVR staff, and others to broaden horizons for these students and to offer assistance in achieving current employment–related or postsecondary goals. The response from the participants was very positive. There are several more Transition Camps scheduled for FFY2016.

**5. If applicable, plans for establishing, developing, or improving community rehabilitation programs within the State.**

Collaboration and partnership with UAA to ensure ongoing training is available to CRPs throughout the state. UAA is in the process of gaining national accreditation from the ACRE to provide employment services training. DVR requires CRPs complete a minimum of 40 hours of ACRE accredited training to meet the minimum requirements to provide basic vocational rehabilitation services.

**6. Strategies to improve the performance of the State with respect to the performance accountability measures under section 116 of WIOA.**

Once regulations have been published, baseline data acquired from other core programs, and targets negotiated with RSA, DVR will be able to comment on performance, based on the accountability indicators.

For the accountability measures that involve quarterly wages and percentages, DVR has worked with DOLWD’s Research and Analysis Section to procure the data and will be able to report percentages and state wage data for adults and youth. The data provided included the FFY2015 and three previous years. However, DVR is finding it difficult to obtain federal wage data, resulting in lower percentages of participants employed and lower overall wage data targets.

For the accountability measures involving education and credentialing, that information is proving to be much more difficult to obtain. DVR is currently working to establish the relationship with education that will allow for sharing the schooling/credentialing data, but little progress has been made so far. DVR is investigating how to obtain that data from additional sources. For education and training that are being paid for by DVR, that information is readily available and will be collected and reported. However, the level of detail that is being required does impose a burden of additional staff time to provide that data. The requirement to provide this data for FFY2015 will be attempted; however, it is doubtful that such data will be able to be matched to the previous three years of participants. Even if these data can be obtained, the work involved in collection and entering into the reporting system would be extremely burdensome.

The service to employers metric has yet to be determined; however, DVR has been collecting data on contacts, outreach, and training provided to employers during FFY2015. DVR expects that data will be a part of the required indicators of performance.

For FFY2015, DVR is attempting to obtain data showing which participants were participating in other DOLWD core programs.

Once final regulations have been published, the case management software has been updated, and staff have been trained on the new data collection elements, DVR will be in a position to negotiate appropriate target measures and ensure that infrastructure is in place for achieving those measures.

**7. Strategies for assisting other components of the statewide workforce development system in assisting individuals with disabilities.**

- Currently co-located, six AJCs.
- Increase collaboration and integrated service delivery with AJCs.
- Under Section 188, AJC Universal Access, ensure physical and communication accessibility, program accessibility, AT, and AJC staff training is adequate to serve the needs of individuals with disabilities.

**8. How the agency's strategies will be used to:**

**A. achieve goals and priorities by the State, consistent with the comprehensive needs assessment;**

- Build clear routes for students, youth and adults to careers.
  - o Sponsor transition camps throughout Alaska.
  - o Contract with CRPs to provide pre-employment transition services to students ages 16-21.
  - o Work with Special Education teachers to ensure appropriate referrals.
  - o Outreach to alternative schools and youth correctional facilities.
- Develop multiple paths for employers and workers.
  - o Increase outreach to employers.
  - o Work with BEST to survey needs and gaps for improved partnerships with employers.
  - o Develop training module to ensure staff captures and documents services to employers, once final regulations are published with definitions of "services."
- Support and grow learning opportunities for workers at all stages of life.
  - o Work closely and collaborate with AJCs to ensure a smooth referral process between each entity.
  - o Work closely with and collaborate with the other core programs to ensure a smooth referral process between programs.
  - o Continue to improve outreach to rural areas.
  - o Maximize training opportunities by collaborating with other core programs.
  - o Have representation on statewide boards like AWIB, the Alaska Mental Health Trust, and the Governor's Council on Disabilities and Special Education to ensure people with disabilities continue to have a voice in developing learning opportunities.
- Improve the efficiency and performance of Alaska's workforce system.

- o Collaborate with statewide data group to develop streamlined enrollment processes across all core programs.
- o Refine referral process to enhance co–investment opportunities between core programs.
- o Meet or exceed negotiated performance measure targets.

**B. support innovation and expansion activities; and**

- Develop portable, electronic training modules to provide information to employers, based on survey results of needs and gaps.
- Collaborate with statewide data group to develop streamlined enrollment processes across all core programs.
- Continue to provide funding to the State Vocational Rehabilitation Committee and the Statewide Independent Living Council.

**C. overcome identified barriers relating to equitable access to and participation of individuals with disabilities in the State VR Services Program and the State Supported Employment Services Program.**

The largest barrier to equitable access is due to the remoteness of Alaskan communities and limited resources. DVR partners with school districts, American Indian Vocational Rehabilitation Services programs, WIOA core programs, and other local partners in designated hub communities throughout Alaska. Through coordination of services with these partners, DVR is able to provide VR services to individuals living in rural Alaska. Additionally, DVR has a Rural Services Team that is consistently examining methods for improving service delivery to Alaskans with disabilities residing in rural and remote communities. DVR is also committed to continued efforts to develop CRP capacity in rural Alaska, as well as implementing innovative strategies using Assistive Technology to enhance and encourage continued consumer participation throughout the VR process.

**p. Evaluation and Reports of Progress: VR and Supported Employment Goals**

Describe:

**1. An evaluation of the extent to which the VR program goals described in the approved VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan for the most recently completed program year were achieved. The evaluation must:**

**A. Identify the strategies that contributed to the achievement of the goals.**

Goal 1 – Service Delivery: DVR will provide high quality services to all eligible individuals to assist them in obtaining employment consistent with their career goals.

Priority 1 – Transition services for youth with disabilities.

- Youth results.
  - o Rehabilitation rate for youth was 61.2 percent, which exceeds the federal S&I 1.2 of 55.8 percent.
  - o 22 percent of all applicants were youth.
  - o 22.8 percent (137) of all those individuals closed rehabilitated were youth at application.

- o 25.1 percent of all individuals participating in the VR program were youth at application.
- o For youth closed rehabilitated, the average hourly wage was \$11.12, well above the minimum wage of \$7.75, and the average number of hours worked at closure was 28.4 hours per week.
- o DVR continued its emphasis on youth transition services in FY2013 with the hiring of a new transition coordinator.
  - Strategies contributing to success:
    - o Counselors in Fairbanks, Anchorage, Kenai, and Wasilla assigned as Project Search Counselors in high schools.
    - o DVR transition team includes all VR counselors assigned to high schools, and the transition coordinator continues to meet every other month.
    - o DVR staff participate in bi-monthly Job Corp meetings.
    - o On-going efforts to maintain relationships with school district staff directly involved with students who experience a disability.
    - o Continued to explore and expand the use of social media to connect youth to VR services.
    - o Continued to educate school staff on DVR's mission as it relates to referrals.
    - o Updated website with tools including a video for special education teachers.
    - o Coordinated meetings with both OCS and DJJ.
    - o Spoke at statewide video conference with DJJ.
    - o Provided Discovery training to DJJ staff.

Priority 2. Remain off an Order of selection.

- Strategies contributing to success:
  - o DVR was able to maintain current staffing levels.
  - o DVR was able to take advantage of federal re-allotment funds.
  - o Aggressive filing of Social Security reimbursements.
  - o Close monitoring of expenditures and obligations.

Priority 3. Improving DVR services in rural Alaska. DVR remains committed to improving services to rural Alaska. The number of counselors assigned to travel on an itinerant basis has increased. Even so, providing services to rural Alaska continues to be a challenge for DVR. The 2013 Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment identified rural Alaska as an underserved area.

- Strategies contributing to success:

- o Continued partnerships with the AIVRS programs, the local AJCs, and other state agencies providing rural services.

- o VR counselors are assigned to hub communities in Western Alaska and to other rural communities.

- o Continued expansion of tools and resources that are not available in rural areas such as vocational evaluation tests/assessments for VR counselors to use when traveling.

- o DVR counselors participated in Rural Transition Camps.

Priority 4. Work with AJC partners to improve services in AJCs for people with disabilities.

- Strategies contributing to success:

- o AT services are available in AJCs.

- o DVR collaborated with the Division of Employment and Training Services (DETS) on the implementation of the DEI.

- o DVR worked with and supported DETS' effort for the AJCs to become employment networks as part of the Ticket to Work initiative.

- o Strong partnership between ETS and DVR to support services to individuals with disabilities in AJCs at all levels of both divisions.

- o DVR staff continues to make presentations on VR services at local AJCs.

Priority 5. Enhance the DVR service delivery system through the use of technology.

- Strategies contributing to success:

- o Expanded the use of "Survey Monkey" software for participant satisfaction surveys.

- o CRPs can now apply on-line.

- o Improved and expanded the functionality of DVR's intranet.

- o DVR's case-management software is updated to keep up with changing federal requirements.

- o Using participant preferences to communicate: text, email, etc.

Priority 6. Develop new CRPs and enhance delivery of CRP services.

- Strategies contributing to success:

- o CRP standards have been developed and implemented.

- o CRP application process has been revised with the minimum training, education, and experience requirements established for each service.

- o Local staff and regional managers work in the communities to establish new CRPs, particularly in rural, underserved areas.

- o Through UAA's Center for Human Development, new CRPs will be provided with training to obtain a National Certificate in Employment Services via distance delivery, which will allow for training to be provided to CRPs in rural and remote areas of Alaska.

Priority 7. Meet or exceed federal performance standards.

- DVR did not meet Standard 1.1, likely due to the new requirement to have cases in plan in 90 days. This requirement can force more unsuccessful closures. However, DVR met or exceeded every other standard.

- Strategies contributing to success:

- o Good communication with staff and Regional Managers.

- o Clear goals and guidelines. On-going training, particularly around WIOA.

- o Proactive planning for future WIOA requirements.

- o Feedback reports to managers and staff.

- o New program evaluation emphasis.

Priority 8. Enhance and streamline Ticket to Work processes.

- Strategies contributing to success:

- o The decision to purchase tracking software that will streamline and offer electronic processing of claims and tickets.

- o Dedicated staff.

Priority 9. Assess service delivery system for individuals who are blind or visually impaired to ensure on-going support.

- Strategies contributing to success:

- o DVR counselor assigned to Blind Services participates in community outreach on issue facing the blind and visually impaired.

- o All VR offices are able to provide services to the blind and visually impaired.

Goal 2 – Staff Development: DVR will recruit, employ, retain, and train the most qualified and highly skilled rehabilitation staff.

Priority 1. Recruit and retain qualified staff.

- Strategies contributing to success:

- o Utilizing training resources and the support of TACE and CCER.

- o Seeking training opportunities to help staff achieve CRC recertification and professional growth.

Priority 2. Provide on-going training opportunities.

- Strategies contributing to success:

- o Training activities occur on a continuous basis and many are delivered via teleconference and/or webinars.

- o DVR counselors utilize the services of medical/psychiatric consultants to regularly update their disability-related knowledge.

- o Evidence-based best practices and advances in the field are presented by the Institute on Rehabilitation Issues.

Priority 3. Support leadership development and succession planning.

- Strategies contributing to success:

- o Able to send staff to Emerging Leaders and the NRLI.

- o DVR worked with the TACE on succession planning.

- o Availability of training dollars.

Goal 3 – DVR will distinguish its role in the workforce system and will leverage partnerships to maximize resources and support for employment of individuals with disabilities.

Priority 1. Partner with employers to promote the hiring of people with disabilities.

- Strategies contributing to success:

- o Created Business Team with goals to strengthen ties and networking with employers.

- o Coordination and board participation with the Governor's Council on Disabilities and Special Education, the Alaska Mental Health Board, and the Community and Public Transportation Advisory Board.

Priority 2. Partner with other service providers to maximize resources and coordinate services especially for individuals who are in need of long-term supported employment services and employment services from community behavioral health providers.

- Strategies contributing to success:

- o Many opportunities to partner with statewide initiatives and hold board/committee positions on many of these initiatives.

**B. Describe the factors that impeded the achievement of the goals and priorities.**

Goal 1 – Service Delivery: DVR will provide high quality services to all eligible individuals to assist them in obtaining employment consistent with their career goals.

Priority 1 – Transition services for youth with disabilities. • Factors impeding progress: o Postsecondary students are often very transient. o Youth have different communication styles than more traditional methods (i.e., anecdotal information

suggests texting has become the preferred method of communication). DVR needs to determine the best way to communicate to reduce the number of youth who are lost after applying for VR services. o School district staff turnover.

Priority 2. Remain off an Order of selection.

- Factors impeding progress:

- o None.

Priority 3. Improving DVR services in rural Alaska. DVR remains committed to improving services to rural Alaska. The number of counselors assigned to travel on an itinerant basis has increased. Even so, providing services to rural Alaska continues to be a challenge for DVR. The 2013 Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment identified rural Alaska as an underserved area.

- Factors impeding progress:

- o Size of the state.

- o Lack of service in rural Alaska.

- o Lack of employment opportunities in rural Alaska.

- o Census data suggest an out–migration from rural Alaska to larger communities.

Priority 4. Work with AJC partners to improve services in AJCs for people with disabilities.

- Factors Impeding progress:

- o Staff turnover at AJCs.

- o AJC closures and reduced staff.

- o AJCs in rural communities are served by DVR counselors on an itinerant basis.

Priority 5. Enhance the DVR service delivery system through the use of technology.

- Factors impeding progress:

- o Statewide internet services and infrastructure limited in many smaller communities.

- o Reduced and limited resources.

- o Limited bandwidth.

Priority 6. Develop new CRPs and enhance delivery of CRP services.

- Factors impeding progress:

- o Difficult to retain CRPs.

- o New state accounting system has delayed payments for CRPs, many of whom are small operations.

- o Primary CRP in the state specializing in AT services cannot meet the demand.

Priority 7. Meet or exceed federal performance standards.

- DVR did not meet Standard 1.1, likely due to the new requirement to have cases in plan in 90 days. This requirement can force more unsuccessful closures. However, DVR met or exceeded every other standard.

- Factors impeding progress:

- o Stress of lower oil prices on entire State of Alaska structure and job market.

- o DVR cases becoming more complex, and increased I/DD and cognitive impairments among participants.

- o Lack of employers in rural areas.

Priority 8. Enhance and streamline Ticket to Work processes.

- Factors impeding progress:

- o None.

Priority 9. Assess service delivery system for individuals who are blind or visually impaired to ensure on-going support.

- Factors impeding progress:

- o The blind and visually impaired are a low incidence population, making it difficult for the Center to have an adequate customer base.

- o Keeping qualified staff employed at the Center.

- o Blind services in many cases are less expensive out-of-state.

Goal 2 – Staff Development: DVR will recruit, employ, retain, and train the most qualified and highly skilled rehabilitation staff.

Priority 1. Recruit and retain qualified staff.

Goal 2 – Staff Development: DVR will recruit, employ, retain, and train the most qualified and highly skilled rehabilitation staff.

- Factors impeding progress:

- o Educational institutions within Alaska lack Bachelor and Master level programs in Rehabilitation Counseling. University of Alaska offers academic programs in related disciplines, such as Associate and Bachelor degrees in Human Services and Psychology, as well as Master of Education degree in Counseling.

- o State's employment and pay policies make it difficult to recruit new staff.

Priority 2. Provide on-going training opportunities.

- Factors impeding progress:
  - o Lack of local training.

Priority 3. Support leadership development and succession planning.

- Factors impeding progress:
  - o Staff turnover.

Goal 3 – DVR will distinguish its role in the workforce system and will leverage partnerships to maximize resources and support for employment of individuals with disabilities.

Priority 1. Partner with employers to promote the hiring of people with disabilities.

- Factors impeding progress:
  - o DVR is a small agency with limited staff resources and does not always have the capacity to participate on all boards or initiatives.

Priority 2. Partner with other service providers to maximize resources and coordinate services especially for individuals who are in need of long-term supported employment services and employment services from community behavioral health providers.

- Factors impeding progress:
  - o Staff capacity.
  - o Shifting and non-aligned priorities.

**2. An evaluation of the extent to which the Supported Employment program goals described in the Supported Employment Supplement for the most recent program year were achieved. The evaluation must:**

**A. Identify the strategies that contributed to the achievement of the goals.**

- Continue efforts coordinated with the Governor’s Council on Disabilities and Special Education.
- Continue to work with the Center for Human Development and the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority to increase provider capacity for employment services and supports.
- Continue to increase use of the Provisional Hire process.

**B. Describe the factors that impeded the achievement of the goals and priorities.**

- Ongoing challenges include the level of funding for I/DD Home and Community Based Services. Funding to Senior and Disability Services (SDS) is being reduced while the cost of plans of care continue to increase. Due to these funding reductions, the waiver waitlist is expected to increase substantially. Confusion continues to exist between DVR staff and SDS service providers when determining the responsible entities for service costs. This has led to delays in SDS service

providers submitting plans of care that include the long-term supports necessary for the achievement of individual goals. In response to this impediment, DVR is working with SDS to develop a matrix of care that would outline responsibility of service costs. Additionally, DVR is now required to set aside 50% of Title VI, Part B funds for the provision of SE services to youth with disabilities. It is unknown how this mandate will impact achievement of goals and priorities of SE service provision, however, DVR is confident this mandate will be met.

### **3. The VR program's performance on the performance accountability indicators under section 116 of WIOA.**

DVR has not reported, nor historically collected data, on the six performance accountability indicators under section 116 of WIOA. DVR is unable to predict its future performance on any of the six performance indicators, including the SE program goals, until baseline targets have been established. DVR is working on data sharing agreements with DOL's Unemployment Insurance and Research and Analysis units in order to establish the data collection necessary for determining baseline indicators and future reporting. As a result, DVR has proposed all indicators as "To Be Determined" in Appendix C of the Combined State Plan, per instructions. Performance Measure 1: Employment Rate - 2nd quarter after exit DVR is working with DOL programs to develop a formal agreement to access the data that will be required for this indicator. It is unlikely this data will include those who are closed as federal employees or self-employment or out-of-state employment.

Performance Measure 2: Employment Rate - 4th quarter after exit DVR is working with DOL programs to develop a formal agreement to access the data that will be required for this indicator. It is unlikely this data will include those who are closed as federal employees or self-employment or out-of-state employment.

Performance Measure 3: Median Earnings - 2nd quarter after exit DVR is working with DOL programs to develop a formal agreement to access the data that will be required for this indicator. It is unlikely this data will include those who are closed as federal employees or self-employment or out-of-state employment.

Performance Measure 4: Credential Attainment Rate (within 1 year of exit) DVR will begin collecting this data July 1, 2016 in order to determine a baseline for this indicator. DVR anticipates it will be able to obtain level of education attained at closure and level of education attained at application; however, DVR is unclear as to the method to be used to collect this data up to one year after exit.

Performance Measure 5: Measureable Skills Gains DVR will require a formal definition of Measurable Skills Gain through final regulations in order to effectively report data on this indicator. Performance measure 6: Effectiveness in Serving Employers Although DVR does have a Business Employer Services Team to meet the needs of the dual-customer model, DVR will require the definition of "Effectiveness in Serving Employers" through final regulations prior to formulating a baseline.

### **4. How the funds reserved for innovation and expansion (I&E) activities were utilized.**

DVR sets aside a portion of funds allotted under Section 110 of the Act for development and implementation of innovative approaches to improve the provision of VR services, particularly for individuals with the most significant disabilities. For FFY2017 through FFY2020, DVR plans on using these funds in support of the SILC and the SVRC. The SVRC is a full and active partner in the development of agency policies, regulations and procedures. The SVRC collaborates with DVR to hold public meetings in different areas around the state each year. These meetings are another way for DVR to identify needs and to gather trend information for strategic planning. DVR also supports the SILC. The DVR Director is a member of the SVRS and the Community Rehabilitation Provider Specialist for DVR is a member of the SILC and participates in the development of the State Plan for Independent Living (SPIL).

Innovation and Expansion Activities for 2016

- Support of the SRC: \$ 80,450
- Support of the SILC: \$ 200,000

**q. Quality, Scope, and Extent of Supported Employment Services.**

Include the following:

**1. The quality, scope, and extent of supported employment services to be provided to individuals with the most significant disabilities, including youth with the most significant disabilities.**

Goals and Priorities for the FFY2017–FFY2020 supported employment (SE) program:

1. DVR will provide SE services to 200 eligible individuals.
2. DVR will set aside 50 percent of the SE award to provide services to youth with the most significant disabilities.
3. DVR will assist 50 SE eligible individuals to obtain competitive employment.
4. DVR will be able to provide all the identified required VR services to all SE eligible individuals.
5. Explore opportunities for CRPs and other entities to become employment networks to provide long–term supports.
6. Work with the community mental health system to increase and establish work–related programs within that system.
7. Emphasize community–based, integrated employment settings with the Governor’s Council on Disability and Special Education, the Alaska Mental Health Board, community behavioral health programs, and the Alaska Mental Health Trust to increase vocational programs within the mental health service delivery system.

FFY2015 SE Program Outcomes:

1. DVR provided VR services under an IPE to 257 SE eligible individuals, of which 79 were youth.
2. DVR successfully assisted 100 SE eligible individuals in obtaining competitive employment, of which 52 were youth.
3. DVR was not on an order of selection and had adequate funding and staff to provide SE services to all eligible individuals.

Strategies contributing to the achievement of the goals:

1. Adequate SE funding was available to DVR counselors.
2. DVR has continued to support and work with the DETS in the endeavor of AJCs to become Employment Networks.
3. DVR has continued to support Project SEARCH.
4. The Alaska Division of Senior and Disability Services has continued to work to reduce the wait list for support services.
5. DVR has continued to work with the community mental health system to increase and/or to reinstate work related programs within that system of providers.
6. Alaska passed Employment First legislation.

## 2. The timing of transition to extended services.

Under reauthorization, the timeframe to provide extended services for SE increased from 18 to 24 months for adults, and up to 48 months for youth with the most significant disabilities. DVR has not fully explored its ability to provide the new extended services timeframes, however, is working with the Division of Senior and Disability Services (DSDS) to determine best practices in order to ensure necessary extended services are provided to SE individuals.

### Certifications

Name of designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate **Alaska Division of Vocational Rehabilitation**

Name of designated State agency **Alaska Division of Vocational Rehabilitation**

Full Name of Authorized Representative: **John Cannon**

Title of Authorized Representative: **Director, Alaska Division of Vocational Rehabilitation**

### States must provide written and signed certifications that:

1. The **designated State agency or designated State unit (as appropriate) listed above** is authorized to submit the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan under title 1 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Rehabilitation Act), as amended by WIOA\*, and its supplement under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act.\*\* **Yes**
2. As a condition for the receipt of Federal funds under title I of the Rehabilitation Act for the provision of VR services, the **designated State agency listed above** agrees to operate and administer the State VR Services Program in accordance with the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan , the Rehabilitation Act, and all applicable regulations , policies, and procedures established by the Secretary of Education. Funds made available under section 111 of the Rehabilitation Act are used solely for the provision of VR services and the administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan; **Yes**
3. As a condition for the receipt of Federal funds under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act for supported employment services, the designated State agency agrees to operate and administer the State Supported Employment Services Program in accordance with the supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan\* , the Rehabilitation Act, and all applicable regulations , policies, and procedures established by the Secretary of Education. Funds made available under title VI are used solely for the provision of supported employment services and the administration of the supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan;\*\* **Yes**
4. The designated State agency and/or the designated State unit has the authority under State law to perform the functions of the State regarding the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement; **Yes**
5. The State legally may carry out each provision of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement. **Yes**
6. All provisions of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement are consistent with State law. **Yes**
7. The **Authorized Representative listed above** has the authority under State law to receive, hold, and disburse Federal funds made available under the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement; **Yes**

8. The **Authorized Representative listed above** has the authority to submit the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and the supplement for Supported Employment services; **Yes**

9. The agency that submits the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement has adopted or otherwise formally approved the plan and its supplement. **Yes**

### Footnotes

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#### Certification 1 Footnotes

\* Public Law 113-128.

\*\* Unless otherwise stated, "Rehabilitation Act" means the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by WIOA, signed into law on July 22, 2014.

#### Certification 2 Footnotes

\* All references in this plan to "designated State agency" or to "the State agency" relate to the agency identified in this paragraph.

\*\* No funds under title 1 of the Rehabilitation Act may be awarded without an approved VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan in accordance with section 101(a) of the Rehabilitation Act.

\*\*\* Applicable regulations, in part, include the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) in 34 CFR parts 76,77,79,81, and 82; 2 CFR part 200 as adopted by 2 CFR part 3485; and the State VR Services Program regulations.

#### Certification 3 Footnotes

\* No funds under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act may be awarded without an approved supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan in accordance with section 606(a) of the Rehabilitation Act.

\*\* Applicable regulations, in part, include the citations in \*\*\* under Certification 2 footnotes

### Additional Comments on the Certifications from the State

#### Certification Regarding Lobbying — Vocational Rehabilitation

Certification for Contracts, Grants, Loans, and Cooperative Agreements The undersigned certifies, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:

(1) No Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid, by or on behalf of the undersigned, to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of an agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with the awarding of any Federal contract, the making of any Federal grant, the making of any Federal loan, the entering into of any cooperative agreement, and the extension, continuation, renewal, amendment, or modification of any Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement.

(2) If any funds other than Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress,

or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," in accordance with its instructions.

(3) The undersigned shall require that the language of this certification be included in the award documents for all subawards at all tiers (including subcontracts, subgrants, and contracts under grants, loans, and cooperative agreements) and that all subrecipients shall certify and disclose accordingly. This certification is a material representation of fact upon which reliance was placed when this transaction was made or entered into. Submission of this certification is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required certification shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than \$10,000 and not more than \$100,000 for each such failure.

### **Statement for Loan Guarantees and Loan Insurance**

The undersigned states, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:

If any funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this commitment providing for the United States to insure or guarantee a loan, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," in accordance with its instructions. Submission of this statement is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required statement shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than \$10,000 and not more than \$100,000 for each such failure.

Applicant's Organization    **Alaska Division of Vocational Rehabilitation**

Full Name of Authorized Representative:    **John Cannon**

Title of Authorized Representative:    **Director, Alaska Division of Vocational Rehabilitation**

SF LLL Form – Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (only if applicable)  
(<http://www2.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/appforms.html>). If applicable, please print, sign, and email to MAT\_OCTAE@ed.gov

### **Certification Regarding Lobbying — Supported Employment**

Certification for Contracts, Grants, Loans, and Cooperative Agreements The undersigned certifies, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:

(1) No Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid, by or on behalf of the undersigned, to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of an agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with the awarding of any Federal contract, the making of any Federal grant, the making of any Federal loan, the entering into of any cooperative agreement, and the extension, continuation, renewal, amendment, or modification of any Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement.

(2) If any funds other than Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," in accordance with its instructions.

(3) The undersigned shall require that the language of this certification be included in the award documents for all subawards at all tiers (including subcontracts, subgrants, and contracts under grants, loans, and cooperative agreements) and that all subrecipients shall certify and disclose accordingly. This certification is a material representation of fact upon which reliance was placed when this transaction was made or entered into. Submission of this certification is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required certification shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than \$10,000 and not more than \$100,000 for each such failure.

#### **Statement for Loan Guarantees and Loan Insurance**

The undersigned states, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:

If any funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this commitment providing for the United States to insure or guarantee a loan, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," in accordance with its instructions. Submission of this statement is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required statement shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than \$10,000 and not more than \$100,000 for each such failure.

Applicant's Organization **Alaska Division of Vocational Rehabilitation**

Full Name of Authorized Representative: **John Cannon**

Title of Authorized Representative: **Director, Alaska Division of Vocational Rehabilitation**

SF LLL Form – Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (only if applicable)  
(<http://www2.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/appforms.html>).

#### **Assurances**

The designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate and identified in the State certifications included with this VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement, through signature of the authorized individual, assures the Commissioner of the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA), that it will comply with all of the requirements of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement, as set forth in sections 101(a) and 606 of the Rehabilitation Act. The individual authorized to submit the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement makes the following assurances: **The State Plan must provide assurances that:**

##### **1. Public Comment on Policies and Procedures:**

The designated State agency assures it will comply with all statutory and regulatory requirements for public participation in the VR Services Portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, as required by section 101(a)(16)(A) of the Rehabilitation Act.

##### **2. Submission of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and Its Supplement:**

The designated State unit assures it will comply with all requirements pertaining to the submission and revisions of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement for the State Supported Employment Services program, as required by sections 101(a)(1), (22), (23), and 606(a) of the Rehabilitation Act; section 102 of WIOA in the case of the submission of a unified plan; section 103 of WIOA in the case of a submission of a Combined State Plan; 34 CFR 76.140.

**3. Administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan:**

The designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate, assures it will comply with the requirements related to:

**a. the establishment of the designated State agency and designated State unit, as required by section 101(a)(2) of the Rehabilitation Act.**

**b. the establishment of either a State independent commission or State Rehabilitation Council, as required by section 101(a)(21) of the Rehabilitation Act.**

The designated State agency or designated State unit, as applicable **(B) has established a State Rehabilitation Council**

**c. consultations regarding the administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, in accordance with section 101(a)(16)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act.**

**d. the financial participation by the State, or if the State so elects, by the State and local agencies, to provide the amount of the non-Federal share of the cost of carrying out the VR program in accordance with section 101(a)(3).**

**e. the local administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, in accordance with section 101(a)(2)(A) of the Rehabilitation Act.**

The designated State agency allows for the local administration of VR funds **Yes**

**f. the shared funding and administration of joint programs, in accordance with section 101(a)(2)(A)(ii) of the Rehabilitation Act.**

The designated State agency allows for the shared funding and administration of joint programs: **Yes**

**g. statewideness and waivers of statewideness requirements, as set forth in section 101(a)(4) of the Rehabilitation Act.**

Is the designated State agency requesting or maintaining a waiver of statewideness for one or more services provided under the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan? See Section 2 of this VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan. **No**

**h. the descriptions for cooperation, collaboration, and coordination, as required by sections 101(a)(11) and (24)(B); and 606(b) of the Rehabilitation Act.**

**i. all required methods of administration, as required by section 101(a)(6) of the Rehabilitation Act .**

**j. the requirements for the comprehensive system of personnel development, as set forth in section 101(a)(7) of the Rehabilitation Act.**

**k. the compilation and submission to the Commissioner of statewide assessments, estimates, State goals and priorities, strategies, and progress reports, as appropriate, and as required by sections 101(a)(15), 105(c)(2), and 606(b)(8) of the Rehabilitation Act.**

**l. the reservation and use of a portion of the funds allotted to the State under section 110 of the Rehabilitation Act for the development and implementation of innovative approaches to expand and improve the provision of VR services to individuals with disabilities, particularly individuals with the most significant disabilities.**

m. the submission of reports as required by section 101(a)(10) of the Rehabilitation Act.

**4. Administration of the Provision of VR Services:**

The designated State agency, or designated State unit, as appropriate, assures that it will:

a. comply with all requirements regarding information and referral services in accordance with sections 101(a)(5)(D) and (20) of the Rehabilitation Act.

b. impose no duration of residence requirement as part of determining an individual's eligibility for VR services or that excludes from services under the plan any individual who is present in the State in accordance with section 101(a)(12) of the Rehabilitation Act .

c. provide the full range of services listed in section 103(a) of the Rehabilitation Act as appropriate, to all eligible individuals with disabilities in the State who apply for services in accordance with section 101(a)(5) of the Rehabilitation Act?

Agency will provide the full range of services described above    Yes

d. determine whether comparable services and benefits are available to the individual in accordance with section 101(a)(8) of the Rehabilitation Act.

e. comply with the requirements for the development of an individualized plan for employment in accordance with section 102(b) of the Rehabilitation Act.

f. comply with requirements regarding the provisions of informed choice for all applicants and eligible individuals in accordance with section 102(d) of the Rehabilitation Act.

g. provide vocational rehabilitation services to American Indians who are individuals with disabilities residing in the State, in accordance with section 101(a)(13) of the Rehabilitation Act.

h. comply with the requirements for the conduct of semiannual or annual reviews, as appropriate, for individuals employed either in an extended employment setting in a community rehabilitation program or any other employment under section 14(c) of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938, as required by section 101(a)(14) of the Rehabilitation Act.

i. meet the requirements in sections 101(a)(17) and 103(b)(2) of the Rehabilitation Act if the State elects to construct, under special circumstances, facilities for community rehabilitation programs

j. with respect to students with disabilities, the State,

i. has developed and will implement,

A. strategies to address the needs identified in the assessments; and

B. strategies to achieve the goals and priorities identified by the State, to improve and expand vocational rehabilitation services for students with disabilities on a statewide basis; and

ii. has developed and will implement strategies to provide pre-employment transition services (sections 101(a)(15) and 101(a)(25)).

**5. Program Administration for the Supported Employment Title VI Supplement:**

- a. The designated State unit assures that it will include in the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan all information required by section 606 of the Rehabilitation Act.
- b. The designated State agency assures that it will submit reports in such form and in accordance with such procedures as the Commissioner may require and collects the information required by section 101(a)(10) of the Rehabilitation Act separately for individuals receiving supported employment services under title I and individuals receiving supported employment services under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act.
- c. The designated state unit will coordinate activities with any other State agency that is functioning as an employment network under the Ticket to Work and Self-Sufficiency program under Section 1148 of the Social Security Act.

**6. Financial Administration of the Supported Employment Program:**

- a. The designated State agency assures that it will expend no more than 2.5 percent of the State's allotment under title VI for administrative costs of carrying out this program; and, the designated State agency or agencies will provide, directly or indirectly through public or private entities, non-Federal contributions in an amount that is not less than 10 percent of the costs of carrying out supported employment services provided to youth with the most significant disabilities with the funds reserved for such purpose under section 603(d) of the Rehabilitation Act, in accordance with section 606(b)(7)(G) and (H) of the Rehabilitation Act.
- b. The designated State agency assures that it will use funds made available under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act only to provide supported employment services to individuals with the most significant disabilities, including extended services to youth with the most significant disabilities, who are eligible to receive such services; and, that such funds are used only to supplement and not supplant the funds provided under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act, when providing supported employment services specified in the individualized plan for employment, in accordance with section 606(b)(7)(A) and (D), of the Rehabilitation Act.

**7. Provision of Supported Employment Services:**

- a. The designated State agency assures that it will provide supported employment services as defined in section 7(39) of the Rehabilitation Act.
- b. The designated State agency assures that:
  - i. the comprehensive assessment of individuals with significant disabilities conducted under section 102(b)(1) of the Rehabilitation Act and funded under title I of the Rehabilitation Act includes consideration of supported employment as an appropriate employment outcome, in accordance with the requirements of section 606(b)(7)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act
  - ii. an individualized plan for employment that meets the requirements of section 102(b) of the Rehabilitation Act, which is developed and updated with title I funds, in accordance with sections 102(b)(3)(F) and 606(b)(6)(C) and (E) of the Rehabilitation Act.

**Additional Comments on the Assurances from the State**

## VII. Program-Specific Requirements For Combined State Plan Partner Programs

States choosing to submit a Combined State Plan must provide information concerning the six core programs—the Adult Program, Dislocated Worker Program, Youth Program, Wagner-Peyser Act Program, Adult Education and Family Literacy Act Program, and the Vocational Rehabilitation Program— and also submit relevant information for any of the eleven partner programs it includes in its Combined State Plan. When a State includes a Combined State Plan partner program in its Combined State Plan, it need not submit a separate plan or application for that particular program. \* If included, Combined State Plan partner programs are subject to the “common planning elements” in Sections II and III of that document, where specified, as well as the program-specific requirements for that program (available on [www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov) for public comment). The requirements that a State must address for any of the partner programs it includes in its Combined State Plan are provided in this separate supplemental document. The Departments are not seeking comments on these program-specific requirements, which exist under separate OMB control numbers and do not represent requirements under WIOA. For further details on this overall collection, access the Federal eRulemaking Portal at <http://www.regulations.gov> by selecting Docket ID number ETA-2015-0006.

\* States that elect to include employment and training activities carried out under the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) Act (42 U.S.C. 9901 et seq.) under a Combined State Plan would submit all other required elements of a complete CSBG State Plan directly to the Federal agency that administers the program. Similarly, States that elect to include employment and training activities carried by the Department of Housing and Urban Development and programs authorized under section 6(d)(4) and 6(o) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 that are included would submit all other required elements of a complete State Plan for those programs directly to the Federal agency that administers the program.

### Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP)

At minimum, in the SCSEP stand-alone submission and the SCSEP portion of the Combined State Plan, States should comprehensively cover the following elements.

#### **(a) Economic Projections and Impact**

**1. Discuss long-term projections for jobs in industries and occupations in the State that may provide employment opportunities for older workers. (20 CFR 641.302(d))(May alternatively be discussed in the economic analysis section of strategic plan.)**

#### **Long-term projections for employment opportunities for older workers**

See the economic analysis section of the full strategic plan for the discussion on long-term projections for jobs in industries and occupations in the state that may provide employment opportunities. Regarding Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP), Alaska’s senior population continues to grow along with the needs of employers for older workers in health care and social assistance. Both the AWIB and the Alaska Commission on Aging (ACoA) develop strategies to keep pace with workforce needs through planning, advocacy, public awareness efforts, and collaboration with other organizations focused on the well-being of older Alaskans. The state recognizes the need for reliable older workers in the workforce and continues to collaborate with other key organizations including the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services, Senior and Disabilities Services, Governor’s Council on Disabilities and Special Education, Alaska Mental Health Trust, and the University of Alaska to help the SCSEP in Alaska. These key organizations utilize Alaska Job Centers (AJCs) for meeting areas, training needs, employment searches, individual employment plan development, and general communication at partner meetings. Positive collaboration continues with other state agencies to deliver training and employment services to seniors.

**2. Discuss how the long-term job projections discussed in the economic analysis section of strategic plan relate to the types of unsubsidized jobs for which SCSEP participants will be trained and the types of skill training to be provided. (20 CFR 641.302(d))**

**Long-term projections for unsubsidized jobs for SCSEP participants**

The State of Alaska is focused on developing the state’s resource-based economy and maximizing its human capital. This is accomplished with ongoing collaborative engagement of industries, state universities, vocational educational centers, organized labor, economic development representatives, educators, tribal entities, community and faith based organizations, as well as regional and local officials. Currently, about 76 percent of the SCSEP participants are accepting employment in office and administrative services, 11 percent in community and social services, 11 percent in food preparation and service, and the remaining 2 percent are in miscellaneous sectors. Alaska employers continue to hire older workers with a firm foundation of both basic employability skills and specific technical knowledge for occupations at all levels of education and training. The program emphasis is on training that results in the attainment of postsecondary credentials or industry-recognized certifications that strengthen individual employment-based training.

Alaska is aware of the need to improve the training and preparation that individuals receive for jobs that are in demand. Strategies include identifying competencies that workers must have to do their jobs effectively, helping participants build specific skills, and assessing their work to ensure that they have the capacity to perform duties or tasks competently. A critical key to working with other agencies is collaboration with stakeholders to leverage their collective public and private sector assets and resources in order to devise strategies that focus on infrastructure, investment, and talent development.

**3. Discuss current and projected employment opportunities in the State (such as by providing information available under §15 of the Wagner-Peyser Act (29 U.S.C. 491-2) by occupation), and the types of skills possessed by eligible individuals. (20 CFR 641.325(c))**

**Current and projected employment opportunities**

On average over 50 percent of all openings are in health care, community and social services, personal care and service, sales, production occupations/industries, food preparation and serving, education, training, and transportation and material moving occupations. Other older workers’ employment opportunities include management, professional, and information occupations in the state.

Each week, a distribution list of available jobs is sent to all Older Worker Specialists. From this job available list, case managers are able to encourage job ready participants to apply for specific jobs. In addition, once participants have posted a skills based resume in ALEXsys, they can receive a system-generated notification of new job postings that require skills similar to those reflected in their resume. The types of skills that need to be developed and possessed by work ready SCSEP individuals are verbal communication skills, strong work ethic, teamwork skills, analytical skills, computer skills, and initiative.

**(b) Service Delivery and Coordination**

States must:

**1. Provide a description of actions to coordinate SCSEP with other programs**

This may alternatively be discussed in the State strategies section of the strategic plan, but regardless of placement in document, must include:

**(A) Actions to coordinate activities of SCSEP grantees with WIOA title I programs, including plans for using the WIOA one-stop delivery system and its partners to serve individuals aged 55 and older. (20 CFR 641.302(g), 641.325(e))**

## **Coordination with WIOA Title I and One-Stops**

SCSEP is co-located within the DOLWD Division of Employment and Training Services (DETS) and works closely with its integrated partners to ensure that participants understand that there are many services available from the AJC. SCSEP has developed an integrated system of case management plans that are braided to address the requirement of grant funds and needs of participants and employers. The case managers work with participants and employment service partners to develop individual training plans. SCSEP also works with WIOA and other job training programs to co-enroll participants in career services that provide labor market information, job listings, information on partner programs, and individualized services such as comprehensive and specialized assessments, development of individual employment plans, career counseling, career planning, or workforce preparation activities. Other training services may include occupational skills training, community service work-based training, or customized training.

### **(B) Actions to coordinate activities of SCSEP grantees with the activities to be carried out in the State under the other titles of the OAA. (20 CFR 641.302(h))**

#### **Coordination with OAA**

DOLWD manages Title V for senior employment; planned actions to coordinate activities include following labor directives and guidance in developing the workforce needs. SCSEP is aligned with the state's commitment to economic development. Workforce development programs rely on the broad strategic policy decisions of the AWIB and the Alaska Commission on Aging (ACoA) to clarify the relationship between programs and particular economic development efforts.

SCSEP's service delivery plan and coordination includes a strong working relationship with other OAA partner agencies in providing services to those most in need. While multiple state agencies provide services to Alaska seniors, the Department of Health & Social Services (DHSS) is the State of Alaska's designated state unit on aging. The state is a single planning and service unit and there are no Area Agencies on Aging within the State of Alaska.

SCSEP has strong working relationships with the other programs authorized by the Older Americans Act (OAA) operating in Alaska. The state SCSEP coordinator sits on the UAA Community & Technical College's Plus 50 Bridge to College & Careers Instruction Program group and works directly with the ACoA to plan and coordinate services with all other OAA programs to better support not only employment, but also health, wellness, and independence for seniors.

For example, each quarter the state's SCSEP coordinator meets with other state directors and coordinators to ensure that SCSEP activities statewide are leveraging partnerships with Aging and Disability Resource Centers, Senior Home and Community Based programs, Nutrition, Transportation, Support Services, Adult Day Service, National Family Caregiver Support programs, the Alzheimer's Disease and Related Disorder Education and Support programs, Senior Residential Services, Real Choice Systems Change services, Medicare Information services, Legal Assistance, Alaska Legal Services, Consumer Choice, Medicaid Waiver programs, Nursing Facility Transition programs, Health and Disease Prevention programs, Adult Protective Services, etc. Referrals are made to all appropriate services to assist the participants as needed. These quarterly meetings are held in different locations of the state to ensure ongoing collaboration with key organizations.

### **(C) Actions to coordinate SCSEP with other private and public entities and programs that provide services to older Americans, such as community and faith-based organizations, transportation programs, and programs for those with special needs or disabilities. (20 CFR 641.302(i))**

#### **Coordination with other entities**

The state is currently working with many host sites and leveraging resources to ensure successful outcomes for the SCSEP participants that will foster individual economic self-sufficiency and promote useful opportunities in community service activities. The state also provides a wide range of programs and services to seniors, spanning multiple divisions and other private and public entities. Funds from the OAA are leveraged with WIOA, other federal programs, and resources from the

Alaska State Employment and Training Program (STEP). The program provides local training in priority industries by placing seniors in community work-based training sites at non-profit, faith-based organizations, transportation and public facilities, governmental offices, senior centers, schools, and hospitals, to name a few.

**(D) Actions to coordinate SCSEP with other labor market and job training initiatives. (20 CFR 641.302(j))**

**Coordination with other initiatives**

SCSEP continues to coordinate with other programs, initiatives, and entities in an ongoing effort to train Alaska's workforce and to maximize its human capital. These ongoing partnerships have yielded important new participant services and resources for older adults with gaps in work history and limited educational experience who wish to enter or re-enter the workforce.

**(E) Actions the State will take to ensure that SCSEP is an active partner in the one-stop delivery system and the steps the State will take to encourage and improve coordination with the one-stop delivery system. (20 CFR 641.335)**

**Partner with One-Stop System**

SCSEP is managed by DOLWD's Division of Employment and Training Services (DETS), which administers Wagner-Peyser funded employment services and delivers WIOA programs in the state's 17 AJCs. SCSEP has been fully integrated into the One-Stop system for more than 10 years and the close relationship between WIOA, Wagner-Peyser, and SCSEP ensures access to employment services to both individuals and communities throughout the state.

**(F) Efforts the State will make to work with local economic development offices in rural locations.**

**Work with economic development**

Alaska's SCSEP continues to reach out to and engage employers to develop and promote opportunities to SCSEP participants by leveraging the AJC business connection services, working directly with employers, and by continuing to reach out to Alaska Native entities. Alaska Native organizations are very important and provide many employment opportunities in rural Alaska. The state SCSEP program targets Alaska Native employers such as regional hospitals and tribal offices to create host agency agreements for participant training. Many tribal organizations have health care, tourism, and natural resource development opportunities for seniors located in rural areas.

**2. Describe the long-term strategy for engaging employers to develop and promote opportunities for the placement of SCSEP participants in unsubsidized employment. (20 CFR 641.302(e)) (Alternately, the State may discuss this in the State strategies section of strategic plan if submitting a Combined Plan.)**

**Long-term strategy for engaging employers**

Alaska remains focused on SCSEP service delivery that is integrated into the state's workforce investment system and the senior service system. Skilled AJC and project operator staff provide quality services to older workers, and employers have reported high satisfaction levels with SCSEP participants who have entered unsubsidized employment with them. Employers have reported that they have great work habits, problem solving skills, the ability to work with others, and adaptability to change with business needs. Alaska's long-term strategy, therefore, is to stay the course and continue to reach out to workforce development partners, the business community, and senior service partners to ensure successful outcomes for older workers and Alaskan businesses alike.

### **3. Describe the long-term strategy for serving minorities under SCSEP. (20 CFR 641.302 (c))**

#### **Long-term strategy for serving minority individuals**

The long-term strategy remains the same: to continue to help all those who qualify for SCSEP services. During state fiscal year 2015, SCSEP served 178 older Alaskans who worked in service to the general community and 133 participants who worked in service to the elderly community. The program served an unduplicated 296 clients. Fifty-nine percent of participants were female, and forty-one percent were male. Eighty-two percent of clients were under age 65, and 18 percent were age 65 and older. Forty-four percent of participants identified their race as American Indian, Alaska Native, Asian, Black, Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, or mixed race. Nine percent of participants had less education than a high school diploma or equivalent, while forty-six percent had a high school diploma or equivalent, and 46 percent had some postsecondary education, including 14 percent with a bachelor's degree or advanced college degree. Eighty-four percent of the participants had a family income at or below the poverty level. Thirty-eight percent were individuals with documented disabilities. Fifty-eight percent were individuals with poor employment history or prospects. Thirty-five percent were homeless, two percent were displaced homemakers, and 20 percent were veterans or spouses of veterans.

### **4. List needed community services and the exact places where these services are most needed. Specifically, the plan must address the needs and location(s) of those individuals most in need of community services and the groups working to meet their needs. (20 CFR 641.330)**

#### **Community services needs**

Alaska's population in 2013 was 735,132. Nearly 38.5 percent of the state's residents lived in Anchorage, which is one of three urban areas of Alaska. Alaska Natives/American Indians represent approximately 14.7 percent of Alaska's residents and are a significant segment of the population in rural villages and communities. In 2013, the senior population overall was 158,909, or 21.6 percent of the state's population. In addition to Alaska Natives, other types of seniors who are most in need of the SCSEP program are widowed and divorced persons, minorities, high-school dropouts, veterans, persons not eligible for Social Security benefits, persons with a limited work history, and seniors on fixed low incomes. The SCSEP program operates where there is the greatest need relative to participants, host agencies, and employers. SCSEP-funded services remain available statewide via the AJCs and sub-recipients. The areas with the greatest need for SCSEP-funded services are Anchorage, Fairbanks, Matanuska-Susitna, Kenai Peninsula, and Juneau because many seniors relocate to these regions to be near medical care. Regional economic challenges facing older Alaskans include income insecurity, the need for more reliable access to health care and long-term care supports, an anticipated physician shortage, absence of geriatric education among providers, a shortage of sufficient senior services and health care services workforce to meet future needs, the need for emergency preparedness for a wide range of potential disasters, and soaring energy and utility costs.

### **5. Describe the long-term strategy to improve SCSEP services, including planned long-term changes to the design of the program within the State, and planned changes in the use of SCSEP grantees and program operators to better achieve the goals of the program. This may include recommendations to the Department as appropriate. (20 CFR 641.302(k))**

#### **Long-term strategies for improvement**

The long-term strategies meeting to improve program goals and services offered SCSEP an opportunity to work directly with its partners in education, industry, workforce development, economic development, and the public. SCSEP attests that it and its partners have been involved in the WIOA joint planning and policy development process. The WIOA Combined Plan for Alaska emphasizes sector partnerships, career pathways, cross-program data and measurement, and job-driven investments with workforce partners. Three public meetings were held in November of 2015 in Juneau, Fairbanks, and Anchorage to provide information and seek feedback from the public to help develop Alaska's WIOA Combined Plan. Alaska's plan stresses the importance of education, training, credentials, and skill attainment. The Combined Plan addresses economic self-sufficiency of workers by aligning workforce development with education and economic development.

## Needs assessment

In preparation for development of this Combined State Plan, the ACoA began its needs assessment process in 2013 with the first of six elder/senior listening sessions held in communities across Alaska. In 2014, ACoA's survey of Alaskans age 55 years and older drew nearly 2,300 responses, providing insight on topics ranging from health care to housing, from finances to senior services. Many responders also included open-ended comments on issues of concern to them, sharing their insights and ideas for solutions. The ACoA also surveyed service providers about their perceptions of senior needs now and within the next five years, hearing from 85 providers in Alaska. Throughout the needs assessment process, a number of concerns about financial security were raised. During the elder listening sessions, input was heard about issues ranging from the value of living a subsistence lifestyle to worries about the cost of living. The senior survey showed financial security as the 2 ranking concern of seniors in Alaska. The long-term strategy to improve SCSEP services is to include discussion with participants on financial and work incentives, to provide information on Social Security 1619b Medicaid While Working, to explore specialized work incentives through programs including Ticket to Work, Impairment-Related Work Expenses, Blind Work Expenses, and Plan to Achieve Self-Support, and to provide referrals to those in need of these services. Alaska continues to need older workers to help maintain a reliable, dedicated workforce and provide a significant cost savings for both the short and long term, as workers are in demand throughout Alaska's economy, across all industries and in all occupations. Alaska is a great place to work and live, with unlimited potential.

### **6. Describe a strategy for continuous improvement in the level of performance for SCSEP participants' entry into unsubsidized employment, and to achieve, at a minimum, the levels specified in OAA Section 513(a)(2)(E)(ii). (20 CFR 641.302(f))**

#### **Continuous improvement**

The State's strategy includes collaboration and integration into the state's larger workforce development system and by using the SCSEP Performance and Results QPR System (SPARQ) and other program data to drive decisions on services offered and industries targeted, to ensure continuous improvement. Incorporating these elements into program planning and operations prepares SCSEP participants for self-sustaining employment and economic stability after program exit.

#### **Common measures goals**

SCSEP's common measures goals for federal fiscal year 2015 are:

1. Entered Employment: 57 percent;
2. Employment Retention: 72 percent;
3. Service Level: 175 percent;
4. Service to Most in Need is evidenced by average number of barriers at least 2.54; and
5. Average Earnings: Increase average wages from zero to \$8,506.

#### **(c) Location and Population Served, including Equitable Distribution**

States must:

##### **1. Describe the localities and populations for which projects of the type authorized by title V are most needed. (20 CFR 641.325 (d))**

## Equitable distribution

Equitable distribution is based on census information and federally approved slots to the regions. It is also dependent upon capacity within a region or community to deliver senior services. Enrollment priority is given to veterans and qualified spouses, then to individuals who are over 65, have a disability, have low literacy skills or limited English proficiency, reside in a rural area, are homeless or at risk of homelessness, have low employment prospects, or have failed to find employment after using services of the Alaska Job Centers (AJCs).

## Localities and populations

Alaska has the fastest growing senior population rate in the U.S. Although people in the state are living longer and many are active, this comes with a rise in the number of seniors with dementia, chronic health conditions, and behavioral health needs. Alaska’s total senior population is expected to grow very rapidly in the next 15 years because of the size of the baby boomer population, as well as historical trends in migration and longevity. The reason behind the rapid expansion of Alaska’s senior population lies in the events of the 1970s - the construction of the Trans-Alaska Pipeline and the economic boom that oil development brought about, drawing thousands of young people to the state for newly created jobs in every sector. Those young people established homes and families, and grew extremely fond of Alaska’s lifestyle. Many of them stayed on for their entire working lives, and are now choosing to retire in the state as well, representing a shift in a long-term pattern where most seniors left the state upon retirement.

**2. List the cities and counties where the SCSEP project will take place. Include the number of SCSEP authorized positions and indicate if and where the positions changed from the prior year.**

FIPS	Census Area	Approved Slots	Modified Slots	PY 2014 Enrollment	Over/Under Enrolled
2013	Aleutians	3	2	0	(2)
2016	Aleutians	2	1	0	(1)
2020	Anchorage	56	44	104	60
2050	Bethel	8	6	1	(5)
2060	Bristol Bay	1	1	0	(1)
2068	Denali	1	1	0	(1)
2070	Dillingham	2	2	0	(2)
2090	Fairbanks North Star	16	12	63	51
2100	Haines	1	1	2	1
2105	Hoonah–Angoon	2	2	3	1
2110	Juneau	7	5	24	19
2122	Kenai	21	16	44	28
2130	Ketchikan	5	4	0	(4)
2150	Kodiak	2	2	0	(2)
2164	Lake and Peninsula	1	1	0	(1)
2170	Matanuska–Susitna	26	20	37	17
2180	Nome	6	5	1	(4)
2185	North	3	2	0	(2)
2188	Northwest	3	2	0	(2)
2195	Petersburg	1	1	1	0
2198	Prince of Wales–Hyder	2	2	2	0
2220	Sitka	3	2	1	(1)
2230	Skagway	1	1	0	(1)
2240	Southeast	3	2	0	(2)

FIPS	Census Area	Approved Slots	Modified Slots	PY 2014 Enrollment	Over/Under Enrolled
<b>2013</b>	Aleutians	3	2	0	(2)
2261	Valdez–Cordova	2	2	0	(2)
2270	Kusilvak (Wade)	4	3	0	(3)
2275	Wrangell	2	2	0	(2)
2282	Yakutat	1	1	0	(1)
2290	Yukon–Koyukuk	5	4	5	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>190</b>	<b>190</b>	<b>149</b>	<b>288</b>	<b>139</b>

**3. Describe any current slot imbalances and proposed steps to correct inequities to achieve equitable distribution.**

**Imbalances**

The state continues to reach out to all regions. All regions are open for enrollment. The state coordinator oversees these regions, working directly with AJC and its partners. Alaska has not turned down or wait-listed any eligible participant for services.

**4. Explain the State’s long-term strategy for achieving an equitable distribution of SCSEP positions within the State that:**

**A. moves positions from over-served to underserved locations within the State in compliance with 20 CFR 641.365.**

**Moving positions**

SCSEP services are available in all regions, and the program is fully integrated into all AJCs. The program continues to advertise at its AJC team meetings, informing partners and the public that the SCSEP program exists statewide and what this program can do for older Alaskans and employers. This proactive approach empowers the target population to connect with AJCs or sub-recipients to help this program achieve the equitable distribution requirements statewide.

**B. equitably serves both rural and urban areas.**

**Rural and urban**

Alaska’s SCSEP is and will continue to be available to all eligible participants statewide. The state’s long term strategies are: 1) to award sub-recipients who are capable project operators in the most populated areas of the state when such a project operator is available; 2) to operate the program in the most populated areas with DOLWD staff in AJCs where a capable project operator is not available; and 3) to continue to make program services available to both urban and rural areas of the state through the 17 AJCs. Alaska’s SCSEP intends to continue to ensure a wait list does not exist and those who are eligible for services receive the assistance they need to enter the program.

**C. serves individuals afforded priority for service under 20 CFR 641.520. (20 CFR 641.302(a), 641.365, 641.520)**

**Waitlist**

Currently, the State of Alaska does not have a waitlist and is able to help all those requesting services. Alaska’s selection of participants is based on the Priority of Service (POS) and income eligibility requirements. The state understands that pursuant to regulations prescribed by the Labor Secretary, an eligible individual shall have priority for the community service employment and other authorized activities provided under the OAA Amendments of 2006, Title V - SCSEP if the individual is 65 years of age or older or:

(A) has a disability;

(B) has limited English proficiency or low literacy skills;

(C) resides in a rural area;

(D) is a veteran;

(E) has low employment prospects;

(F) has failed to find employment after using services provided under title I of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act; or

(G) is homeless or at risk for homelessness.

**5. Provide the ratio of eligible individuals in each service area to the total eligible population in the State. (20 CFR 641.325(a))**

**Eligible populations**

The largest population areas are Anchorage, Fairbanks, Matanuska–Susitna, Kenai Peninsula, and Juneau. Areas with the highest percentages of population age 55 and over include Anchorage (38.27 percent), Matanuska–Susitna (13.27 percent), Fairbanks (11.84 percent), Kenai Peninsula (10.78 percent), and Juneau (5.03 percent). The remaining census areas have small percentages of population 55 and over.

**6. Provide the relative distribution of eligible individuals who:**

**A. Reside in urban and rural areas within the State**

61% of the enrolled participants reside in an urban area and 39% of the enrolled participants reside in a rural area.

**B. Have the greatest economic need**

84% of the enrolled participants are at or below the poverty level.

69% of the enrolled participants are receiving public assistance.

35% of the enrolled participants are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

20% of the enrolled participants are veterans or eligible spouse of a veteran.

**C. Are minorities**

44% of the enrolled participants are minorities.

**D. Are limited English proficient.**

3% of the enrolled participants have limited English proficiency.

4% of the enrolled participants have low literacy skills.

**E. Have the greatest social need. (20 CFR 641.325(b))**

58% of the enrolled participants have low employment prospects.

20% of the enrolled participants are veterans or eligible spouse of a veteran.

38% of the enrolled participants have disabilities.

4% of the enrolled participants are individuals age 75 and over.

**7. Describe the steps taken to avoid disruptions to service for participants to the greatest extent possible, when positions are redistributed, as provided in 20 CFR 641.365; when new Census or other reliable data becomes available; or when there is over-enrollment for any other reason. (20 CFR 641.325(i), 641.302(b))**

**Disruptions**

Disruptions in service have not historically been a problem in Alaska’s SCSEP. However, if disruptions in service occur, the program will use current SCSEP program performance reporting system data, including updated Census information, and trends to determine where positions need to be to meet the demand for services. In order to prevent disruption in service, both the AJCs and SCSEP sub-recipients would assist those participants affected. If disruption of services were to occur, meetings with affected sub-recipients would be scheduled to outline possible scenarios for minimizing potential impacts. Budget revisions could be made to sub-recipient funding allocations to alleviate under- or over-funding. This process also occurs at mid-year to adjust regions with the greatest needs to those regions that do not need the funding awarded. This effort, if necessary, would occur immediately, depending on the specific situation. The determination of where positions need to be relocated and how urgent the situation is will be the basis for the state’s decisions. In order to address the issues of disruption of service, teleconferences with all affected parties would be scheduled to discuss the issues and to keep all partners informed.

**SCSEP Assurances**

The State Plan must include assurances that where SCSEP is included in the Combined Workforce Plan, the State has established a written policy and procedure to obtain advice and recommendations on the State Plan from:

Representatives of the State and area agencies on aging; **Yes**

State and local boards under WIOA; **Yes**

Public and private nonprofit agencies and organizations providing employment services, including each grantee operating a SCSEP project within the State, except as provided under section 506(a)(3) of OAA and 20 CFR 641.320(b); **Yes**

Social service organizations providing services to older individuals; **Yes**

Grantees under Title III of OAA; **Yes**

Affected Communities; **Yes**

Unemployed older individuals; **Yes**

Community-based organizations serving older individuals; **Yes**

Business organizations; and **Yes**

Labor organizations. **Yes**

#### **State Comments on SCSEP Assurances**

In collaboration with many partners over a 19-month statewide planning process, including the Alaska Commission on Aging and the Alaska Workforce Investment Board, SCSEP staff helped to develop the Alaska State Plan for Senior Services to render a guide for the provision of senior services over the next four years and to satisfy a federal requirement of all states receiving Older American Act funds for their services. Alaska's SCSEP Plan, therefore, attests to the required active engagement with public and private stakeholders to achieve the goal of ensuring Alaska seniors can live safely and independently in their homes and communities as long as possible. In preparation for development of this State Plan, the Commission conducted a Senior Survey (2,280 respondents age 55 years and older), a Senior Provider Survey (85 provider respondents), and six Elder-Senior Listening Sessions (128 public member participants) statewide.

# Appendix 1. Performance Goals for the Core Programs

Include the State's expected levels of performance relating to the performance accountability indicators based on primary indicators of performance described in section 116(b)(2)(A) of WIOA.

## Instructions: Performance Goals for the Core Programs

Each State submitting a Unified or Combined Plan is required to identify expected levels of performance for each of the primary indicators of performance for the first two years covered by the plan. The State is required to reach agreement with the Secretary of Labor, in conjunction with the Secretary of Education on state adjusted levels of performance for the indicators for each of the first two years of the plan.

**Table 1. Employment (Second Quarter after Exit)**

Program	PY 2016 Proposed/ Expected Level	PY 2016 Negotiated/ Adjusted Level	PY 2017 Proposed/ Expected Level	PY 2017 Negotiated/ Adjusted Level
Adults	80.00	68.70	80.00	71.00
Dislocated Workers	81.00	70.00	82.00	72.00
Youth	57.00	53.00	58.00	54.00
Adult Education	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Wagner-Peyser	56.00	55.00	56.00	58.00
Vocational Rehabilitation</	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline

**Table 2. Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit)**

Program	PY 2016 Proposed/ Expected Level	PY 2016 Negotiated/ Adjusted Level	PY 2017 Proposed/ Expected Level	PY 2017 Negotiated/ Adjusted Level
Adults	82.00	68.90	82.00	71.00
Dislocated Workers	90.00	70.00	91.00	71.00
Youth	58.00	55.00	58.00	56.00
Adult Education	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Wagner-Peyser	79.00	58.50	79.00	61.50
Vocational Rehabilitation	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline

**Table 3. Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit)**

Program	PY 2016 Proposed/ Expected Level	PY 2016 Negotiated/ Adjusted Level	PY 2017 Proposed/ Expected Level	PY 2017 Negotiated/ Adjusted Level
Adults	10,000.00	7,400.00	10,500.00	7,600.00
Dislocated Workers	12,500.00	9,500.00	13,000.00	9,700.00
Youth	2,000.00	Baseline	2,500.00	Baseline
Adult Education	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Wagner-Peyser	9,000.00	5,749.00	9,000.00	6,750.00
Vocational Rehabilitation	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline

**Table 4. Credential Attainment Rate**

Program	PY 2016 Proposed/ Expected Level	PY 2016 Negotiated/ Adjusted Level	PY 2017 Proposed/ Expected Level	PY 2017 Negotiated/ Adjusted Level
Adults	62.00	62.00	63.00	63.00
Dislocated Workers	62.00	62.00	63.00	63.00
Youth	62.00	49.00	62.00	50.00
Adult Education	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Wagner-Peyser	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Vocational Rehabilitation	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline

**Table 5. Measureable Skill Gains**

Program	PY 2016 Proposed/ Expected Level	PY 2016 Negotiated/ Adjusted Level	PY 2017 Proposed/ Expected Level	PY 2017 Negotiated/ Adjusted Level
Adults	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Dislocated Workers	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Youth	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Adult Education	37.00	36.00	37.00	37.00
Wagner-Peyser	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Vocational Rehabilitation	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline

**Table 6. Effectiveness in Serving Employers**

Program	PY 2016 Proposed/ Expected Level	PY 2016 Negotiated/ Adjusted Level	PY 2017 Proposed/ Expected Level	PY 2017 Negotiated/ Adjusted Level
Adults	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Dislocated Workers	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Youth	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Adult Education	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Wagner-Peyser	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Vocational Rehabilitation	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline

**Table 7. Combined Federal Partner Measures**

Measure	PY 2016 Proposed/ Expected Level	PY 2016 Negotiated/ Adjusted Level	PY 2017 Proposed/ Expected Level	PY 2017 Negotiated/ Adjusted Level
SCSEP Entered Employment	57.00		57.00	
SCSEP Employment Retention	72.00		72.00	
SCSEP Service Level	175.00		175.00	
SCSEP Most in Need Barriers	2.00		2.00	
SCSEP Average Earnings	8,506.00		8,506.00	

## Appendix 2. Other State Attachments

### Appendix 2.1 Acronyms

Acronym	Definition
<b>ABE</b>	Adult Basic Education
<b>ABLE</b>	Achieving A Better Life Experience Act
<b>ACA</b>	Alaska Construction Academy
<b>ACoA</b>	Alaska Commission on Aging
<b>ACPE</b>	Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education
<b>ACRE</b>	Association of Community Rehabilitation Educators
<b>ADA</b>	Americans with Disabilities Act
<b>AEFLA</b>	Adult Education and Family Literacy Act
<b>AIEI</b>	Alaska Integrated Employment Initiative
<b>AIVRS</b>	American Indian Vocational Rehabilitation Services
<b>AJC</b>	Alaska Job Center
<b>ALEXsys</b>	Alaska Labor Exchange System
<b>ANCET</b>	Alaska Native Coalition for Employment and Training
<b>ANCSA</b>	Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act
<b>ANSEP</b>	Alaska Native Science and Engineering Program
<b>AOP</b>	Agricultural Outreach Plan
<b>APICC</b>	Alaska Process Industry Careers Consortium
<b>ARDOR</b>	Alaska Regional Development Organization
<b>ASL</b>	American Sign Language
<b>AT</b>	Assistive Technology
<b>ATLA</b>	Assistive Technologies of Alaska
<b>ATOP</b>	Alaska Transition Outreach Project
<b>AVTEC</b>	Alaska Vocational Technical Education Center
<b>AWARE</b>	DVR's case management software
<b>AWIB</b>	Alaska Workforce Investment Board
<b>BEP</b>	Business Enterprise Program
<b>BEST</b>	Business Employment Services Team
<b>CCER</b>	Center for Continuing Education in Rehabilitation at University of Washington
<b>CCR</b>	College and Career Readiness
<b>CEF</b>	Construction Education Foundation
<b>COBRA</b>	Continuation of employee health care benefits
<b>CRC</b>	Certified Rehabilitation Counselor
<b>CRP</b>	Community Rehabilitation Program
<b>CSBG</b>	Community Services Block Grant
<b>CSNA</b>	Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment
<b>CSPD</b>	Comprehensive System of Personnel Development
<b>CSTS</b>	Career Support and Training Services
<b>CTE</b>	Career and Technical Education
<b>CWIC</b>	Community Work Incentives Coordinator
<b>DBH</b>	Division of Behavioral Health

<b>Acronym</b>	<b>Definition</b>
<b>DBP</b>	Division of Business Partnerships
<b>DCCED</b>	Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development
<b>DCRA</b>	Division of Community and Regional Affairs DCCED
<b>DEI</b>	Disability Employment Initiative
<b>DETS</b>	Division of Employment and Training Services
<b>DHSS</b>	Department of Health & Social Services
<b>DJJ</b>	Division of Juvenile Justice
<b>DOC</b>	Department of Corrections
<b>DOLWD</b>	Department of Labor and Workforce Development
<b>DPA</b>	Division of Public Assistance
<b>DRC</b>	Disability Resource Coordinator
<b>DSDS</b>	Division of Senior and Disability Services
<b>DVOP</b>	Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program
<b>DVR</b>	Division of Vocational Rehabilitation
<b>EED</b>	Department of Education and Early Development
<b>EGrAMS</b>	Electronic Grants Administration and Management System
<b>EL</b>	Emerging Leaders
<b>EN</b>	Employment Networks
<b>ES</b>	Employment Service
<b>ESD</b>	Employment Security Division
<b>ESL</b>	English as a Second Language
<b>ETA</b>	Employment and Training Administration(USDOL)
<b>ETPL</b>	Eligible Training Provider List
<b>ETS</b>	Employment & Training Services
<b>FASD</b>	Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder
<b>FEMA</b>	Federal Emergency Management Agency
<b>FFY</b>	Federal Fiscal Year
<b>GDP</b>	Gross Domestic Product
<b>GED</b>	General Educational Development
<b>GPRA</b>	Government Performance and Results Act (Employment and Training Administration)
<b>GPS</b>	Global Positioning System
<b>HUD</b>	U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
<b>ICM</b>	Individual Case Management
<b>I/DD</b>	Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities
<b>IEP</b>	Individual Employment Plan or Individual Education Program
<b>IL</b>	Independent Living
<b>IPE</b>	Individualized Plan for Employment
<b>ISER</b>	University of Alaska's Institute of Social and Economic Research
<b>ITA</b>	Individual Training Account
<b>JBER</b>	Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson
<b>JVSG</b>	Jobs for Veterans State Grant
<b>LEA</b>	Local Education Agency
<b>LVER</b>	Local Veterans' Employment Representative
<b>MASST</b>	Mature Alaskans Seeking Skills Training
<b>MOA</b>	Memorandum of Agreement
<b>MOU</b>	Memorandum of Understanding

<b>Acronym</b>	<b>Definition</b>
<b>MSD</b>	Most Significant Disabilities
<b>MSFW</b>	Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker
<b>NFJP</b>	National Farmworker Jobs Program
<b>NRLI</b>	National Rehabilitation Leadership Institute
<b>OAA</b>	Older Americans Act
<b>OCS</b>	Office of Children's Services
<b>OJT</b>	On-the-Job Training
<b>PETS</b>	Pre-Employment Transition Services
<b>PFD</b>	Permanent Fund Dividend
<b>PH</b>	Provisional Hires
<b>POS</b>	Priority of Service
<b>PPP</b>	Planning, Policy and Performance Evaluation
<b>PY</b>	Program Year
<b>RA</b>	Registered Apprenticeship
<b>RCE</b>	Rehabilitation Counseling Education
<b>REAP</b>	Renewable Energy Alaska Project
<b>REF</b>	Renewable Energy Fund
<b>RESEA</b>	Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment
<b>RR</b>	Rapid Response
<b>RSA</b>	Rehabilitation Services Administration
<b>RTC</b>	Regional Training Center
<b>SCSEP</b>	Senior Community Service Employment Program
<b>SE</b>	Supported Employment
<b>SMA</b>	State Monitor Advocate
<b>SNAP</b>	Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
<b>SPARQ</b>	SCSEP Performance and Results Quarterly Progress Report System
<b>SP-NEG</b>	Sector Partnership - National Emergency Grant
<b>SSDI</b>	Social Security Disability Insurance
<b>SSI</b>	Social Security Insurance
<b>STEP</b>	State Training and Employment Program
<b>SVRC</b>	State Vocational Rehabilitation Committee
<b>SWA</b>	State Workforce Agency
<b>TAA</b>	Trade Adjustment Assistance
<b>TAARA</b>	Trade Adjustment Assistance Reauthorization Act
<b>TABE</b>	Test of Adult Basic Education
<b>TACE</b>	Technical Assistance and Continuing Education
<b>TANF</b>	Temporary Assistance for Needy Families
<b>TAS</b>	Trade Act System
<b>TTY</b>	Text Telephone
<b>TVEP</b>	Technical and Vocational Education Program
<b>TVR</b>	Tribal Vocational Rehabilitation
<b>UA</b>	University of Alaska
<b>UAA</b>	University of Alaska Anchorage
<b>UAF</b>	University of Alaska Fairbanks
<b>UAS</b>	University of Alaska Southeast
<b>UI</b>	Unemployment Insurance

<b>Acronym</b>	<b>Definition</b>
<b>USDOL</b>	United States Department of Labor
<b>VI</b>	Visually Impaired
<b>VR</b>	Vocational Rehabilitation
<b>VR&amp;E</b>	Vocational Rehabilitation & Education
<b>VRC</b>	Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor
<b>WIA</b>	Workforce Investment Act of 1998
<b>WIOA</b>	Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act

## Appendix 2.2. Mandatory and Optional One-Stop Delivery System Partners

Partner Name	Program	Program Authority	Website/ Contact	Workforce Development Activities
Department of Labor and Workforce Development (DOLWD); Division of Employment and Training Services (DETS)	Adult Basic Education (ABE)	WIOA Chapter 1, Sec. 121, (b) One-Stop Partners, (1)(B)(iii) Adult Education and Literacy activities authorized under WIOA Title II	http://www.jobs.alaska.gov/abe/ Contact Name: Amy Iutzi, ABE Program Manager Phone: (907) 465-8714 E-Mail: amy.iutzi@alaska.gov	The Adult Basic Education (ABE) program serves adults who need a high school diploma, have math and reading skills below the 12th grade level, or need to study English as a second language. The ABE program helps adults prepare for transition into the labor market, higher academic or vocational training. The desired outcome of all ABE program activities is that adult learners reach a higher level of self-sufficiency as an individual, community member, and employee.
Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development (DCCED); Division of Community and Regional Affairs (DCRA)	Grants Section. Community Service Block Grant (CSBG), RurAl CAP	RurAL CAP is the only eligible Community Action Agency in the State of Alaska that is eligible to receive CSBG funds. State Assurance '676(b)(5); WIOA Chapter 1, Sec. 121, (b) One-Stop Partners, (1)(B)(ix) employment and training activities carried out under the Community Services Block Grant Act (42 USC 9901 et seq.).	https://www.commerce.alaska.gov/web/dcra/https://ruralcap.com/?page_id=321 Contact Name: Sarah Scanlan, Deputy Director, RurAL CAP Phone: (907) 865-7365 E-Mail: Sscanlan@ruralcap.com	State Assurance '676(b)(5): and the eligible entities in the state will coordinate, and establish linkages between, governmental and other social services programs to assure the effective delivery of such services to low-income individuals and to avoid duplication of such services, and state and the eligible entities will coordinate the provision of employment and training activities in the state and in communities with entities providing activities through statewide and local workforce investment systems under the Workforce Investment Act of 1998. RurAL CAP works extensively with state-related entities that receive funding under the Workforce Investment Act. The Anchorage Services Division works with Nine Star, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, State Training and Employment Program, all GED completion programs, CITC, etc. to assist resident participants in reaching their employment goals. DOLWD assists with job applications. In addition, residents are provided employment classes and internet access to private companies that may be hiring. They are also provided transportation to employment related activities and access to “day labor” jobs. The Planning and Construction Division hires individuals for the weatherization projects who have completed USDOL workforce training programs. DOLWD allows RurAL CAP to provide the necessary training and technical assistance to their service partners and within their organization to meet the new standards in the CSBG program.

Partner Name	Program	Program Authority	Website/ Contact	Workforce Development Activities
Alaska Housing Finance Corporation (AHFC)	Moving to Work	WIOA Chapter 1, Sec. 121, (b) One-Stop Partners, (1)(B)(x) employment and training activities carried out by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).	https://www.ahfc.us/ Contact Name: Sherrie Hinshaw, Statewide Manager of the Self-Sufficiency Programs Phone: (907) 330-6189 E-Mail: shinshaw@ahfc.us	<p>AHFC is a Public Housing Authority participating in the Moving to Work (MTW) Demonstration Program. As a Moving to Work Agency, AHFC has the flexibility to design and test various approaches for providing and administering housing assistance that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce cost and achieve greater cost effectiveness in federal expenditures;</li> <li>• Give incentives to families with children whose heads of household are either working, seeking work, or are participating in job training, educational, or other programs that assist in obtaining employment and becoming economically self-sufficient; and</li> <li>• Increase housing choices for low-income families.</li> </ul> <p>With this MTW designation, AHFC's FY2014 MTW Annual Plan created an initiative Reasonable Rent and Family Self-Sufficiency. Under this program, families are divided into three classifications: Step, Classic and Set-Asides. Families in the Step Program are families that contain a workable adult and do not meet the criteria for the Classic program. Families in the Classic program pay an income-based rent and see no time-limits on assistance. Under the Step program, families are limited to five (5) years of assistance. Under the Step Rent/Subsidy schedule, each year the family's share of rent increases as AHFC's subsidy decreases. To serve participating families, AHFC expanded and improved on its Family Self-Sufficiency Program by creating the Jumpstart Program. The Jumpstart Program provides financial incentives for participation and/or completion of employment, education, and long-term financial activities along with intensive case management for families identified as having high shelter costs. The objective of Jumpstart is to reduce the dependency of low-income families on welfare assistance and on Housing Choice Voucher, Public Housing, or any Federal, State, or Local rent or homeownership subsidies. AHFC measures the success of Jumpstart not only by the number of families who achieve self-sufficiency, but also by the number of Jumpstart families who, as a result of participation in the program:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have family members who obtain their first job;</li> <li>• Have family members who obtain higher paying jobs;</li> <li>• No longer need benefits received under one or more welfare programs;</li> <li>• Obtain a high school diploma, General Educational Development (GED.) certificate, or higher education degree; or</li> <li>• Accomplish goals that assist the family in obtaining economic independence.</li> </ul> <p>AHFC case managers work with families to help them develop individualized goals and then introduce or direct them to resources and support services that can assist in their progress toward meeting these goals. Local AHFC offices (16 locations statewide) regularly assist families in immediate need by referring them to resources and services. Referrals for employment assistance to One-Stop centers are a priority to assist with job training, preparation, and counseling; job development and placement; and follow-up assistance after job placement and completion of the contract of participation. AHFC coordinates closely with USDOL to ensure non-duplication of services. AHFC also offers a suite of job readiness classes on-site through the Gateway to Education, including multi-class occupational endorsements, computer lab classes, and other foundational courses to assist in gaining skills for immediate job placement.</p>

Partner Name	Program	Program Authority	Website/ Contact	Workforce Development Activities
Department of Education and Early Development (EED)	Career and Technical Education (CTE), Perkins Postsecondary Competitive Grant	Postsecondary Vocational Education – Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Education Act (20 USC 2301) WIOA Chapter 1, Sec. 121, (b) One-Stop Partners, (1)(B)(vi) career and technical education programs at postsecondary level authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006.	https://education.alaska.gov/tls/cte/Contact Name: Curtis Clough, Education Administrator II, Member of the AWIB Phone: (907) 465-8730 E-Mail: Curtis.clough@alaska.gov	EED actively participates through the Perkins Postsecondary program, which is carried out in Alaska through a competitive grant process open to all eligible postsecondary partners. Perkins-funded postsecondary programs have in the past focused mainly on professional development for CTE instructors. The current focus is on partnerships between secondary and postsecondary programs and industry, targeted at one or more of the high-priority industries. Programs either 1) provide secondary students with content-specific access to postsecondary career and technical education as dual-credit classes (at no cost to either the student or district) and make substantive links between secondary and postsecondary education and the workforce; or 2) provide professionals transitioning from the field into education with instructional skills specific to the secondary CTE classroom and are based on a clear program of study that results in participants receiving an industry certification upon completion.
Department of Labor and Workforce Development (DOLWD); Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR)	Vocational Rehabilitation	Rehabilitation Act, Title I, Parts A & B – Rehabilitation Services Commission (29 USC 720)  WIOA Chapter 1, Sec. 121, (b) One-Stop Partners, (1)(B)(iv) programs authorized under Title I of Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 USC, 720)(other than section 112 or part C of title	http://labor.alaska.gov/dvr/home.htm Contact Name: John Cannon, Director, DVR Phone: (907) 465-6927 E-Mail: john.cannon@alaska.gov	DVR operates a statewide comprehensive, coordinated, effective, efficient, and accountable vocational rehabilitation program as an integral part of a statewide workforce development system; and to assess, plan, and provide vocational rehabilitation services to individuals with disabilities so that those individuals may prepare for and engage in competitive integrated employment consistent with their unique strengths, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice.

Partner Name	Program	Program Authority	Website/ Contact	Workforce Development Activities
		I of such Act (29 USC 732, 741).		
Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS); Division of Public Assistance (DPA)	Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Work Services	Social Security Act – Welfare to Work Programs (42 USC 603(a)(5))  WIOA Chapter 1, Sec. 121, (b) One-Stop Partners, (1)(B)(xiii) programs authorized under part A of Title IV of the Social Security Act (42 USC 601 et seq.), subject to subparagraph (C).	<a href="http://dhss.alaska.gov/dpa/Pages/atap/default.aspx">http://dhss.alaska.gov/dpa/Pages/atap/default.aspx</a> x Contact Name: Mark Walker, Field Service Manager I, Division of Public Assistance Phone: (907) 352-4106 E-Mail: <a href="mailto:mark.walker@alaska.gov">mark.walker@alaska.gov</a>	DPA provides TANF case management, referrals to community agencies, and financial supportive services. Items such as tools, scrubs, medical equipment, background checks and licenses can be purchased. Supportive Services may continue for 12 months post Temporary Assistance if the client has earnings at the time of closure.

Partner Name	Program	Program Authority	Website/ Contact	Workforce Development Activities
Department of Labor and Workforce Development (DOLWD); Division of Employment and Training Services (DETS)	Mature Alaskans Seeking Skills Training (MASST)	Older Americans Act, Title V – Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) (42 USC 3056)WIOA Chapter 1, Sec. 121, (b) One-Stop Partners, (1)(B)(v) activities under title V of the Older Americans Act of 1965 (42 USC 3056)	<a href="http://labor.alaska.gov/masst/home.htm">http://labor.alaska.gov/masst/home.htm</a> Contact Name: Margarita Bowen, MASST Program Coordinator Phone: (907) 465-4872 E-Mail: <a href="mailto:rita.bowen@alaska.gov">rita.bowen@alaska.gov</a>	The Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) is a program administered by DOLWD that serves unemployed low-income persons who are at least 55 years of age, unemployed, and have a family income of no more than 125% of the federal poverty level. Enrollment priority is given to veterans and qualified spouses, then to individuals who are over 65, have a disability, have low literacy skills or limited English proficiency, reside in a rural area, are homeless or at risk of homelessness, have low employment prospects, or have failed to find employment after using services through the Alaska Job Center Network and by assisting them in developing skills and experience to facilitate their transition to unsubsidized employment. SCSEP is known in Alaska as, Mature Alaskans Seeking Skills Training (MASST) and is a component of DOLWD, DETS. Its long-term strategy is to stay committed to ensuring that Alaska’s job opportunities are available to older workers and that the program continues to reach out to workforce development partners, the business community and the senior service partners to ensure successful outcomes for seniors and Alaskan businesses alike. The purposes of the SCSEP are to foster individual economic self-sufficiency and promote useful part time opportunities in community service assignments for unemployed low-income persons who are 55 years of age or older, particularly persons who have poor employment prospects, and to increase the number of older persons who may enjoy the benefits of unsubsidized employment in both the public and private sectors. SCSEP is a required partner under WIOA and, as such, it is a part of the Alaska Job Center Network. When acting in their capacity as WIOA partners, SCSEP grantees and sub-recipients are required to follow all applicable rules under WIOA and its regulations.
Department of Labor and Workforce Development (DOLWD); Division of Employment and Training Services (DETS)	Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) Program	WIOA Chapter 1, Sec. 121, (b) One-Stop Partners, (1)(B)(vii) activities authorized under Chapter 2 of title II of the Trade Act of 1974 (19 USC 2271 et seq).  Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) (19 USC 2317) and North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) (19 USC 2271)	<a href="http://jobs.alaska.gov/TAA/index.html">http://jobs.alaska.gov/TAA/index.html</a> Contact Name: Nicole Skeek, Employment Security Analyst II, DETS Phone: (907) 465-1198 E-Mail: <a href="mailto:Nicole.skeek@alaska.gov">Nicole.skeek@alaska.gov</a>	The TAA program assists workers who were laid off because of foreign competition or out-sourcing to regain employment. Workers who are eligible for TAA benefits in Alaska primarily worked in petroleum, timber, or fishing industries. Services provided to eligible participants include: employment services; career development; case management; relocation assistance; trade readjustment assistance and occupational training.

Partner Name	Program	Program Authority	Website/Contact	Workforce Development Activities
		Trade Act of 1974 (19 USC 2101 et seq.), Title II, Chapter 2, as amended in 2002, 2009, 2011 and Trade Adjustment Assistance Reauthorization Act (TAARA 2015)		
Department of Labor and Workforce Development (DOLWD); Division of Employment and Training Services (DETS)	Unemployment Insurance (UI)	Unemployment Insurance (UI) – (5 USC 85) (ORC Chapter 4141)WIOA Chapter 1, Sec. 121, (b) One-Stop Partners, (1)(B)(xi) programs authorized under state unemployment compensation laws (in accordance with applicable Federal law).	<a href="http://labor.alaska.gov/unemployment/">http://labor.alaska.gov/unemployment/</a> Contact Name: Patsy Westcott, Assistant Director, DETS, UI Program Phone: (907) 465-5927 E-Mail: <a href="mailto:patsy.westcott@alaska.gov">patsy.westcott@alaska.gov</a>	Alaska's UI Program is committed to providing support to the One-Stop centers through referrals to Reemployment Services Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) activities and dedicated UI staff available to respond to the needs of unemployed workers coming into the One-Stop centers. Alaska UI already requires mandatory registration, and provides Rapid Response program activities jointly with Alaska Job Center staff.

Partner Name	Program	Program Authority	Website/ Contact	Workforce Development Activities
Department of Labor and Workforce Development (DOLWD); Division of Employment and Training Services (DETS)	Employment and Training Services (ETS) – Alaska Job Center Network (AJCN)	WIOA Title III – Amendments to the Wagner-Peyser Act Programs (29 USC 49)	<a href="http://jobs.alaska.gov/http://jobs.alaska.gov/jobsseeker.htm">http://jobs.alaska.gov/http://jobs.alaska.gov/jobsseeker.htm</a> <a href="http://jobs.alaska.gov/employer.htm">http://jobs.alaska.gov/employer.htm</a> Contact Name: James Harvey, Assistant Director, DETS Phone: (907) 465-4891 E-Mail: james.harvey@alaska.gov	<p>The One-Stop delivery system collaborates with partners to create a seamless system of service delivery that will enhance access to services, and improve long-term employment outcomes for individuals receiving assistance.</p> <p>The Employment and Training Services program is the foundation of the One-Stop delivery system in Alaska that provides universal access to labor exchange, employment services, and training services. The goal of universal access is the provision of services to workers, job seekers, and employers under one roof from easy-to-find locations. The delivery points for the Employment and Training Services are within the 17 job centers located throughout the state. As part of the One-Stop service delivery system, the Employment and Training Services program provides a variety of employment-related labor exchange services, including job search assistance, job referral and placement assistance for job seekers, re-employment services to unemployment insurance claimants, and recruitment services to employers with job openings. Services are delivered in one of three modes including self-service, facilitated self-help services, and staff-assisted service delivery. Depending on the needs of the labor market, services may be available such as job seeker assessment of skill levels, abilities and aptitudes, career guidance when appropriate, job search workshops, and referral to intensive and training services.</p> <p>Apprenticeship specialists in the job centers provide information to employers on sponsoring an apprenticeship program. Apprenticeships allow employers to establish the standards of proficiency, while developing a local and loyal workforce. Any business that requires skilled employees can benefit from an apprenticeship.</p> <p>DOLWD efforts in providing prisoner re-entry services has proven to be successful in assisting prisoners transitioning back into communities. DOLWD partners with the Department of Corrections in coordinating and developing job placement assistance and services for those individuals.</p> <p>Services offered to employers, in addition to referral of job seekers to available job openings, include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assistance in development of job order requirements;</li> <li>• Matching job seeker experience with job requirements, skills and other attributes;</li> <li>• Assisting employers with special recruitment needs;</li> <li>• Coordinating job fairs;</li> <li>• Helping employers analyze hard-to-fill job orders;</li> <li>• Helping employers minimize or avoid layoffs or business closures; and</li> <li>• Establishing USDOL recognized apprenticeship programs.</li> </ul>

Partner Name	Program	Program Authority	Website/ Contact	Workforce Development Activities
Department of Labor and Workforce Development (DOLWD); Division of Employment and Training Services (DETS)	Job Training – Alaska Job Center Network (AJCN)	WIOA Title I, Subtitle B, Chapter 3 Adult and Dislocated Worker Employment and Training Activities – Adult and Dislocated Worker Programs – (29 USC 2861, 29 USC 2872(b) and (c)), 3174)	http://jobs.alaska.gov/jt/Contact Name: Ken Mill, Assistant Director DETS Phone: (907) 465-5934 E-Mail: ken.mill@alaska.gov	The Title I programs provide an array of career services, supportive services and training needed to be self-sufficient. The services are provided by Career Support and Training Services (CSTS) case managers who are located in the job centers. The CSTS case managers work with participants and employment service partners to develop individual training accounts, resulting in sustainable employment. CSTS uses various funds to cover training costs. To make use of all available funding, the trainee may be concurrently enrolled in other programs for which the trainee qualifies. Post-training job placement and follow up assistance is also provided. Job training programs are funded through WIOA and the State Training Employment Program (STEP).
Department of Labor and Workforce Development (DOLWD); Division of Employment and Training Services (DETS)	Veteran Services	WIOA Title I – Veteran’s Workforce Programs – (29 USC 2913, 29 USC 2919, 38 USC 41)	http://jobs.alaska.gov/veterans/ Contact Name: Steven Williams Phone: (907) 465-5953 E-Mail: steven.williams2@alaska.gov	As required by 38 U.S.C., all Jobs for Veterans State Grants (JVSG) staff attend training through the National Veterans’ Training Institute within 18 months of appointment into a JVSG position. JVSG staff also receives regular training on ever-changing veterans’ issues and regulations, local employment resources through internal channels and external organizations, Department-sponsored initiatives, and eligibility for other required programs. Training is conducted through teleconferences, webinars, short face-to-face meetings, and multi-day conferences.

<b>Partner Name</b>	<b>Program</b>	<b>Program Authority</b>	<b>Website/ Contact</b>	<b>Workforce Development Activities</b>
Alaska Job Corps Center	Job Corps	WIOA Public Law 113-128, Chapter 4, Subtitle C Job Corps, Section 148 Program Activities	<a href="http://alaska.jobcorps.gov/contact.aspx">http://alaska.jobcorps.gov/contact.aspx</a> Contact Name: Malyn Smith, Alaska Job Corps Director Phone: (907) 861-8801 E-Mail: <a href="mailto:smith.malyn@jobcorps.org">smith.malyn@jobcorps.org</a>	<p>Alaska Job Corps offers hands-on career technical training as well as academic training. Career technical training is available in the following industries: Business and Technology, Construction, and Health and Community Services. Academic training includes basic reading and math. Courses in independent living, employability skills, and social skills are offered in order to help students transition into the workplace. There are also several academic programs to help our students achieve their full potential. One of the top goals at the Alaska Job Corps is to ensure that every qualified student obtains his or her GED/high school diploma prior to leaving the center. Students who don't already have a high school diploma upon their arrival at Alaska Job Corps Center are automatically enrolled into our GED program. Students who complete this program's core classes may participate in the high school diploma program, which is an on-center program. Pre-requisites for the high school diploma program are the student must have fifteen or more credits, and the student must have passed at least two high school qualifying exams (HSQEs). Driver's education is available to all students needing an Alaska driver's license. Permits and licensing fees for students are paid for by the center. Arrangements for students to take the written and road examinations are also handled by the center. The Alaska Job Corps Center also offers a college program where students can enroll in Advanced Career Training (ACT) and attend the Matanuska-Susitna College in Palmer.</p>

Partner Name	Program	Program Authority	Website/ Contact	Workforce Development Activities
<p>Alaska Native Coalition on Employment and Training (ANCET), Representing: Aleutian-Pribilof Islands Assn., Inc. (APIA); Association of Village Council Presidents (AVCP); Bristol Bay Native Association (BBNA); Central Council of Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes; Chugachmiut; Cook Inlet Tribal Council, Inc.; Copper River Native Association; Kakerak, Inc.; Kenaitze Indian Tribe; Kodiak Native Assoc.; Maniilaq Assoc.; Metlakatla Indian Community; Orutsararmiut Native Council and; Tanana Chiefs Conference List of DOL-WIA Funded Federally Recognized Tribes and Alaska Native Entities Participating in Public Law 102-</p>	<p>Various</p>	<p>WIOA Subtitle D National Programs, Section 166 Native American Programs, Includes grantees of Public Law 102-477 Indian Employment, Training, and Related Services Demonstration Act of 1992, as amended by Public Law 106-568, the Omnibus Indian Advancement Act of 2000. 29 USC 3221 – Native American programs (all programs under this section administered consistent with 25 USC 450 et seq. Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act)</p>	<p>Aleutian-Pribilof Islands Assn., Inc. <a href="http://www.apia.i.org/">http://www.apia.i.org/</a> ; Association of Village Council Presidents <a href="http://www.avcp.org/">http://www.avcp.org</a> ; Bristol Bay Native Association <a href="http://www.bbnai.org/">http://www.bbnai.org/</a> ; Central Council of Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska <a href="http://www.cchita.org/">http://www.cchita.org/</a> ; Chugachmiut <a href="http://www.chugachmiut.org/">http://www.chugachmiut.org/</a> ; Cook Inlet Tribal Council, Inc. <a href="http://citci.org/">http://citci.org/</a> ; Copper River Native Association <a href="http://crnative.org/">http://crnative.org/</a> ; Kakerak, Inc. <a href="http://www.kakerak.org/">http://www.kakerak.org/</a> ; Kenaitze Indian Tribe <a href="http://www.kenaitze.org/">http://www.kenaitze.org/</a> ; Kodiak Native Assoc. <a href="http://www.knaweb.org/">http://www.knaweb.org/</a> ; Maniilaq Assoc. <a href="http://www.maniilaq.org/">http://www.maniilaq.org/</a> ; Metlakatla Indian Community</p>	<p>The majority of the Alaska Native partners participating in employment and training workforce development activities (pursuant to WIOA Subtitle D, Sec. 166 Native American Programs; Public Law 102-477 Indian Employment Training, and Related Services Demonstration Act of 1992, as amended by Public Law 106-568, the Omnibus Indian Advancement Act of 2000), provide these services:</p> <p>The emphasis for the majority of participating Alaska Native partners involves these activities:</p> <p>Job Seeker Services – Emphasis on self-service, staff assisted career services including resume and cover letter, interview skills, careers, jobs, labor market information, workshops, labor exchange, education programs, support, Unemployment Insurance (UI), eligibility screening and referral process. Eligible individuals have access to case management for services such as intake and registration testing and assessment, Individual Employment Plans (IEPs), vocational counseling, short term pre-vocational services, training services, adult education and literacy activities, scholarships, and supplemental training funds for eligible individuals for supportive services, e.g. child care, transportation and clothing.</p> <p>Services to Employers – Labor exchange, marketing, and workforce information.</p> <p>Purpose: To support employment and training activities for Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian individuals in order to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop more fully the academic, occupational, and literacy skills of such individuals;</li> <li>• Make such individuals more competitive in the workforce and to equip them with the entrepreneurial skills necessary for successful self-employment;</li> <li>• Promote the economic and social development of Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian communities in accordance with the goals and values of such communities.</li> <li>• Identify the education and employment needs of the population to be served and the manner in which the activities to be provided will strengthen the ability of the individuals served to obtain or retain unsubsidized employment leading to self-sufficiency;</li> <li>• Consider the needs of the groups served by this section, including the differences in needs among such groups in various geographic service areas; and the economic circumstances of the communities served, including differences in circumstances among various geographic service areas.</li> <li>• Highlight additional workforce development activities provided by partners (as shown on their public web pages) include but are not limited to:</li> </ul> <p><b>Aleutian-Pribilof Islands Association, Inc. (APIA):</b>  AANG Program assists eligible individuals prepare for, gain, or retain employment scholarship opportunities to individuals attending a college or university full time, working towards a 2 or 4 year degree; training scholarships for non-degree training, vocational training and certification courses.</p> <p>The Association of Village Council Presidents (AVCP), Education, Employment, Training and Child Care Department's (EET &amp; CC) outreach is a key component to informing and educating member tribes of the programs they have available, and for any Native American living in the AVCP region, who is enrolled in a federally recognized tribe. AVCP's EET &amp; CC Department also maintains a regional Talent Bank, a file of individuals from within the region. When a project comes to a village,</p>

Partner Name	Program	Program Authority	Website/ Contact	Workforce Development Activities
477https://www.doleta.gov/dinap/cfml/477list.cfm			https://www.meltakata.com/Orutsararmuit Native Council http://nativecouncil.org/ ; Tanana Chiefs Conference https://www.tanachiefs.org/	<p>they encourage local hire by looking through the Bank and identify any individuals from that community who might be qualified and appropriate for hiring on to specific jobs.</p> <p><b>Bristol Bay Native Association (BBNA):</b> Training assistance grants are available for adults attending a vocational or technical training certificate program ranging in length from 6 months to 2 years, for a wide variety of fields working towards a career goal. These include Driver's Education to achieve a Driver's License, Heavy Equipment Operating, Commercial Truck Driver License (CDL), Certified Nurse's Aide, Child Care Associate Certificate or other short term occupation training leading directly to employment upon completion of the training.</p> <p><b>Central Council of Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes (CCT&amp;H):</b> Employment Services provides eligible participants who complete career assessment testing, motivational training, and job skills workshops with an employment portfolio to use while actively seeking employment.</p> <p>The Job Placement program within the Employment &amp; Training (E&amp;T) Division offers motivational, cultural, and basic office skills trainings to TANF, TVR, ES, and AVT clients. The program offers educational, training and employment opportunities to assist in finding meaningful employment and maintaining a healthy lifestyle independent of program services. Computer classroom training and vocational courses are offered to both tribal citizens and the general public through the Vocational Training &amp; Resource Center (VTRC).</p> <p>The Tribal Vocational Rehabilitation (TVR) program with the State of Alaska (SOA), Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) jointly serves eligible applicants with disabilities in Southeast Alaska. Because TVR and DVR work together to provide joint services, tribal citizens are actively referred to the SOA/DVR offices.</p> <p>The Youth Employment Services (YES) program assists eligible tribal youth between the ages of 14-21 to obtain summer employment in their community and provides participating youth with Job &amp; Life Skills Workshops including Job Hunting Tips, Completing an Application, Cover Letter, Resume, Interview Techniques, Surviving the Job, and Power of Choices.</p> <p><b>Cook Inlet Tribal Council, Inc. (CITC):</b> CITC's Employment Training and Services Department assists participants in achieving self-sufficiency by helping them enhance their communication, life management, vocational and academic skills. CITC also provides vocational rehabilitation services, and operates a One-Stop called Alaska's People Career Development Center. CITC's comprehensive wrap-around services include GED, TANF, GA, child care, and career training. The DOLWD is co-located at the CITC Career Development Center and partners with CITC staff to offer services to assist job seekers with training and employment.</p> <p>Copper River Native Association's Workforce Development program is a program designed to assist people who are attempting to gain meaningful employment by assisting them to overcome any barriers that are preventing them from becoming permanently employed.</p>

Partner Name	Program	Program Authority	Website/ Contact	Workforce Development Activities
				<p><b>Kawerak, Inc.:</b>  Employment, Education and Training Programs include:</p> <p>The Kawerak Direct Employment (DE) Program provides a one-time grant to eligible tribal members who reside in the Bering Strait-Norton Sound region to assist with employment related needs and start-up living expenses in order to retain full-time employment.</p> <p>The Higher Education Program provides semester and quarterly scholarships to tribal members of the Bering Strait region that are enrolled at an accredited college or university.</p> <p>Kawerak Native Employment Work Services (KNEWS) provides Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF). KNEWS partners with the Division of Public Assistance to provide services to the villages in the Bering Strait Region. Because there is a shortage of paid positions in village communities, KNEWS works with local organizations to provide volunteer work opportunities for clients to gain job skills.</p> <p>Kawerak offers village-based carpentry and heavy equipment training programs. These 2-4 week programs are designed for apprentices who are registered by the USDOL. Each training program uses a standard curriculum that is approved by the National Center for Construction Education and Research (NCCER). Participants earn college-credit through Northwest College/University of Alaska. Training programs are not limited to carpentry and heavy equipment, and are determined on a village-by-village basis. Village Based Training works with the IRA's of each village to determine what job opportunities are coming to the village or what skills need to be upgraded to increase or keep village residents employed in the near future. Training is then recommended. Funding sources, trainers and other resources are prioritized to the best advantage of the region. Village Based training and all of EET, work to keep each village in the rotation of ongoing training, without favoritism.</p> <p><b>Kenaitze Indian Tribe:</b>  Offers Education, Career and Workforce Development Services through a variety of programs which offer a full range of services, designed to strengthen the economic wellbeing of Tribal members and community. Kahtnuht'ana Dena'ina Values include Education: "passing down cultural knowledge and traditions and supporting formal education." Kenaitze Indian Tribe has a Tribal Membership Scholarship Fund to assist Tribal members pursuing higher education if enrolled in a degree program at an accredited college, university or trade school. Kenaitze Indian Tribe's Higher Education Program provides funds to individuals enrolled or accepted to a four-year college or university, based on need. The WIOA Youth Services Programs (YS): Workforce Investment Program provides meaningful work experience and career exploration. WIOA Comprehensive Services (CS): Provides meaningful work experience and career exploration for adults age 22 and above.</p> <p>Kodiak Area Native Association (KANA) operates the KANA Employment Center which offers access to computers to search for jobs, create resumes, information on college, trade schools and apply for scholarships. Life and employment skills workshops are offered. The Supplemental Youth Employment Training Program (SYETP) provides practical work experience for Kodiak area Native youth, aged 14-24, to build strong communities by providing the life experience they need. Youth placed in a successful match with a business are added to KANA's payroll for up to 100 hours, also making them eligible for a half work Co-op credit at Kodiak High School. The Tribal Vocational Rehabilitation Program (TVRP) assists Alaska Native and American Indian individuals who are</p>

Partner Name	Program	Program Authority	Website/ Contact	Workforce Development Activities
				<p>members of a federally recognized tribe that experience disabilities prepare for, achieve, and maintain employment.</p> <p><b>Maniilaq Assoc.:</b>  The goal of Maniilaq Employment &amp; Training Program is to assist in providing training to the people of the Northwest Arctic region into gainful employment and to be economically self-sufficient. Case workers assist each client in funding resources and case management, need assessments, and training needs to achieve employment, apprenticeship, on-the-job training or supportive services.</p> <p><b>Tanana Chiefs Conference (TCC):</b>  In addition to workforce development activities listed above, TCC also has AmeriCorps and VISTA programs. TCC announces job openings, trainings and other job openings around the State of Alaska. The TCC Youth Employment Program offers year-round and summer-only work experience opportunities for 14-21 year olds. TCC operates a Tribal Employment Rights Office (TERO) through adoption of local village ordinances and helps ensure maximum Native hire on or near Indian Lands. TCC Youth Employment Services empowers Native youth facing barriers to employment by providing work experience, training and educational opportunities designed to foster world-of-work skills.</p>

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Department of Labor and Workforce Development (DOLWD); Division of Employment and Training Services (DETS)	WIOA Youth	WIOA Title I – Youth Programs (29 USC 2852(a), 29 USC 2872(a))WIOA Chapter 2 – Youth Workforce Investment activities, Sec. 126-129.	http://labor.state.ak.us/bp/wia_youth.htm Contact: Shane Bannarbie Program Coordinator I Phone: (907) 269-4551 E-Mail: shane.bannarbie@alaska.gov	WIOA Youth provides educational activities, supportive services, and training opportunities that provide youth with academic instruction and occupational education that leads to attainment of recognized secondary and postsecondary credentials and unsubsidized employment opportunities.

Partner Name	Program	Program Authority	Website/ Contact	Workforce Development Activities
<p>Alaska Department of Corrections (DOC), Division of Institutions</p>	<p>State Training and Employment Program (STEP), (FY15) for \$250,000 for Goose Creek Correctional Center(GCCC) and Spring Creek Correctional Center (SCCC)Carl D. Perkins Grant, Highland Mountain Correctional Center (HMCC) female inmates only) GrantCareer and Technical Education (CTE) (HMCC female inmates only). Partner with Alaska Vocational Technical Center (AVTEC) who is a Title I B, WIOA grant recipient at Spring Creek Correctional Center (SCCC).</p>	<p>State Training and Employment Program (STEPFY15) . STEP is funded by a set-aside from the Unemployment Insurance Trust Fund. (AS 23.15.630)WIOA Chapter 1, Sec. 121, (b) One-Stop Partners, (1)(B)(vi) career and technical education programs at the postsecondary level authorized under the (Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 (20 USC 2301 et seq.).AVTEC received WIOA, Title I-B grant funds for this project. AVTEC also receives grant funds through STEP and SPH (NEG monies through WIOA).USDOL Microsoft Office Specialist (MOS) Grant.</p>	<p>Contact: Chris (Gary) Olsen Criminal Justice Planner, DOC Phone: (907) 761-5617 Contact E-Mail: chris.olsen@alaska.gov</p>	<p>DOLWD selected the Alaska Vocational Technical Center (AVTEC) as a 2016 WIOA grant recipient. AVTEC's goal is to partner with Spring Creek Correctional Center (SCCC) and enroll 1 to 5 eligible candidates who are 14-24 years of age out of school youth. The best case scenario is for an individual to complete an industry-recognized certificate for occupational training and enter the workforce and earn a marketable wage.</p> <p>Providing career education to prisoners is one part of a goal to reduce recidivism as exiting prisoners are better prepared to enter the work world. The State Training and Employment Program (STEP) is administered by DOLWD, Division of Employment and Training Services and funded by a set-aside from the UI Trust Fund. The Department of Corrections (DOC) is providing vocational trade courses that empower incarcerated individuals for marketable employment upon release. These foundational courses provide integrated learning skills that build a reputable resume bank for the returning citizen. Several courses are recognized by the Alaska Commission on Post-Secondary Education at our Goose Creek Career and Technical Education School. Also, Hiland Mountain Correctional Center has a Career and Technical Education partnership through Ilisagvik College for post-secondary credits. ADOC vocational programs include, but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Asbestos Abatement</li> <li>• Welding</li> <li>• Flagging</li> <li>• North Slope Training Card</li> <li>• Forklifting</li> <li>• Weatherization</li> <li>• Plumbing</li> <li>• Alternative Energy</li> <li>• Hazwoper</li> <li>• Confined Spaces</li> <li>• National Center for Construction Education and Research (NCCER) courses: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ MSHA</li> <li>○ CPR</li> <li>○ OSHA</li> <li>○ Carpentry</li> <li>○ Electrical</li> <li>○ HVAC</li> <li>○ Core Curriculum</li> <li>○ Heavy Equipment</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>DOC received \$341,000 in grant funding in 2015 through the Career Technical Education (CTE), STEP, MOS, and Carl Perkins grants. These grants enable DOC to not only partner with the Heavy Equipment Operators Union, but also with the Iron Workers Union Local 751, where qualified applicants, who have proven their commitment to their own success, are given the opportunity to earn an apprenticeship as a union Ironworker. Both the Heavy Equipment Operators and Ironworkers provide the opportunity for people to earn well-above-average wages, building physical infrastructure, as well as a healthier community. Incarcerated individuals in multiple facilities are able to take advantage of the Heavy Equipment Simulator program. This program includes training on a hydraulic excavator, bulldozer, forklift, and front-end loader and teaches skills in control familiarization, safety, and technical ability.</p>