

AGIA Training Strategic Planning Document
October 15th 2007 Draft

The Alaska Gasline Inducement Act of 2007 requires that “the Commissioner of Labor and Workforce Development shall develop a job training program that will provide training for Alaskans in gas pipeline project management, construction, operations, maintenance and other gas pipeline related positions” (AS 43.90.470).

To fulfill this charge, the Commissioner sought the advice of concerned and knowledgeable Alaskans in identifying strategies that would best prepare the state’s workforce for the demands of gas pipeline construction and other proposed major natural resource development projects. Three main groups have been involved in the planning effort: the AGIA Training Plan Steering Committee, composed of leaders from industry, labor and education; the Alaska Workforce Investment Board (AWIB) ad hoc AGIA committee; and an internal Department of Labor and Workforce Development (DOLWD) committee comprised of division and program heads. A list of participants is attached as Appendix A.

Participants in the planning process began with an examination of the current training environment and concluded that the existing system is not meeting current workforce development demands, much less the added demands of AGIA. Participants also recognized that they could build on and endorse the good planning efforts that have already been accomplished, for example, the *Construction Workforce Development Plan* adopted by AWIB in 2006 and the *Vocational Education Comprehensive Plan for Alaska* developed by DOLWD in 2004.

The strategies that are presented here incorporate this earlier work and are intended to elevate the state’s training capacity to the next level by:

- Increasing efficiencies in the use of current resources
- Expanding public/private partnerships and
- Identifying cost/effective proposals for additional investment.

The planning groups have been guided by the Principles for Alaska’s Vocational and Technical Education and Training System found in *Alaska’s Future Workforce Strategic Policies and Investment Blueprint*. Any job training program developed to respond to current or future workforce must be:

- Needs Driven – labor market driven and responsive to interrelated workforce, community and regional economic development needs.
- Accessible – provide access and opportunity in both rural and urban Alaska.
- Interconnected – use coordinated programs and service delivery to promote progressive, lifelong occupational learning, skill transferability, credential portability, and worker mobility.
- Accountable – deliver quality services that are aligned with and responsive to current and emerging needs of core constituents—students, job seekers, employers, families and communities.

- Collaborative Governance – promote collaborative state and local policies and partnerships to ensure a close fit between education and training, labor market demands and the needs of constituents regionally and statewide.
- Sustainable – is “built to last” and supported by increased funding and sustainable investment policies.

Planning participants also reached consensus on the following points:

- Industry employers, trade associations, trade unions, apprenticeship sponsors, and schools are most responsible for training workers.
- Public/private partnerships are essential.
- Training needs to be industry standards-based and target commonly agreed upon outcomes.
- Any training program should incorporate best practices.
- State training dollars should be targeted at programs that meet an industry need, are based on state standards and demonstrate acceptable outcomes.
- Training for the gas pipeline or other natural resource development projects needs to emphasize long-term careers, not just short-term jobs.

The plan presented on the following pages consists of a set of recommended strategies that, if implemented, will position the state to “grow its own” workforce not only for AGIA but for other large projects that will require similar skills and compete for workers. It is intended to assist those who establish policy for public workforce development investment and to encourage additional private investment in training.

Vision: Alaskans are trained and ready for the natural gas pipeline jobs and those jobs are made available to Alaskans

Goal: Deliver an Alaska workforce prepared for careers in construction, operations, management and other occupations related to natural resource development and ultimately a gasline.

Strategy 1.0 Develop a comprehensive, integrated Career and Technical Education system for Alaska that aligns training institutions and coordinates program delivery.

Building a strong, flexible workforce to meet Alaska's resource development needs requires a healthy CTE system—one that prepares high school students for further training and work and provides opportunities for adults to maintain job skills or acquire new ones. At present, there is little state investment in career and technical education at the secondary level and only limited support at the postsecondary level. In addition, there is no system in place to assure that CTE operating and capital dollars are being spent in the most effective manner to meet high priority needs. Better coordination among existing training institution and closer alignment of program offerings are essential to increasing the state's capacity to grow its own labor force.

This strategy can be implemented by:

- Identifying best CTE practices that
 - Include public-private partnerships
 - Identify and provide for customized training needs
 - Transition participants from school to work
 - Integrate cultural and social aspects
 - Show a positive rate of return on investment
- Developing state CTE program standards and outcome measures
 - Base on industry standards
 - Address soft (employability) skills
 - Incorporate best practices
 - Certify program completers
- Coordinating funding and program responsibility among the existing state-funded training centers
- Tying funding requests for state training dollars to state standards, use of best practices and workforce development priorities
 - Consolidate funding requests for training
 - Require funded programs to meet state standards and best practices
 - Prioritize requests using AWIB
 - Provide through AWIB a liaison between industry and secondary-postsecondary institutions

Funding:

- TVEP and STEP dollars
- State General Fund
- WIA and other federal training programs

Strategy 2.0 Increase awareness of and the ability to access career opportunities in natural resource development

Alaskans need to better understand the career opportunities brought about by the development of the state's natural resources. Further, they need information on how to prepare themselves to access these opportunities.

This strategy can be implemented by:

- Conducting public awareness campaigns
- Elevating attention to workforce development to the highest governmental levels
- Incorporating career counseling and planning in the K-12 system
 - Require all secondary students to have a written career plan, integrating Work Keys and career pathways and updated annually
 - Develop a comprehensive, one-stop information system on training opportunities in Alaska
 - Enhance K-12 teacher awareness of natural resource development career opportunities and the academic skills required for these careers
- Maintaining a robust and accessible system of Adult Basic Education and English as a Second Language instruction
- Providing timely and regional employment data to policy makers and program planners

Funding:

- Business/Industry consortia for career information materials, curricula
- WIA funding for public awareness
- State support for career education
- State support for employment data collection and analysis

Strategy 3.0: Increase opportunities for apprenticeship/structured OJT for skilled craft workers

Registered Apprenticeship is a national training system that combines paid learning, on-the-job and related technical and theoretical instruction in a skilled occupation. The purpose of a Registered Apprenticeship program is to enable employers to develop and apply industry standards to training programs that can increase productivity and improve the quality and safety of the workforce.

Certifications earned through Registered Apprenticeship programs are recognized nationwide as portable industry credentials. Registered Apprenticeship has been utilized successfully in Alaska for over 50 years, primarily in the construction industry.

There are other models of structured training such as certificate and degree programs that use internships, cooperatives and mentorships. Many college and career and technical education programs utilize these models in engineering, project management, and similar disciplines where OJT practicums are required.

This strategy can be implemented by:

- Increasing training opportunities for apprenticeships on all construction and infrastructure projects in Alaska through utilization agreements.
- Developing a State of Alaska apprenticeship training fund.
- Developing incentives for employers who employ and train apprentices.
- Allocating 1% for publicly funded construction projects.
- Increasing entry level opportunities through construction academies, career and tech-prep programs, and pre-apprenticeship programs at the secondary and postsecondary levels.
- Aligning and strengthening partnership between employers, education, and the workforce investment system and community stakeholders.

Funding:

- Davis-Bacon training benefit.
- Tax credits/WIA funding, and private investments.
- Pursue mechanism for a goal of 1% of all capital projects to be allocated to a state-wide training trust fund.

Strategy 4.0: Increase opportunities for development of operations, technical resources and management workers

These jobs range from professionally-certified and degreed positions to support functions for industries impacted by natural resource development. Degree programs such as engineering and science, process operations and technical positions require both academic/conceptual education and work-place application.

This strategy can be implemented by:

- Increasing programs in the postsecondary system for critical jobs such as engineering, environmental sciences, etc.
- Attracting more Alaskan high school graduates into these programs
 - Encourage applied academics in secondary math and science courses
 - Increase summer engineering, science and technology camps
- Expanding internships and work-cooperatives for both secondary and postsecondary students.

Funding:

- Increased funding for UA, other postsecondary institutions in target programs
- Tax credits for internships
- Support for applied academics as part of state funding for career and technical education