

Service Delivery Update for Alaska Workforce Investment Board
Division of Public Assistance
October 21, 2007

Mission: We promote self sufficiency and provide for basic living expenses to Alaskans in need.

Welfare to Work – Challenges for 2008

The Deficit Reduction Act of 2006 included significant changes to how states operate TANF-funded welfare programs. To some extent the DRA restricted the flexibility states have to operate programs and deliver services under the original welfare reform act (PRWORA 1996).

- Federal changes in work requirements and performance expectations have:
 - Narrowly defined and limited allowable work activities
 - Lowered caseload reduction credit making it harder to meet performance targets
 - Imposed strict rules for documenting, monitoring and verifying work activities

2008 Service Strategies

DPA will make every effort to ensure Alaska's TANF-funded program and services comply with changes in federal law while concentrating on the best possible outcomes for families.

- Sustain services that promote rapid attachment to the workforce
 - Partner with DOL/ESD to deliver employment services when people first apply for Temporary Assistance
 - Supportive services to meet employment-related needs of program participants
 - Pay for Performance model motivates contractors providers to delivery outcome focused services
 - Working with Job center partners to ensure effective service integration
 - Integration – The development and implementation of policies, systems, and service designs that reduce duplication, maximize the reach of resources, ensure appropriate customer service across funding streams, and reduce administrative overhead.
- Improve access to short-term training and skill building
 - Case management contract with Job Corps to provide supports and service coordination for welfare recipients at Job Corps
 - Need help to identify and increase use of short-term (i.e., 6 -8 weeks) training opportunities
 - Short-term training in basic hard skills (e.g., customer service, keyboarding, common software applications (Word, Excel, etc.) can help job seekers be more competitive and help working clients retain and progress in current employment.
 - Soft skills training can be essential to the success of people with limited work experience.

- Family-centric services
 - Family centered services are collaborative, community-based services, supports, and resources designed to solve identified personal and environmental barriers to employment and self-reliance. Public Assistance family centered services have employment as the focus, and rely on the creative and efficient use of family, community, and multi-agency resources. In addition to promoting the best possible outcomes for families, family-centered services create opportunities for collaboration among service providers and reduce duplication of efforts by making optimal use of private and public resources.
 - Relies on principles of customized employment, job carving, and the delivery of seamless social services
 - Focuses on addressing needs of entire family that impede progress toward self-sufficiency
 - Can support youth employment and training
 - Pilots in Mat-Su and Fairbanks demonstrate improved employment outcomes for participating families

- Improve rural service delivery and support rural work force development initiatives
 - DPA grants to regional ABE providers for tutors
 - Many adults in rural Alaska don't meet the minimum educational requirements for employment (high school completion or a GED)
 - Participation rural regional economic and work force development initiatives
 - Northwest Arctic and North Slope Borough
 - Partnerships to promote and support Native Family Assistance Programs
 - 5 NFAPs currently in operations with 3 more considering implementation

FY 2007 Employment Outcomes

Each month, Temporary Assistance Work Services support the self-sufficiency efforts of over 2,000 families. In state fiscal year 2007:

- 34% of new applicants found employment within 60 days
- 34% of all adults reported earnings in a given month
- 46% of working adults reported an increase in wages
- 52% of the cases that closed in 2007 reported earned income
- 87% of the cases that closed with earnings did not return to the Temporary Assistance Program

