



**ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF LABOR
& WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT**

**Alaska Workforce Investment Board
USDOL On-Site Review Report Pertaining to RAC's**

U.S. Department of Labor



SEP 09 2010

Clark Bishop, Commissioner
Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development
P.O. Box 111149
1111 West 8th Street, Ste 308
Juneau, Alaska 99811-1149

Employment and Training Administration

Region 6 San Francisco

90 7th Street, Suite 17300
San Francisco, CA 94103

Re: On-site monitoring review of Alaska's American Recovery Act (ARRA) and formula-funded Workforce Investment Act and Wagner-Peyser grants.

Dear Mr. Bishop:

The U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration, Region 6, conducted on-site monitoring of the Department of Labor and Workforce Development's (DOLWD) ARRA and formula-funded Workforce Investment Act (WIA) and Wagner-Peyser (WP) grants. The purpose of the on-site monitoring was to evaluate the management and administration of the grants, the quality of grant-related activities and services, and performance outcomes in order to determine if the State is operating in compliance with the grant agreements and in a manner that will ensure achievement of goals and outcomes.

The enclosed report identifies five findings of non-compliance with basic Federal requirements, two areas of concern and five positive practices. All of the findings require a written response to this office within 30 days of your receipt of the report.

Please express my gratitude to your staff members for their cooperation and assistance during the on-site monitoring. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at (415) 625-7900 or Carol Padovan at (415) 625-7946.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Richard C. Trigg".

Richard C. Trigg
Regional Administrator

Enclosure: On-site Monitoring Report

AREAS OF CONCERN

The State Board's role in developing the Strategic Workforce Plan and other statutory activities is less substantial than described under WIA: One of the key roles of the State Workforce Board is to assist the Governor in the development of the State Workforce Plan, in addition to: developing performance measures; preparing the annual performance report; and various other activities described in the WIA law and regulations. The State Board members the reviewers spoke with expressed concern that the role of the State Board in terms of these activities was less substantial and meaningful than what they believed it should be as described in WIA. In conversation with DOLWD and AWIB staff, significant challenges were identified to increasing the Board's involvement. These included: a state-legislated AWIB Charter that limits meeting to three times a year; travel to, and communications in-between, meetings given the distances and costs unique to Alaska; limitations of Board member's time and the timelines for Federal guidance on the submission of the State Plan modifications and the State's Annual Performance Report. Some Board members also identified training for new members to facilitate better understanding of their roles, responsibilities and the overall workforce system, as a means of improving the AWIB's ability to fulfill its role more completely. *References: WIA sections 111(d) and 117; 20 CFR 661.205(a)-(i) and 20 CFR 661.305 (a) – (c):*

Suggestion: We realize that the State has been working on strengthening the role of the State Board, but more work needs to be done in order for the State Board to more completely fulfill its role as described under WIA. We will continue to explore with the State training and technical assistance resources that are available to help strengthen the involvement of the State Board in workforce planning and oversight activities.

2) Local input to the State Board is weak: A guiding principle of WIA, as described within the preamble to the WIA final rule, is a strong role for local workforce boards in the implementation and oversight of WIA programs. The intent was to ensure that local workforce area needs are met and local interests are represented. In addition, recent ETA policy has placed emphasis on the importance of the roles of the local workforce boards in the ongoing implementation of WIA programs. The State has a waiver permitting the State Board to assume the role of the local workforce boards, and in order to ensure local areas are adequately represented on the State Board, the State established Regional Advisory Councils (RAC's). However, the State Board members the reviewers spoke with expressed concern that the RAC's provide varying and inconsistent opportunities for meaningful input and struggle to understand their roles. Furthermore, this has resulted in a lack of substantive local input into planning and policy decisions. *References: section 20 CFR 661.120(a)*

Suggestion: State Board and Division of Business Partnership staff described ongoing efforts to address this issue. We encourage the State to continue its efforts to ensure that the State Board is effectively fulfilling the role of the local boards, particularly by providing regular and consistent opportunities for local input.