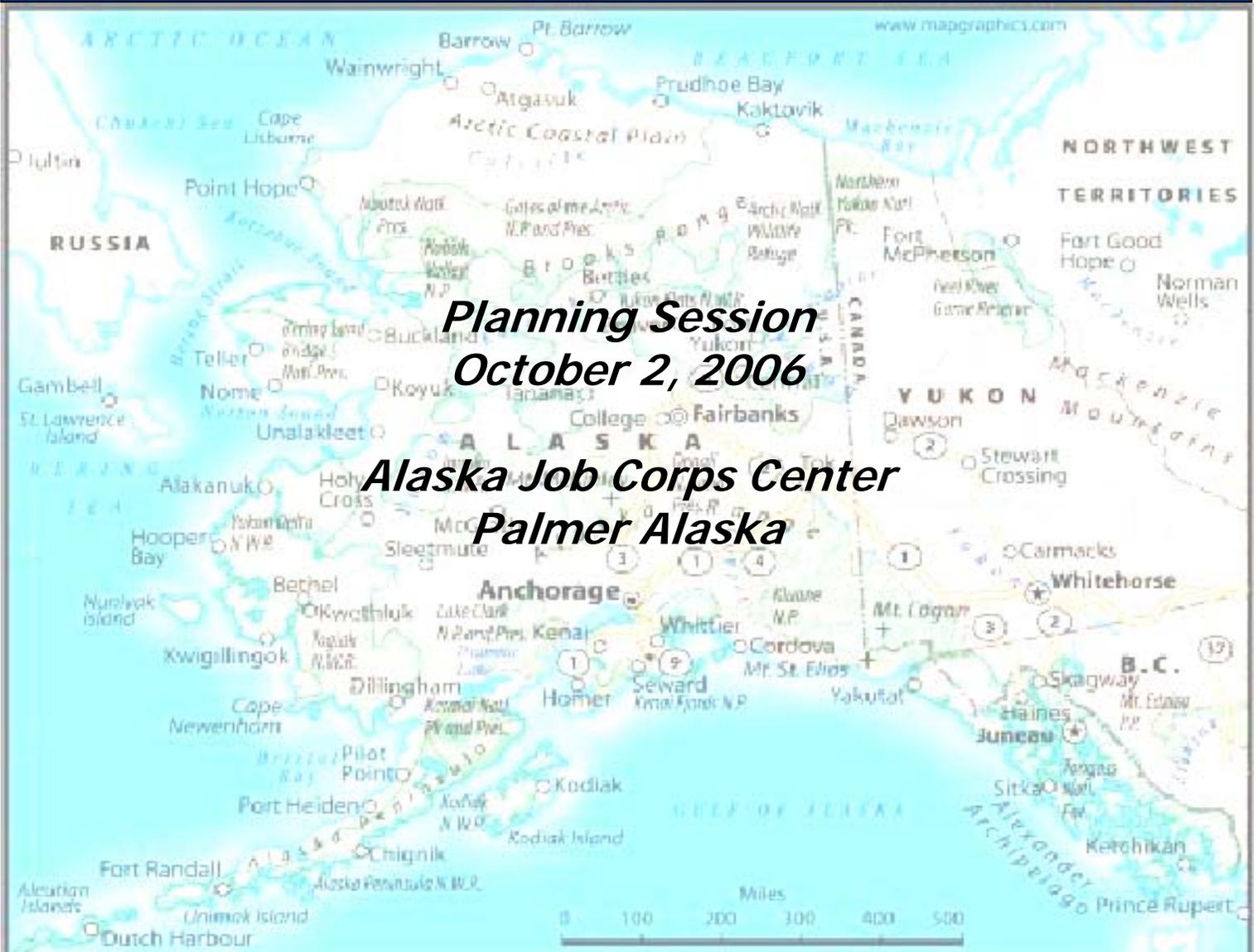




# **ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF LABOR & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT**

## ***Alaska Workforce Investment Board Youth Council***



***Jobs are Alaska's Future***



**ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF LABOR  
& WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT**

**Alaska Workforce Investment Board  
Youth Council Planning Session**

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**ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF LABOR  
& WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT**

**Alaska Workforce Investment Board  
Youth Council**

**10/2/06 Agenda (DRAFT)**

**Teleconference Number: 1(800) 315-6338; Code 5627 (JOBS)**

**Alaska Job Corps Center  
Palmer, Alaska**

- 9:00 A.M. Call to Order and Roll Call  
Approval of Agenda and YC Meeting Minutes – August 8, 2005
- 9:10 Overview of AWIB, YC and WIA (led by Tim Scott)
- 9:30 Review of required functions of Youth Councils under WIA
- 9:40 Debriefing Readiness Assessment (conditions needed for our success)
- 10:00 Seeing the big picture “Youth Workforce Development within a Youth Development Framework” (led by André Layral and Todd Bergman)
- 10:30 Focused conversation about providing a balanced youth workforce development system
- Visioning – “What is the vision of a comprehensive youth serving framework the YC would like to attain in the next 2-3 years?” (must address the population it serves, key elements, service strategies, and the functions the YC must perform to attain the vision)
- Individual and small group brainstorming  
Sharing, clarifying, organizing and naming these aspects of the vision
- 11:30 AK Youth First Initiative – Division of Business Partnerships (Diedre Bailey)
- 11:45 Lunch
- 12:45 PM Identification of the blocks or obstacles that are keeping us from attaining this vision
- 2-3 actions that would address these contradictions and launch us towards our vision
- Accomplishments for the YC in the next year (broken into 90 day segments) that are specific, measurable, action-oriented, realistic and timely
- Identifying who will be responsible for implementation
- Closing reflections and commitments
- 5–6:00 Meeting Adjournment



ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF LABOR  
& WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

**Alaska Workforce Investment Board  
Youth Council Meeting - Anchorage, Alaska  
August 8, 2006 MINUTES *DRAFT***

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Members present: Tim Scott (Chair), Don Brandon, John Douglass, Melissa Hill, David Kvasager, André Layral, Helen Mehrkens, Ex-officio MJ Longley, Margie Germain-Antrim

Others: Andrée McLeod, John Pratt, Todd Bergman

***Call To Order and Roll Call***

Chair Don Brandon called the meeting to order at 11:32 AM and roll was called.

***Introduction of new Youth Council Chair Tim Scott***

Don Brandon officially stepped down and introduced Tim Scott as the newly appointed YC Chair.

***Agenda and Approval of Minutes***

A MOTION to approve the agenda was made by Don Brandon and seconded by John Douglass. The agenda was approved. A MOTION to approve the April 16, 2006 minutes was made by André Layral and seconded by Don Brandon. The minutes were approved.

***Action Items*** None

***Committee Chair Reports***

***Operations -- John Douglass***

The Operations committee has not met since the last YC meeting.

***Market & Planning – David Kvasager***

The Marketing & Planning committee has not met since the last YC meeting.

***Ad-hoc Committee Updates -- Jennifer Jones & Heidi Frost***

None.

***Strategic Planning***

André Layral emphasized the need for a YC strategic planning meeting, outlined some issues to be addressed, and described how the meeting would be conducted. Tim Scott appointed Todd Bergman and Helen Mehrkens to the ad hoc Strategic Planning Committee to assist Mr. Layral in developing materials in preparation for the meeting.

***Discussion Items***

***AWIB/Youth Council Budget for FY 2007***

John Pratt announced that a \$57,000 discretionary fund has been allocated to the AWIB and YC to be used at the cooperative decision of the chairs. The fund's purpose is to pay for costs related to business meetings for both the YC and AWIB; committee meetings; possible member participation in national conferences; and to support rural travel teams. Mr. Pratt stated it's up to the chairs to decide how the fund is divided between the AWIB and YC and suggested establishing a Budget Committee or assigning someone to account and provide a periodic reporting of the fund. A preliminary budget will be presented to AWIB members at the next meeting to assist in making decisions about the fund.

***Other Items***

André Layral asked John Pratt what YC actions would the department support and what kind of support could be expected. John Pratt said it would be most effective to address this issue in the form of a document to be presented at a future YC meeting.

***Meeting Adjournment***

The next YC meeting will be held at the Alaska Job Corps Center in Palmer, either on October 2 or 9, 2006. John Douglass made a MOTION to adjourn, seconded by Helen Mehrkens. The MOTION passed. The meeting adjourned at 12:12 PM.



**ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF LABOR  
& WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT**

**Alaska Workforce Investment Board  
Youth Council Report  
August 25, 2006**

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This will be my last report for the Youth Council and I thought it might be of value to remind AWIB members of some of the highlights of the past 16 months. One observation I have made is that every member of the AWIB and the Governor's staff are very concerned about how we prepare and inspire the workforce of tomorrow. This is heartening considering the multi-cultural nature of our state, and the logistics of a homegrown workforce.

There are some very able professionals in the field of youth services delivery, youth leadership development, and vocational education working in Alaska. And the membership of the Youth Council has access to them on a regular basis. Therefore please remember to call on their expertise as youth workforce issues arise.

As the Youth Council continues to venture forward in its efforts to build bridges among the pockets of youth service providers and Alaskan youth, some basic initial efforts were needed to prepare the YC to shoulder fully its responsibilities under the Workforce Investment Act.

In the last year the administrative work of the Youth Council accomplished the following:

- Passed a set of bylaws that was approved by the AWIB to outline the mission and methods of the Council;
- Approved a vision statement (Building Bridges to Jobs of Alaska's Youth);
- Developed Council member job descriptions;
- Developed ethics rules for Council members;
- Developed formalized operation guidelines;
- Created two additional ad hoc sub committees- Youth Leadership, Youth Workforce Development;
- Worked with Division of Business Partnerships to review grants and recommend programs for funding;
- Developed an Orientation of New Member Training Component;
- Developed AWIB Youth Council presentation describing our role and purpose to be shared with other organizations serving youth;
- Crystallized our purpose "To be the coordinating council for youth workforce development in Alaska;"
- Added the YC as a standing committee in the AWIB bylaws.

In August 2005 the Council adopted seven strategies to improve the youth workforce system. They are to:

- Involve youth in planning and policy development;
- Develop a website or internet portal for Alaskans to provide information for youth, parents, employers and youth organizations;
- Develop public relations and outreach materials to engage a statewide network for youth workforce development;

- Form a coalition among youth workforce readiness and leadership advocates to maximize efforts;
- Build a greater understanding of WIA, youth program policies and activities;
- Develop a strategic plan to integrate with and compliment the AWIB strategic plan;
- Incorporate the Governor's goals for Alaska's youth into strategic planning activities for the YC.

In November, YC activities were put on hold with a change in AWIB's executive director and reorganization of the AWIB committee structure in an effort to create greater involvement of the AWIB membership. After making suggestions for AWIB changes, the consultant then reviewed the make-up and structure of the Youth Council. Below is an excerpt of the consultant's comments regarding the Youth Council. (The full report is attached at the end of this report)

*A key activity for the Youth Council is strategic planning. There is suddenly a great deal of new youth activity underway through the Department; the High Growth Jobs Initiative, Denali Commission Youth Initiatives, and Job Center Career Guides in Schools, for example. There is a current and projected shortage of residents in critical occupations, such as education, health, and construction. It is an appropriate time to do strategic planning for youth workforce programs.*

*There are several issues that should be settled before strategic planning: appointment of Council members, AWIB staff assignments, and meeting resources.*

- *The Youth Council would benefit from more private sector members. Private sector representation is essential to ensuring the programs deliver results desired by employers.*
- *There is no budget for the Youth Council. This means that meetings are held by teleconference with no personal interaction between Council members. A modest travel budget is recommended to enable the Council to have a face to face meeting once or twice per year.*
- *New members should receive orientation about their role and responsibilities prior to attending their first meeting.*
- *There must be adequate AWIB staff resources to meet the needs of the Youth Council. The AWIB Executive Director should ensure staffing to the Council meets the Council's needs.*
- *There are no regular communications by and between the Youth Council members or staff. Most communications are via e-mail and phone as needed. Most of the communications go through the staff and up to the AWIB Executive Director and Department. Providing regular communications is one way to keep members involved. Youth Council staff should discuss ideas with the Chair on ways to have regular communications.*
- *Youth Council members are waiting for something to happen. Most are patient and fall back on their desire to help Alaska's youth in response to the Governor's call to serve but the length between meetings is taking a toll.*
- *There are a number of other state agencies represented on the Youth Council. There is concern youth programs are not contributing their share of resources or collaborating closely enough for a strong youth workforce system. The department should consider ways*

*other programs can adequately support youth council operations and Division of Business Partnerships youth initiatives.*

- *There is no specific requirement for a youth strategic workforce plan at this time. However, it is implied in the overarching legislation that calls upon the AWIB to provide a strategic plan that includes youth workforce strategies. If the Administration wants workforce programs to focus on sustaining high growth jobs initiatives for youth, it would benefit from adoption of a Youth Council strategic plan.*

(The consultant's report was not distributed to Youth Council members till late June and the Council has not had a chance to respond directly to the comments listed above.)

The Youth Council was given permission to begin meetings again in March and scheduled a teleconference in April. The teleconference meeting was an effort to refocus and to allow remaining members to get back on track. The YC was split over re-gathering of our issues and anger over not doing anything for such a long period of time. It was determined that a face-to-face meeting was needed and a date in May was set to meet face to face for strategic planning.

The May face-to-face meeting was cancelled due to lack of travel money, and another date was not scheduled.

Part of the discussion regarding reorganization of the AWIB included a need for a YC chair that was closer to the pulse of youth issues in Alaska. A new AWIB member who had a seat on the State Board of Education and was a school principal with strong ties to rural Alaska seemed to be the perfect candidate. On July 17<sup>th</sup>, Tim Scott was appointed new YC Chair.

An August 8<sup>th</sup> teleconference was set in which Tim Scott assumed his duties of YC Chair and the Council tentatively set a face-to-face meeting date of October 2 or 9, 2006 to complete strategic planning for the YC.

As outgoing chair of the Youth Council I am excited about the changes that will be forthcoming as Tim Scott assumes his duties as the new chair. He has the respect of his peers, speaks the language of today's youth and plays in a rock band. At the time of the writing of this report, several of the consultant's suggestions for the improvement of Youth Council function are in place. Things like a budget, staffing, strategic planning etc. I am pleased to have served as YC Chair and I encourage all AWIB members to lend your support and encouragement to Mr. Scott during these trying and exciting times.

## Consultants Report

***“We need to point our money at helping our youth so they can get good jobs in Alaska and stay here. Everyone wants to help. So let’s just do it.”*** Alaska Youth Council Member

The Alaska Youth Council is an advisory committee to the Alaska Workforce Investment Board for youth (ages 14-21) formed to meet the requirements of the federal Workforce Investment Act of 1998. The federal law mandates the formation and continuance of a Youth Council dedicated to workforce issues for youth, particularly youth who have significant barriers for success in school, transitioning to work, or seeking to advance themselves through postsecondary education and job training.

The Youth Council has oversight for a coordinated system that is effective at meeting youth challenges and for advancing youth into Alaska’s good paying jobs and careers. There are many education, employment and training programs involved helping a wide range of groups of youth, including students in school, school drop-outs, youth involved with the justice system, disabled youth, and Alaska Native youth.

The Youth Council sets the state’s vision for youth as the State’s emerging workforce and offers strategies to help all young Alaskans succeed. The Council vision points workforce programs in a direction that improves services for all youth while preparing them for work and careers in Alaska.

Members of the Youth Council are appointed by the AWIB Chair in consultation with the Commissioner of Labor and Workforce Development. They represent a cross section of geographic regions, government agencies, community, faith based and non-profit organizations, Alaska Native youth programs, educators, industry, unions, youth, parents of youth, and other committed volunteers.

The Council forges partnerships and drives coordination among partners to offer a structured education, employment and training system. Three current Council objectives are to (1) provide a variety of proactive options to improve educational achievement, (2) reduce high school dropout rates, and (3) prepare youth for successful careers in Alaska.

The current Youth Council has strived to ensure each member understands its mission and role. This understanding helps the Council fulfill its role. The Youth Council adopted bylaws in 2005 that were subsequently adopted by the Alaska Workforce Investment Board. The bylaws include a vision statement (*Building Bridges to Jobs for Alaska’s Youth*), mission statement, member job descriptions, ethics rules for council members, standing and ad hoc committees, and operation rules.

The Youth Council has formed several committees to help accomplish its mission. These are the Executive, Operations, Marketing & Planning, Youth Leadership Development, Workforce Development, and Strategic Planning. There is a process for moving youth workforce policy through committees, through the Youth Council, to the AWIB Executive Committee.

In August 2005 the Council adopted five strategies to improve the youth workforce system. These are:

- a website to provide information for youth, parents, employers and youth organizations,

- public relations and outreach materials to engage a statewide network for youth workforce development,
- form a coalition among youth workforce readiness and leadership advocates to maximize efforts,
- build a greater understanding of WIA, youth program policies and activities, and
- involve youth in planning and policy development.

The large number of Council members brings many volunteers and voices to strengthen the state youth workforce system and ensure good programs for youth. Coordinating the activities of members is challenging for Council leadership and staff.

The AWIB has assigned one person as lead staff to the Council. AWIB staff coordinates with the Division of Business Partnerships Youth Program Manager and connecting federal and state programs to help carry out program oversight. Youth Council makes timely decisions required by WIA.

In general, the Youth Council is functioning and meets the requirements of WIA, which is a minimum standard. The Council wants to accomplish more by engaging in the development of a more comprehensive service delivery system.

A key activity for the Youth Council is strategic planning. There is suddenly a great deal of *new* youth activity underway through the Department; the High Growth Jobs Initiative, Denali Commission Youth Initiatives, and Job Center Career Guides in Schools, for example. There is a current and projected shortage of residents in critical occupations, such as education, health, and construction. It is an appropriate time to do strategic planning for youth workforce programs.

There are several issues that should be settled before strategic planning: appointment of Council members, AWIB staff assignments, and meeting resources.

- The Youth Council would benefit from more private sector members. Private sector representation is essential to ensuring the programs deliver results desired by employers.
- There is no budget for the Youth Council. This means that meetings are held by teleconference with no personal interaction between Council members. A modest travel budget is recommended to enable the Council to have a face to face meeting once or twice per year.
- New members should receive orientation about their role and responsibilities prior to attending their first meeting.
- There must be adequate AWIB staff resources to meet the needs of the Youth Council. The AWIB Executive Director should ensure staffing to the Council meets the Council's needs.
- There are no regular communications by and between the Youth Council members or staff. Most communications are via e-mail and phone as needed. Most of the communications go through the staff and up to the AWIB Executive Director and Department. Providing regular communications is one way to keep members involved. Youth Council staff should discuss ideas with the Chair on ways to have regular communications.

- Youth Council members are waiting for something to happen. Most are patient and fall back on their desire to help Alaska's youth in response to the Governor's call to serve but the length between meetings is taking a toll.
- There are a number of other state agencies represented on the Youth Council. There is concern youth programs are not contributing their share of resources or collaborating closely enough for a strong youth workforce system. The department should consider ways other programs can adequately support youth council operations and Division of Business Partnerships youth initiatives.

There is no specific requirement for a youth strategic workforce plan at this time. However, it is implied in the overarching legislation that calls upon the AWIB to provide a strategic plan that includes youth workforce strategies. If the Administration wants workforce programs to focus on sustaining high growth jobs initiatives for youth, it would benefit from adoption of a Youth Council strategic plan.

## Questions to help prepare for the Youth Council Planning Session

1. What should the relationship of the YC be with the AWIB board and regional councils?

2. What are the outcomes desired in the AWIB plan and how can or should the YC assist?

3. What is the role of the YC? (and what it is not?)

4. What is the authority of the YC to take action? Is it advisory to AWIB or more or both?

5. What aspects of the current AWIB strategic plan are relevant to the YC?

6. What "key actions" do YC members believe the YC should undertake?

7. What are the key actions the YC should advocate others take?

## Questions to help prepare for the Youth Council Planning Session

8. What are the elements of an effective youth development framework and what policies or regulations should the YC should advance?

9. What workforce readiness needs of rural and urban youth should the YC advocate so their needs are equally met?

10. How can the YC ensure that different rural and urban viewpoints (including that of youth) are included?

11. How can the YC ensure the perspectives of service providers and those who work with youth are included?

12. How can the YC ensure that employer needs are balanced and connected with youth development needs?

13. What can the YC do to advocate for successful transition of eligible youth (and all other youth) to workforce development programs?

14. What plans previously developed by various YC committees should be included in the YC implementation plan?

## AWIB Youth Council Readiness Assessment

Condition Needed for Success	Not in place or not clear	Aware but still emerging	We're making progress	We're already there	Comments/questions or notes to self
1. There is a clear statement of purpose for the AWIB Youth Council.					
2. The purpose of the Youth Council emerged from thoughtful deliberation of its members, rather than imposed by the AWIB Board.					
3. The AWIB Youth Council has a clear vision of what youth workforce development is.					
4. There is a clear youth delivery system in place that prepares youth for success in work and life.					
5. Members of the AWIB Youth Council have a clear understanding of existing workforce development services for youth in Alaska and their regions.					
6. Members of the AWIB Youth Council understand their roles.					
7. Members of the AWIB Youth Council want real change for youth workforce development in Alaska.					
8. The current AWIB Youth Council reflects the various regions (urban and rural) and demographics of Alaska.					
9. The current youth workforce service delivery is working well for preparing youth throughout Alaska.					
10. There is successful collaboration occurring by youth providers in Alaska for coordinating effective youth workforce development					
11. While not voting members, youth providers are actively involved in projects identified by the AWIB Youth Council.					

## AWIB Youth Council Readiness Assessment

Condition Needed for Success	Not in place or not clear	Aware but still emerging	We're making progress	We're already there	Comments/questions or notes to self
12. The perspectives of youth providers are sought before decisions are made by the Youth Council, and they are respected for the work they do.					
13. The perspectives of a broad range of youth are sought about workforce development needs and viewed as crucial to the success of any plans for implementation or improvement.					
14. Youth from grantees and youth programs are involved in the design, implementation and evaluation of youth council projects.					
15. The AWIB Youth Council works with youth providers as partners to improve the current delivery system					
16. There is a clear service delivery plan focused on education, training and employment services for youth.					
17. While competitors for funding, youth providers want to cooperate in their efforts to maximize services for their region.					
18. The AWIB Chair is supportive of participant-driven planning processes, is patient with process and willing to be a member at the table, albeit a member with special responsibilities.					
19. There is clear intent and means to involve youth in AWIB Youth Council activities.					
20. There is a Project Coordinator position dedicated to leading or supporting the activities of the AWIB Youth Council.					
21. There is the funding available to cover the direct expenses related to implementing YC identified projects, including the cost of a Project Coordinator.					
22. There is a clear commitment by the AWIB Executive Council to supporting the vision and actions identified by the Youth Council.					



**ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF LABOR  
& WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT**

**Alaska Workforce Investment Board  
Youth Council**

## **Role of the Youth Council (WIA)**

A youth Council is to be established as a subgroup of the local WIB board.

The youth council:

- develops portions of the local plan relating to youth;
- recommends the providers of youth activities to be awarded grants by the local board; and,
- coordinates youth activities in the local area.

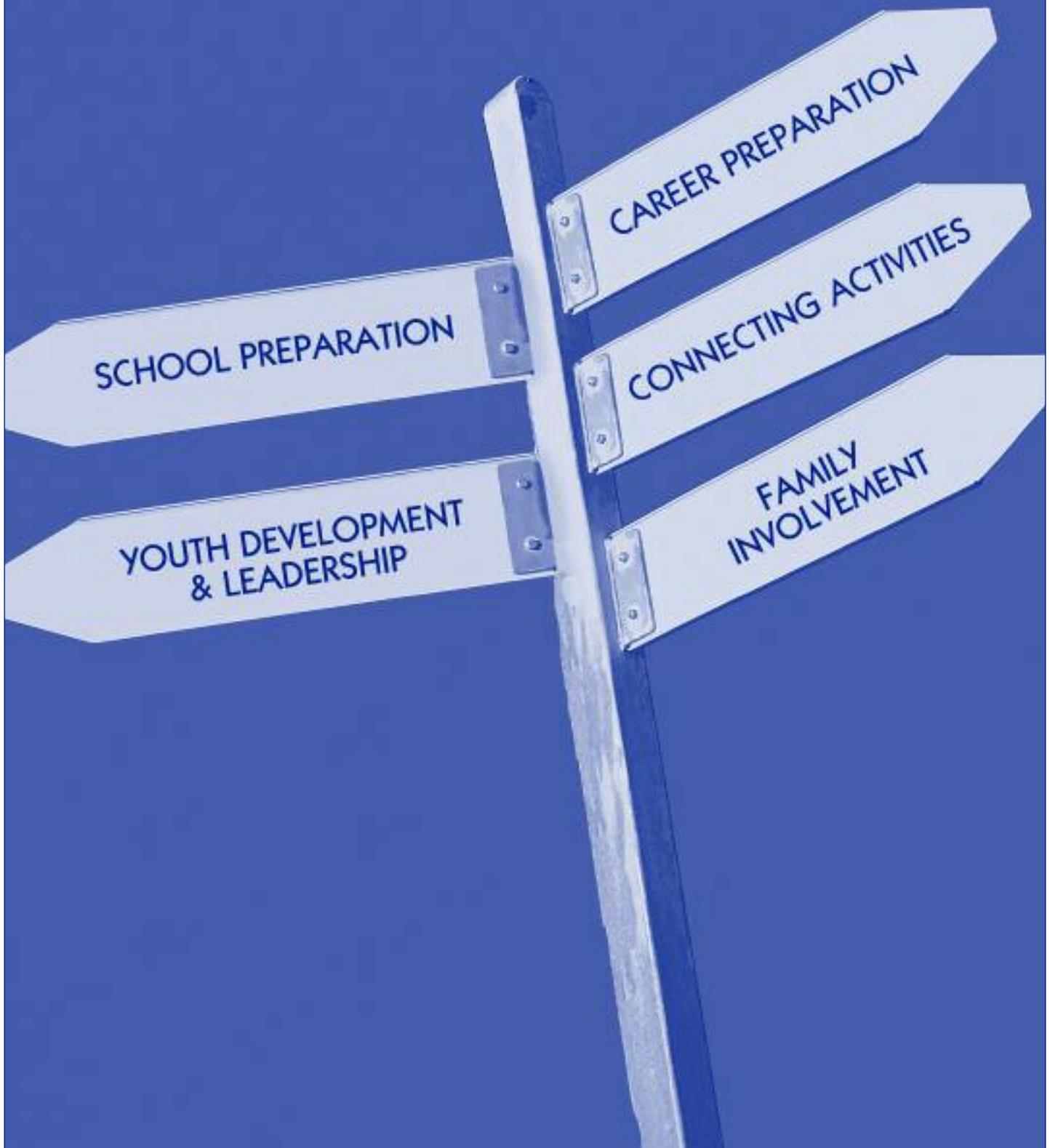
## **Essential Components of a Youth Workforce Readiness Ecosystem** *Strategy for AWIB Youth Council*

(Support strategies that help create a system capable of incorporating the interests of family, business and industry, K-12 education, workforce development, youth groups, community and faith-based organizations, local advisory boards and government officials.)

- Collaborate with leaders capable of strategically positioning, promoting and growing resources from a variety of funding sources to sustain a comprehensive youth investment system.
- Support policy that positions, promotes and grows collaboration between a variety of stakeholders and service providers (certifications, structured workplace experiences, internships, service-learning, apprenticeships, regular employment...) assisting youth in meeting the job requirements of the ever-evolving workplace.
- Support policy & targets (goals and measures) that addressing key results for secondary education, post-secondary education, work/job/employment readiness, youth mentoring & guidance...
- Support policy that ensures *workforce readiness* (Alaska Employability Standards) and *career development standards* (national skill based and certification standards) are integrated into all secondary vocational and career & technical education programs.
- Support policy that institutes performance measures and review (*workforce readiness* (Alaska Employability Standards) and *career development standards* (national skill based and certification standards)) for all youth service providers.

NCWD/YOUTH

# GUIDEPOSTS *for* SUCCESS



NATIONAL COLLABORATIVE ON WORKFORCE AND DISABILITY

## ABOUT THE COLLABORATIVE



**T**he National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth (NCWD/Youth) has been created to help state and local workforce development systems improve outcomes for youth with disabilities. Housed at the Institute for Educational Leadership in Washington, D.C., NCWD/Youth is composed of partners with expertise in disability, education, employment, and workforce development policy and practice.

This document was developed by the National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth, funded by a grant/contract/cooperative agreement from the U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Disability Employment (Number #E-9-4-1-0070). The opinions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the position or policy of the U.S. Department of Labor. Nor does mention of tradenames, commercial products, or organizations imply the endorsement by the U.S. Department of Labor.

## GUIDEPOSTS FOR SUCCESS

T

he transition from youth to adulthood is challenging for almost every young person. This is particularly true for young people with disabilities. Yet, it is in those critical transition-age years that a young person's future can be determined. Part of a successful future includes finding and keeping work. The total employment rate is projected to increase by 15% in the first decade of the twenty-first century. Employment in occupations that generally require a college degree or other postsecondary credential is projected to grow much faster than other jobs across all occupations. Jobs requiring work-related training will still account for the majority of the new positions.

### CHALLENGES FACING YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES IN THE WORKPLACE

Youth with disabilities, and particularly those with significant disabilities, often face difficulties in accessing the workforce development system. The workforce development system encompasses organizations at the national, state, and local levels with direct responsibility for

planning, allocating resources (both public and private), providing administrative oversight, and operating programs to assist individuals and employers in obtaining education, training, job placement, and job recruitment.

Today, there continues to be a stubborn dilemma facing youth with disabilities. In spite of supportive legislation (e.g., the **Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)**, the **Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)**, and the **Rehabilitation Act**), and identified effective practices, these youth continue to experience high unemployment as well as insufficient opportunities to obtain competitive employment with the potential of career growth. Many youth with disabilities, and particularly those with significant disabilities, experience poor education and employment outcomes. Certainly, some youth with disabilities have attained successful careers. Some of these youth have benefited from well delivered special education transition services, while others have received timely and appropriately delivered youth employment

THE TOTAL  
EMPLOYMENT RATE  
IS PROJECTED TO  
INCREASE BY 15%  
IN THE FIRST  
DECADE OF THE  
TWENTY-FIRST  
CENTURY.



services; many of these successes reflect both circumstances. Yet, these successes are not the norm.

**Consider the following facts:**

- Special education students are more than twice as likely as their peers in general education to drop out of high school.
- Youth with disabilities are half as likely as their peers without disabilities to participate in postsecondary education.
- The adjudication rate of youth with disabilities is four times higher than for youth without disabilities.
- Roughly 10% to 12% of all youth will present some form of mental health problem of significant severity to call for some sort of short-term special services and treatment at some point during their teenage years.
- More than half of youth identified with mental health needs will drop out of school, and only between 5% and 20% will enter postsecondary education.
- Approximately 5% of all school children have some form of a learning disability and are served under special education, while between 15% and 17% of all children have reading difficulties. Less than 8% of those with learning disabilities go on to college after high school.
- Two-thirds of those with learning disabilities have not been identified by the school system as having such disorders. The majority of this population is poor, disproportionately female, minority and will not graduate from high school.
- Current special education students can expect to face much higher adult unemployment rates than their peers without disabilities.

- Young adults with disabilities are three times likelier to live in poverty as adults than their peers without disabilities.

Little or no expectation of success, low educational attainment, few vocational goals, and confusing government programs with conflicting eligibility criteria have resulted in many youth with disabilities not making a successful transition from school to postsecondary education, employment, and independent living.

**WHAT CAN BE DONE TO IMPROVE CHANCES?**

Research has identified educational and career development interventions that can make a positive difference in the lives of youth. Work-based learning experiences, preferably connected to curriculum content; student-centered individualized education programs that drive instruction; family involvement in and support of education and career development activities; and linkages to individually determined support services have all been proven, by both practice and research, to lead to the education and employment success of all youth, including youth with disabilities.

**All youth need the following:**

- Access to high quality standards-based education regardless of the setting;
- Information about career options and exposure to the world of work, including structured internships;
- Opportunities to develop social, civic, and leadership skills;
- Strong connections to caring adults;
- Access to safe places to interact with their peers; and
- Support services to allow them to become independent adults.



YOUNG ADULTS WITH DISABILITIES ARE THREE TIMES LIKELIER TO LIVE IN POVERTY AS ADULTS THAN THEIR PEERS WITHOUT DISABILITIES.



# THE GUIDEPOSTS

**N**CWD/Youth has identified **Guideposts for Success** based on what research tells us that all youth need to transition to adulthood successfully. The **Guideposts** provide:

- a statement of principles;
- a direction that will lead to better outcomes for all young people; and
- a way to organize policy and practice.

## WHO SHOULD USE THEM AND HOW?

**Youth and families** should look for programs and activities that provide these features. Youth with disabilities should use the **Guideposts** in developing any individualized plans, such as Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), Individualized Plans for Employment (IPE), and service strategies as required by the Workforce Investment Act.

**State level policy makers** should use the **Guideposts** as a strategic organizational framework which can assist them in moving the state's transition planning from a stove-pipe focus on guiding categorical programs and funding to a more coordinated transition system focusing on successful outcomes for all youth.

**Administrators and policy makers at the local level** should use the **Guideposts** in making decisions regarding funding, in setting and establishing local priorities related to transitioning youth, and in evaluating the work of agencies supported by that funding.

NCWD/Youth also has developed a number of tools for youth-service practitioners to implement the **Guideposts** in their work.

## The Guideposts are based on the important following assumptions:

1. High expectations for all youth, including youth with disabilities;
2. Equality of opportunity for everyone, including nondiscrimination, individualization, inclusion, and integration;
3. Full participation through self-determination, informed choice, and participation in decision-making;
4. Independent living, including skills development and long-term supports and services;
5. Competitive employment and economic self sufficiency, which may include supports; and,
6. Individualized, person-driven, and culturally and linguistically appropriate transition planning.

The **Guideposts** framework is organized in the following manner. After providing a detailed list within each **Guidepost** of what all youth need, the framework then describes additional specific needs pertaining to youth with disabilities. By addressing these specific needs policymakers, program administrators, youth service practitioners, parents, family members, and youth will have access to a foundation that will lead to work, further education, and independent community living.



# GUIDEPOST 1

## SCHOOL-BASED PREPARATORY EXPERIENCES

**I**n order to perform at optimal levels in all education settings, all youth need to participate in educational programs grounded in standards, clear performance expectations, and graduation exit options based upon meaningful, accurate, and relevant indicators of student learning and skills. **These should include the following:**

- academic programs that are based on clear state standards;
- career and technical education programs that are based on professional and industry standards;
- curricular and program options based on universal design of school, work, and community-based learning experiences;
- learning environments that are small and safe, including extra supports such as tutoring, as necessary;
- supports from and by highly qualified staff;
- access to an assessment system that includes multiple measures; and
- graduation standards that include options.

**In addition, youth with disabilities need to do the following:**

- use their individual transition plans to drive their personal instruction, and use strategies to continue the transition process post-schooling;
- have access to specific and individual learning accommodations while they are in school;
- develop knowledge of reasonable accommodations that they can request and control in educational settings, including assessment accommodations; and
- be supported by highly qualified transitional support staff that may or may not be school staff.



...ALL YOUTH NEED TO PARTICIPATE IN EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS GROUNDED IN STANDARDS, CLEAR PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS, AND GRADUATION EXIT OPTIONS...



## GUIDEPOST 2

### CAREER PREPARATION AND WORK-BASED LEARNING EXPERIENCES

**C**areer preparation and work-based learning experiences are essential in order for youth to form and develop aspirations and to make informed choices about careers. These experiences can be provided during the school day or through after-school programs, and will require collaborations with other organizations.

**All youth need information on career options, including the following:**

- career assessments to help identify students' school and post-school preferences and interests;
- structured exposure to postsecondary education and other life-long learning opportunities;
- exposure to career opportunities that ultimately lead to a living wage, including information about educational requirements, entry requirements, income and benefits potential, and asset accumulation; and
- training designed to improve job-seeking skills and work-place basic skills (sometimes called “soft skills”).

**In order to identify and attain career goals, youth need to be exposed to a range of experiences, including the following:**

- opportunities to engage in a range of work-based exploration activities such as site visits and job shadowing;
- multiple on-the-job training experiences, including community service (paid or unpaid), that are specifically linked to the content of a program of study and school credit;
- opportunities to learn and practice their work skills (so-called “soft skills”); and
- opportunities to learn first-hand about specific occupational skills related to a career pathway.

**In addition, youth with disabilities need to do the following:**

- understand the relationships between benefits planning and career choices;
- learn to communicate their disability-related work support and accommodation needs; and
- learn to find, formally request, and secure appropriate supports and reasonable accommodations in education, training, and employment settings.

IN ORDER TO IDENTIFY AND ATTAIN CAREER GOALS, YOUTH NEED TO BE EXPOSED TO A RANGE OF EXPERIENCES.



# GUIDEPOST 3

## YOUTH DEVELOPMENT AND LEADERSHIP



**Y**outh Development is a process that prepares young people to meet the challenges of adolescence and adulthood through a coordinated, progressive series of activities and experiences which help them gain skills and competencies. Youth leadership is part of that process. **In order to control and direct their own lives based on informed decisions, all youth need the following:**

- exposure to personal leadership and youth development activities, including community service; and
- opportunities that allow youth to exercise leadership and build self-esteem.

**Youth with disabilities also need the following:**

- mentors and role models including persons with and without disabilities; and
- an understanding of disability history, culture, and disability public policy issues as well as their rights and responsibilities.

...ALL YOUTH  
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OPPORTUNITIES  
THAT ALLOW  
THEM TO  
EXERCISE  
LEADERSHIP  
AND BUILD  
SELF-ESTEEM.



## GUIDEPOST CONNECTING ACTIVITIES

oung people need to be connected to programs, services, activities, and supports that help them gain access to chosen post-school options. **All youth may need one or more of the following:**

- mental and physical health services;
- transportation;
- tutoring;
- financial planning and management;
- post-program supports through structured arrangements in postsecondary institutions and adult service agencies; and
- connection to other services and opportunities (e.g. recreation).

**Youth with disabilities may need one or more of the following:**

- acquisition of appropriate assistive technologies;
- community orientation and mobility training (e.g. accessible transportation, bus routes, housing, health clinics);
- exposure to post-program supports such as independent living centers and other consumer-driven community-based support service agencies;
- personal assistance services, including attendants, readers, interpreters, or other such services; and
- benefits-planning counseling, including information regarding the myriad of benefits available and their interrelationships so that youth may maximize those benefits in transitioning from public assistance to self-sufficiency.

YOUNG PEOPLE  
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GAIN ACCESS  
TO CHOSEN  
POST-SCHOOL  
OPTIONS



# GUIDEPOST 5

## FAMILY INVOLVEMENT AND SUPPORTS

**P**articipation and involvement of parents, family members, and/or other caring adults promotes the social, emotional, physical, academic and occupational growth of youth, leading to better post-school outcomes. **All youth need parents, families, and other caring adults who do the following:**

- take an active role in transition planning with schools and community partners; and
- have access to medical, professional, and peer support networks.

**In addition, youth with disabilities need parents, families, and other caring adults who have the following:**

- have high expectations that build upon the young person's strengths, interests, and needs and that foster each youth's ability to achieve independence and self-sufficiency;
- remain involved in their lives and assist them toward adulthood;
- have access to information about employment, further education, and community resources;
- an understanding of the youth's disability and how it affects his or her education, employment, and daily living options;
- knowledge of rights and responsibilities under various disability-related legislation;
- knowledge of and access to programs, services, supports, and accommodations available for young people with disabilities; and
- an understanding of how individualized planning tools can assist youth in achieving transition goals and objectives.

ALL YOUTH  
NEED THE  
SUPPORT OF  
PARENTS, FAMILY  
MEMBERS,  
AND OTHER  
CARING  
ADULTS.

5



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National Conference of State Legislatures

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**NCWD/YOUTH**

1-877-871-0744 (toll free)

1-877-871-0665 (TTY toll free)

<http://www.ncwd-youth.info>

[contact@ncwd-youth.info](mailto:contact@ncwd-youth.info)

# Information Brief

Issue 3 September 2002

The National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth is working to ensure that youth with disabilities are provided full access to high quality services in integrated settings to gain employment and independent living. NCWD/Youth is:

- Supporting state and local policies that promote full access to high quality services for youth with disabilities;
- Strengthening the services provided by organizations responsible for delivery of workforce development services; and,
- Improving the awareness, knowledge, and skills of individuals responsible for providing direct services to youth.

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This Information Brief is the part of a series of publications and Newsletters to be prepared by the NCWD/Youth. All publications will be posted on the Web site listed on page 4. Please visit our Website to sign up to be notified of future publications.

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## How Young People Can Benefit from One-Stop Centers

Are you looking for a job for the summer or year round? Is everyone asking you what you are going to do after high school? Don't know what to tell them or where to start? Well, there is a new resource to help you get started: **One Stop Centers**. At One Stop Centers you will find the tools you need to build your future and enter the world of work. They offer resources and assistance to help in each stage of your road to work, including researching careers, completing resumes and applications, and practicing for interviews. This Information Brief familiarizes you with, and prepares you for, your first visit to a One Stop Center. It explains the history of One Stop Centers, who can use a Center, the services provided, and how you can get the most out of a Center.

## What Is the Workforce Investment Act and What Does it Have to Do with Me?

Since the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) became law in 1998, one of its main goals has been to bring job related services under one roof in places called One Stop Centers. These Centers gather together job information and resources in one place and make them available to everyone in a simple and convenient manner. Because of WIA, more people find out about and are linked to services they need without going to more than one place. WIA also ensures that **all** people are able to access Center services. Centers, according to the law, must work in ways that empower people with enough information to make good choices about their work and future job opportunities. Finally, WIA emphasizes youth. Youth activities available under WIA include tutoring and instruction leading to completion of high school, summer employment opportunities, paid and unpaid work experiences such as internships and job shadowing, leadership development activities, and mentoring. WIA specifically discusses how youth can qualify for services and what services are available to them. Center staff are familiar with jobs and opportunities in the community. They can help you not only find a job but also help you find appropriate training, return to school, develop job seeking skills, and learn about yourself and your interests.

## What can One-Stops Do for Me?

One-Stop Centers can provide you with valuable resources that will assist you in:

- obtaining information about careers in your local community and skills required for a wide variety of occupations
- developing important work skills such as conducting job searches, writing resumes, preparing for interviews;
- accessing information and opportunities for work-based experience through internships, summer work programs, apprenticeships and mentoring;
- identifying community resources that can help you to plan and meet your transition goals.

Typically there are many different types of community based organizations and services located at or connected to One Stop Centers. Center staff have information about these and other resources in your community and can refer you to them as needed. Centers usually have resources such as computers, job listings, materials about education and training programs, and lots of information about different careers. Most Centers also provide a range of services, from what they call "core" services, to actual training. (See chart on page 3) The type of service you receive depends on what you qualify for and what the Center offers.

## Am I Eligible to Use One Stop Centers?

Anyone 18 years of age and older is eligible for core services; however, some Centers have special programs for youth 14 years of age and older who meet certain eligibility criteria. If they do not have special programs or you do not meet the eligibility criteria, you can still use the basic resources offered by the One Stop, even if you already receive services from another agency or your school. You are eligible for core services if you are:

- 14-21 and are part of a group that has traditionally faced serious barriers to being employed, such as living in low-income circumstances or having a disability;

- 18 or older and have a hard time getting a job and/or keeping one;
- Struggling with dropping out of school or have been homeless, a runaway, in foster care, or have a child;
- A pregnant mother or a parent;
- An offender; or
- In need of help completing an educational program or in securing and holding a job.

## One Stop Centers Services

The chart on the following page describes the three levels of service provided at One Stop Centers. Core services may be the most useful to you. The resource library, online databanks and workshops give you a chance to prepare for work, find out more about what is out there, in terms of work, and what you may be interested in pursuing

## Finding a One Stop Center

There are centers in major population areas in every State. If there is more than one nearby, you can choose the one you want to use. Contact each Center and find out which one offers the services most appropriate for you. Sometimes locating Centers can be challenging. In many states and cities, these Centers have different names; most of them are not called One-Stop Centers. Here are three of the best and fastest ways to find the One Stop closest to you:

1. Contact America's Service Locator from the U.S. Department of Labor, at 877-872-5627 (toll free) or at their web site [www.servicelocator.org](http://www.servicelocator.org).
2. Call your State Department of Labor <http://www.dol.gov/dol/location.htm>
3. Ask your guidance counselor, special education coordinator, or transition coordinator at school.

## Visiting a One Stop Center

Once you know which Center to use, you need to prepare for your first visit. Below are two lists of things you can do to help this initial visit go smoothly.

## Three Levels of Service

	Descriptions	Examples
<b>Core Services</b>	Available to everyone for free. Most of these services are self-directed and you decide what to use and how to use them. However, help is available from staff.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access to job banks and listings of jobs</li> <li>• Internet access</li> <li>• Access to computers and other tools available in the resource library</li> <li>• Workshops that focus on topics such as: job seeking skills, interviewing techniques, resume development</li> <li>• Work skills and interest inventories</li> </ul>
<b>Intensive Services</b>	Available to people unable to become employed by using the core services, or who meet other specific eligibility for extended services. Access to more services and special programs and training.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individual and group training sessions</li> <li>• Individualized job counseling and one-on-one assistance</li> <li>• Tutoring and study skills</li> <li>• Case management</li> <li>• Intensive career counseling</li> </ul>
<b>Training</b>	Services offered to people who have not become successfully employed through core or intensive services and are eligible. May use Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) to choose training services from any approved organization.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Literacy or academic assistance</li> <li>• Custom training for a specific employer</li> <li>• Technical training programs (for example medical assistant or data processor)</li> </ul>

### Before you go:

It's a good idea to call a Center before your first visit and ask the following questions

- What services are available to me and how are they provided?
- What documents or information do I need to bring with me to the Center?
- How do I start the process? Is there a group orientation
- Do I make an appointment to meet with a staff person?
- Do I walk in and help myself?
- Is someone available to assist me with self-directed activities, if needed?

Ask about accommodations. If you have a disability and you require any accommodations, you will need to speak up. Tell them the type of assistance you will need at your first visit. It will help if you have an idea about what accommodations help you succeed in a school setting.

- Do you use a sign language interpreter?
- Do you need written information in Braille, large print or a different alternative format?
- Do you need help using equipment?
- Do you need help filling out forms?
- Do you use special equipment or assistive technology?

**Note about disclosure:** If you have a disability, you are not obligated to disclose that you have one; however, if you will need accommodations, you will have to disclose that you have a disability in order to receive your requested accommodations. Also, disclosing may open the door to other services that could be useful to you. The decision to disclose is yours.

Gather any papers or documents you are told to bring. If you need help doing this, ask someone in your family or at school to help you put things in order.

### **When you get there:**

You may be asked to register, fill out some papers, or even enter some information into a computer. This information will help staff identify the best services for you.

A question about disability may be included in the registration form. Remember that you are not obligated to disclose that you have a disability.

Ask if you can meet with a staff person to develop a plan for using the Center's services tailored to your goals and needs. This will help you make the best use of services and opportunities. If you have a transition plan at school, determine how the opportunities at the Center

This Information Brief was written by Kerry Venegas, intern, for the Academy for Educational Development and published by the Institute for Educational Leadership for the National Collaborative.

### For more information

National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth  
1001 Connecticut Avenue, NW  
Suite 310

Washington, DC 20036

Email: [Collaborative@iel.org](mailto:Collaborative@iel.org)

877 871 0744 toll free (for general technical assistance questions)

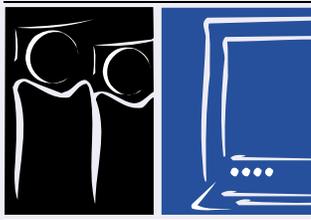
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### HIGH SCHOOL • HIGH TECH



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can help you fulfill your transition plan goals. Use the resources and technology available at the Center, such as computers and fax machines, to search for job information, type and send letters or put together your resume. If you don't know how to use a computer, or have never used the Internet, ask if they offer workshops on how to use the computer or ask a staff member for help.

**NOTE:** Find out if there are fees for sending faxes, making photocopies, accessing the internet, or utilizing other resources **before** you use them.

Participate in any activities that might help you achieve your goals, and try new things. Ask about workshops and when they are offered. The Center may offer workshops on a variety of topics, such as how to write a resume or job seeking skills.

*Remember to be open and up front about what your goals are, what your interests are, and/or what you want to try – you are the best person to decide about what you want to do.*

**Follow-through.** If you sign up for a workshop, be sure to attend. If you have a worksite experience scheduled, make sure that you go. Finish your activities and be responsible for what you need to do.

### One Last Thing

One Stop Centers provide opportunities for you to explore your options and enhance your job skills. All you have to do is find out what a Center near you has to offer and get started using its services. A One Stop Center is the best place for you to get started on the Road to Work!

### Information Online

There is a lot of information about One Stop Centers on the Internet.

The US Workforce website for information about the Workforce Investment Act and how to find One Stop Centers in any state <http://www.doleta.gov/>

America's Service Locator <http://www.servicelocator.org> for finding One Stop Centers

Employment and Training Administration website for information related services for people with disabilities, including One Stop Centers

<http://www.doleta.gov/usworkforce/resources/disability.asp>

## Serving Youth with Disabilities Under the Workforce Investment Act of 1998: *The Basics*

### What is the Workforce Investment Act (WIA)?

The Workforce Investment Act (P.L. 105-220) (WIA) provides coordinated, effective, and customer-focused workforce development and employment services. Congress passed WIA in 1998. Title I of WIA provides for services to youth, adults, and dislocated workers through three formula-based funding streams. The youth provisions of Title I of WIA require states and localities to provide a comprehensive workforce preparation system that reflects the developmental needs of youth. The Act institutionalizes the One-Stop System as the delivery system of choice, requires the participation of 19 partner programs in the One-Stop System, and strongly encourages the participation of others. One-Stop services are provided at both physical and virtual sites, and serve as gateways to employment and training information and services found in communities. However, youth services are often provided in locations other than the One-Stop center.

### How does WIA benefit youth?

Under WIA, eligible youth receive a wide array of services in achieving academic and employment success.

*Activities include:*

- Tutoring and other academic instruction;
- Occupational skill training;
- On-going mentoring opportunities;
- Workforce participation, including work experience and job readiness training;
- Continued supportive services;

*This information brief is for anyone who interacts with youth with disabilities and would like to know about the programs under the Workforce Investment Act of 1998. The brief provides background on those parts of the Workforce Investment Act that cover service to youth so that youth, families, and service providers can better connect to the workforce development system.*

- Incentives for recognition and achievement; and
- Leadership, development, decision-making, and community service.

WIA links traditional youth employment and training services with the core principles of youth development by requiring ten program elements that are discussed later.

### Who can participate in the Workforce Investment Act Youth Program?

WIA youth services are available for both in-school and out-of-school youth aged 14 to 21. To be eligible, youth must be low-income and face one or more of the following barriers:

- Basic skills deficient;
- School dropout;
- Homeless, a runaway, or foster child;
- Pregnant teen or teen parent;

- Offender; or
- Individual who requires additional assistance to complete an educational program or to secure and hold employment.

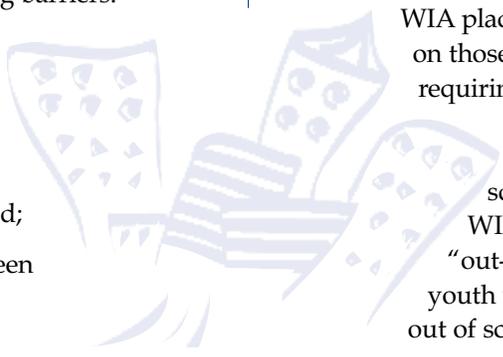
Even if the family of a disabled youth does not meet the income eligibility criteria, the disabled youth may be considered a low-income individual if the youth's own income:

- Meets the income criteria established in WIA section 101(25)(B); or
- Meets the income eligibility criteria for cash payments under any federal, state, or local public assistance program.

In addition, up to five percent of the youth served in a local area can be exempted from the low-income requirement, if they:

- Experience one or more of the barriers listed above;
- Are one or more grade levels below their age-appropriate grade level;
- Are an individual with a disability, including a learning disability (emphasis added); or
- Face a serious barrier to employment as identified by the local board.

WIA places heavy emphasis on those most in need, requiring that 30 percent of the funds be used on out-of-school youth. The WIA definition of "out-of-school" includes youth who have dropped out of school, as well as





youth who have graduated from high school or hold a GED but are deficient in basic skills, unemployed, or underemployed. To be defined as out-of-school, the applicant must not be enrolled in school or any alternative educational program when he or she registers for WIA services; however, the applicant may be placed in an educational program, such as a GED program or alternative school, as part of the service strategy after registration.

### What services are provided?

WIA mandates that ten *youth program elements* be included in WIA services provided to eligible youth. The specific services provided to a youth are outlined in the individual service strategy, which is developed based on the youth's individual needs. These program elements, which are consistent with youth development research, include:

1. Tutoring, study skills training, and instruction leading to completion of secondary school, including dropout prevention strategies;
2. Alternative secondary school services;
3. Summer employment opportunities that are directly linked to academic and occupational learning;
4. Paid and unpaid work experiences, including internships and job shadowing;
5. Occupational skill training, as appropriate;
6. Leadership development activities, which may include community service and peer-centered activities encouraging responsibility and other positive social behaviors during non-school hours;
7. Supportive services;
8. Adult mentoring during program participation;
9. Follow-up for at least 12 months after program completion (this is required for all youth); and

10. Comprehensive guidance and counseling, including drug and alcohol abuse counseling and referral, as appropriate.

Low-income youth ages 18 to 21 may be eligible for dual enrollment in both the adult and youth WIA programs. This allows them to take advantage of *Individual Training Accounts* (ITAs) under the adult program while receiving the guidance and supportive services available under the youth programs. An ITA may be used to purchase training services from eligible providers.

### How does the Workforce Investment Act work?

**One-Stops:** WIA promotes a One-Stop service delivery system to connect the broad range of workforce services available to youth and adults in a local community. One-Stops can serve as a starting place for youth to navigate their way into the world of work. Youth can also access WIA programs directly through local service providers where they may already be involved in other programs. Some of the core services of a One-Stop include: career counseling, job search and placement assistance, information about unemployment insurance claims, establishing eligibility for welfare-to-work programs, access to financial assistance for training, and information about other supportive services. Core employment-related services are available to all individuals without regard to income eligibility or other program eligibility requirements. One-Stops are also the access point for Individual Training Accounts and intensive services such as individual counseling and career planning, comprehensive and specialized assessments, and short-term prevocational services. Eligible youth may access various One-Stop offerings, and, after they reach 18, participate in adult services, as well as youth program offerings, depending upon the individual assessment of youth needs.

One-Stops can encourage youth to access their services by:

- Establishing linkages with schools, community-based youth-serving organizations, vocational/community rehabilitation programs, and school-to-work systems;
- Targeting out-of-school youth;
- Conducting youth tours of One-Stop centers;
- Placing youth program staff at One-Stops or training One-Stop staff in youth programs; and
- Creating separate youth resource areas.

**Youth Services:** WIA youth funds are distributed from the U.S. Department of Labor to states based on a formula, which takes into account the youth population, poverty, and unemployment rates. States, in turn, direct funds to local workforce investment boards (WIBs) based on the same formula. Youth services are delivered by entities that are competitively awarded a grant or contract by the WIB to provide such services. Local WIBs, or in some cases youth councils, seek proposals from service providers and make recommendations about the use of these providers to the local WIB. Each state is required to disseminate a list of eligible providers of youth activities.

In addition to the formula-funded youth programs, under WIA the Department of Labor youth programs portfolio includes two additional youth programs – the Youth Opportunity Grants and the Job Corps.

WIA specifies that the **Youth Opportunity Grants (YOG)** are to be used to increase employment and school completion rates of *all* youth between the ages of 14 and 21 who live in selected empowerment zones, enterprise communities, and other high-poverty areas. Unlike WIA formula-funded youth programs, Youth



Opportunity programs can serve all of the youth in the target area, regardless of income or family circumstance. Through a competitive grant process, DOL awarded 36 YOGs in February 2000 to local WIBs and/or Native American reservations to provide the ten program elements listed above, including intensive job placement and the requirement of two-year follow-up for every participant. YOG sites were also required to establish at least one or more YOG Community Centers, centralized locations for young people to participate in training and development activities. There are currently 36 YOGs operating across the nation – 24 are in urban areas, six are in rural areas, and six are located in Native American communities. Each of these grants is for up to five years of funding, pending funding availability and performance.

Founded in 1964, **Job Corps** is a residential education and job-training program for disadvantaged youth, ages 16 through 24. Most students enter the program without a high school diploma. Job Corps services may include: intensive education, vocational training, work-based learning, recreational activities, counseling and related services, and follow-up that includes post-center placement and support services. Job Corps operates 118 primarily residential centers located across the country and in Puerto Rico. WIA strengthened Job Corps by requiring applicants be assigned to centers nearest their home, identifying core indicators of performance (such as graduation, placement, retention, earnings, entry into post-secondary education, advanced training enrollment, and participant skill gains), and providing continued services for one year after graduation. Job Corps centers must have a business and community liaison and an industry council. The industry council reviews relevant labor market information, determines local employment opportunities, identifies the skills and education needed to gain those

opportunities, and recommends appropriate vocational training for the center.

**Governance:** Under WIA, the workforce investment system is overseen by state and local WIBs that must include representatives of individuals and organizations that have experience with respect to youth activities. Local business-led WIBs ensure youth programs are tailored to the needs of youth and the community. These local WIBs are responsible for establishing *youth councils* as a subgroup of the board. The youth council is composed of individuals representing a range of local stakeholders and youth service providers. The youth council must include:

- Members of the local WIB (particularly educators and employers);
- Representatives of youth service agencies (including juvenile justice agencies), public housing authorities, and Job Corps;
- Parents of youth eligible for WIA services, and
- Other individuals, including former program participants, who have experience relating to youth (including representatives of community-based organizations, vocational rehabilitation, and organized labor).

The youth council is responsible for:

- Developing portions of the local plan relating to youth;
- Recommending the providers of youth activities to be awarded grants by the local WIB (based on criteria contained in the state plan);
- Conducting oversight of these providers; and
- Coordinating the youth activities in the local area.

**What does WIA say about civil rights protections?**

WIA has clear *nondiscrimination and equal opportunity provisions* in Section

188. This section brings all WIA programs and activities under the prohibitions against discrimination in the Age Discrimination Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act (disability), Title IX of the Education Amendments (gender), and the Civil Rights Act (race, color, or national origin).

This WIA regulation prohibits discrimination based on disability for participation, benefits, or employment by programs and activities funded or otherwise financially assisted in whole or in part under WIA (including One-Stops and subcontractors). This includes: denying an opportunity for benefits, training, or services; providing an

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unnecessarily segregated opportunity; or applying criteria that exclude qualified individuals. The penalties for programs that do not comply range from a compliance order to civil proceedings in District Court.

**How are programs and services measured under WIA?**

WIA is a performance driven program. The success of service providers, local workforce areas, and states will be determined by the extent to which they achieve the negotiated performance goals. WIA established a different set of core indicators of performance for younger and older youth than for adults. The core indicators for youth ages 14 through 18 are:

- Attaining basic skills, as well as work readiness and occupational skills;
- Obtaining a high school diploma or its equivalent;
- Placement and retention in postsecondary education or advanced training, military, employment, or apprenticeship opportunities; and
- Customer satisfaction for both participating youth and their employers.

For youth aged 19 through 21, measures similar to adult measures apply, including:

- Entry into unsubsidized employment;
- Retention in unsubsidized employment six months after entry into the employment;
- Earnings received in unsubsidized employment six months after entry into the employment;
- Attainment of recognized credential relating to the achievement of educational skills, which may include attainment of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, or occupational skills, by participants who enter unsubsidized employment, or who enter postsecondary education, advanced training, or

unsubsidized employment; and

- Customer satisfaction for both participating youth and their employers.

State workforce boards, also required by WIA, are authorized to establish additional core indicators of performance, subject to negotiation with the U.S. Department of Labor and local WIB. The key to the success of the performance accountability system is the extent to which the data derived from performance measurement is built into a process for continuous improvement of services and activities for both youth and adults.

*The Workforce Investment Act of 1998 is up for reauthorization by the Congress in 2003.*

**What actions can better connect youth with disabilities to the WIA?**

Youth, their families, and those that work with them can:

- Visit the local One-Stop to find out what resources are available there. (WIA youth services may also be offered by secondary institutions, post-secondary institutions, school-to-work programs, and other community-based service providers);
- Become more familiar with WIA eligibility requirements and the supporting material that must be provided to show that eligibility requirements are met;
- When at the One-Stop, ask for the list of eligible service providers; and
- Find out about careers, accommodations, and assessments for youth with disabilities;
- Youth can ask for an individual assessment and take an active role in the creation of their service plan;
- Parents and youth can ask to become members of the local youth council that reviews and recommends service providers, as well as developing the local plan;

- Even if not serving on the council, all who care about youth with disabilities can attend meetings of Youth Councils and local WIBs to ensure that youth with disabilities are included in their activities, services, and priorities.

**Resources:**

To find out about programs in a specific local area, visit the National Association of Workforce Boards (NAWB) website directory of local and state workforce investment boards: [www.nawb.org/asp/wibdir.asp](http://www.nawb.org/asp/wibdir.asp) or America’s Service Locator directory of One-Stop Centers: [www.service locator.org](http://www.service locator.org).

For information about Employment and Training Administration services for people with disabilities, including One-Stop Centers, visit: [www.doleta.gov/usworkforce/resources/disability.asp](http://www.doleta.gov/usworkforce/resources/disability.asp).

For more detailed information about WIA, visit the Department of Labor’s website: [www.doleta.gov/usworkforce/wia.asp](http://www.doleta.gov/usworkforce/wia.asp). For more detailed information about the Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration’s Youth Programs, visit the website at: [www.doleta.gov/youth\\_services](http://www.doleta.gov/youth_services). For more information on Job Corps, visit: [www.jobcorps.org/OneStop/](http://www.jobcorps.org/OneStop/).

For more information about the Office of Disability Policy in the Department of Labor, visit: [www.dol.gov/odep/](http://www.dol.gov/odep/).

For information on all disability-related resources of the federal government, visit DisabilityInfo.gov at: [www.disabilityinfo.gov](http://www.disabilityinfo.gov).

For more information on better connecting youth with disabilities to the workforce development system, visit the National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth at: [www.ncwd-youth.info/](http://www.ncwd-youth.info/). ♦

## Youth Development and Youth Leadership in Programs

### What are Youth Development and Youth Leadership & Why are They Important?

Research supports the premise that both youth development and youth leadership programs positively shape the growth of young people with and without disabilities. Youth leadership programs build on solid youth development principles, with an emphasis on those development and program components that support youth leadership.

Often, and mistakenly, the terms “youth development” and “youth leadership” are used interchangeably. **Youth development** is a process that prepares young people to meet the challenges of adolescence and adulthood through a coordinated, progressive series of activities and experiences that help them to become socially, morally, emotionally, physically, and cognitively competent. Youth leadership is an important part of the youth development process. **Youth leadership** is both an internal and an external process leading to (1) the ability to guide or direct others on a course of action, influence their opinion and behavior, and show the way by going in advance; and (2) the ability to analyze one’s own strengths and weaknesses, set personal and vocational goals, and have the self-esteem to carry them out.

Youth development experiences are connected to positive outcomes in youth, including decreases in negative behaviors (such as alcohol and tobacco use and violence) and increases in positive attitudes and behaviors (such

*This brief describes how administrators and policymakers can use the concepts of youth development and youth leadership in developing and administering programs that serve all youth and activities specifically geared toward youth with disabilities. The brief is based on a longer paper, [Youth Development and Youth Leadership, A Background Paper](http://www.ncwd-youth.info), published by The National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth. The full paper is available online at <http://www.ncwd-youth.info>.*

as motivation, academic performance, self-esteem, problem-solving, positive health decisions, and interpersonal skills). Participation in leadership development experiences is linked to increased self-efficacy and the development of skills relevant to success in adulthood and the workplace such as decision-making and working well with others. Building self-advocacy and self-determination skills, an important aspect of leadership development for youth with disabilities, correlates with making a successful transition to adulthood.

### Youth Development in Workforce Development

The youth provisions of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) of 1998 fused youth development principles with traditional workforce development. WIA, the cornerstone of the publicly funded workforce development system,

provides workforce investment services and activities through local One-Stop Career Centers and youth-serving programs. The presence of youth development principles in WIA reflected the growing consensus that the most effective youth initiatives are the ones that focus on a wide range of developmental needs. One of the 10 program elements required under WIA is leadership development. Research shows that effective youth initiatives give young people opportunities for new roles and responsibilities in the program and the community. Because leadership development and youth development are needed by all youth, and because they have such a prominent role in WIA, NCWD/Youth identified essential areas of development and program components for youth leadership and youth development programs.

### The Five Areas of Development

Some common competencies and desirable outcomes emerge from a review of youth development and youth leadership research. The competencies and outcomes are best articulated in a framework created by the Forum for Youth Investment that organizes the range of youth

development outcomes into five developmental areas: **working, learning, thriving, connecting, and leading.**

Youth development programs strive to





provide supports, services, and opportunities that help youth, including youth with disabilities, achieve positive outcomes in all five of these areas. While youth leadership programs also help youth achieve positive outcomes in all five areas, they place more emphasis on developing competencies in the areas of **leading** and **connecting**. Using the Forum for Youth Investment’s framework, NCWD/Youth has outlined intended outcomes and examples of program activities for each of the five areas.

**Working** refers to the development of positive attitudes, skills, and behaviors around occupational and career direction. Positive outcomes that fall under this area include demonstrated work-readiness skills and involvement in meaningful work that offers advancement, satisfaction, and self-sufficiency. Activities such as career interest assessments and summer internships help youth achieve these outcomes.

**Learning** refers to the development of positive basic and applied academic attitudes, skills, and behaviors. Beneficial outcomes that fall under this area include rational problem solving and critical thinking. Activities such as group problem-solving games and contextualized learning using academic skills to complete a project help youth achieve these outcomes.

**Thriving** refers to the development of attitudes, skills, and behaviors that are demonstrated by maintaining optimal physical and emotional well-being. Beneficial outcomes that fall under this area include knowledge and practice of good nutrition and hygiene and the capacity to identify risky conditions. Activities such as workshops on nutrition and hygiene and role-playing adverse situations help youth achieve these outcomes.

**Connecting** refers to the

development of positive social behaviors, skills, and attitudes. Positive outcomes that fall under this area include quality relationships, the ability to build trust, and effective communication. Activities such as adult mentoring, positive peer interactions, and team-building exercises help youth achieve these outcomes.

**Leading** refers to the development of positive skills, attitudes, and behaviors around civic involvement and personal goal-setting. Beneficial outcomes that fall under this area include a sense of responsibility to oneself and others and the ability to articulate one’s personal values. Activities such as the opportunity to take a leadership role and participation in community service projects help youth achieve these outcomes.

The chart “Five Areas of Development with Related Outcomes and Activities” provides intended outcomes and suggested activities for each of the five areas of development. The chart includes youth leadership program-specific outcomes and activities for the “connecting” and “leading” areas.

**Organizational and Program Components**

Youth development and youth leadership programs for all youth, including those with disabilities, consist of the same basic components necessary to build on each youth’s capabilities and strengths and address a full range of developmental needs. Youth leadership programs place an additional emphasis on certain components central to leadership development. The key components of youth development and youth leadership programs can be divided into **organizational**

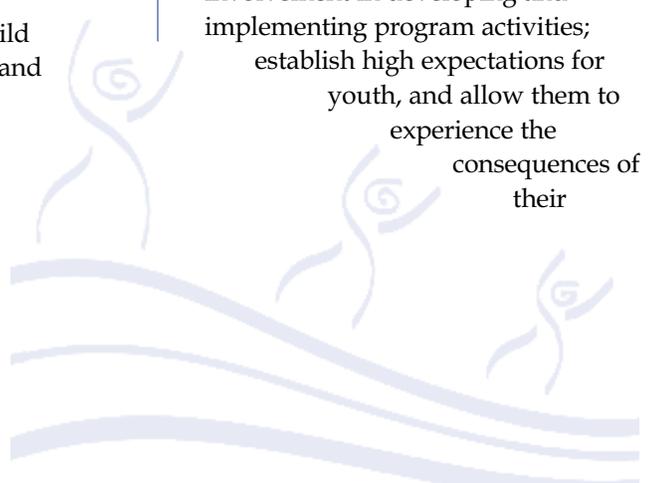
**components** – practices and characteristics of the organization as a whole that are necessary for effective youth programs – and **programmatic components** – the practices and characteristics of a specific program that make it effective for young people. In addition, there are some components that comprise a disability focus that programs should include in order to meet the needs of youth with disabilities.

**Organizational Components**

Both youth development and youth leadership programs need to be supported by an organization that has all of the following characteristics: clear goals related to the development of young people; youth development-friendly staff; connections to the community; and youth involvement. Youth leadership programs must emphasize the importance of involving youth in every facet of the organization, including serving on the Board of Directors, strategic planning, and other administrative decision-making processes.

**Programmatic Components**

Youth development and youth leadership programs should do all of the following: provide varied hands-on and experiential activities; provide opportunities for youth to succeed and to take on various roles in the program; encourage youth involvement in developing and implementing program activities; establish high expectations for youth, and allow them to experience the consequences of their





choices and decisions; involve family members when possible; and provide the opportunity to interact with a mentor or role model. Youth leadership programs place a particular emphasis on involving youth in every aspect of program delivery. Practically, this means that youth have multiple opportunities to observe, practice, and develop leadership skills; experience progressive roles of leadership ranging from leading a small group to planning an event; receive education on the values and history of the organization; and learn to assess their own strengths and set goals for personal development.

The chart **“Organizational and Program Components”** provides an overview of all the organizational and programmatic components relevant to youth development and youth leadership programs, including those relevant to serving youth with disabilities effectively.

### Disability Focus

The outcomes in all five areas of youth development are relevant for all youth, including youth with disabilities. Youth with disabilities can and should be included as participants in youth development and youth leadership programs along with peers without disabilities. There are some additional components that programs should include in order to meet the needs of youth with disabilities fully. On the organizational level, it is important for organizations and programs to have physical and programmatic accessibility; willing, prepared, and well supported staff with knowledge of how to accommodate youth with disabilities; national and community resources for youth with disabilities; and partnerships and collaborations with other agencies that serve youth

with disabilities. On the programmatic level, the additional components for meeting the needs of youth with disabilities include involving peers and adults with disabilities as mentors in order to give youth with disabilities as well as those without disabilities the option of selecting these individuals as their mentors; providing self-advocacy skill-building activities for all youth in programs focused on developing leadership skills (self-advocacy skills are especially important for youth with disabilities as they transition into adulthood and employment); providing opportunities to learn about the history and culture of individuals with disabilities, including disabilities laws, policies and practices; and providing independent living information and assessment for youth with disabilities and those without disabilities (while important for all youth, initial and ongoing assessments for independent living that center on careers and employment, training and education, transportation, recreation and leisure, community resources, life skills, and financial independence and planning are especially critical in programming for youth with disabilities).

### Conclusion

Few programs for youth include all of the youth development, youth leadership, and disability-related components necessary for youth to participate fully in all aspects of their lives and society. In order to serve all youth effectively, practitioners should connect to national resources as well as other youth-serving organizations in their own community to incorporate these components. The increasing recognition of the importance of youth development and youth leadership for all youth holds both promise and challenge. To meet the challenge of

ensuring that all youth, including youth with disabilities, have access to high quality programs focused on youth development and youth leadership, NCWD/Youth is seeking to work with stakeholders at all levels of the workforce development, youth development, and disability fields to develop needed resources and materials for program practitioners and administrators, federal and state legislators, and youth and their families. The challenge is great, but the promise of better outcomes for youth is greater.

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The National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth (NCWD/Youth) is composed of partners with expertise in disability, education, employment, and workforce development issues. NCWD/Youth is housed at the Institute for Educational Leadership in Washington, DC The Collaborative is charged with assisting state and local workforce development systems to integrate youth with disabilities into their service strategies.

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NCWD/Youth  
1-877-871-0744 (toll-free)  
1-877-871-0665 (TTY toll-free)  
<http://www.ncwd-youth.info>  
[contact@ncwd-youth.info](mailto:contact@ncwd-youth.info)





## CHART: Five Areas of Development with Related Outcomes and Activities

	<u>Intended Youth Outcomes</u>	<u>Suggested Activities</u>
<p><b>Working</b></p> <p><b>1</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meaningful engagement in own career development process</li> <li>• Demonstrated skill in work readiness</li> <li>• Awareness of options for future employment, careers, and professional development</li> <li>• Completion of educational requirements or involvement in training that culminates in a specific vocation or opportunity for career advancement</li> <li>• Established involvement in meaningful work that offers advancement, satisfaction, and self-sufficiency</li> <li>• Positive attitude about one’s ability and future in working in a particular industry or the opportunities to grow into another</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Career exploration activities including career interest assessment, job shadowing, job and career fairs, and workplace visits and tours</li> <li>• Internships</li> <li>• Work experience, including summer employment</li> <li>• Information on entrepreneurship</li> <li>• Networking activities</li> <li>• Mock interviews</li> <li>• Work readiness workshops</li> <li>• Visits from representatives of specific industries to speak to youth about the employment opportunities and details of working within their industry</li> <li>• Mock job searches, including locating positions online and in the newspaper, “cold-calling,” preparing résumés, and writing cover letters and thank-you letters</li> <li>• Visits to education or training programs</li> <li>• Career goal setting and planning</li> <li>• Job coaching or mentoring</li> <li>• Learning activities using computers and other current workplace technology</li> </ul>
<p><b>Learning</b></p> <p><b>2</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Basic aptitude in math and reading</li> <li>• Rational problem solving</li> <li>• Ability to think critically toward a positive outcome</li> <li>• Logical reasoning based on personal experience</li> <li>• Ability to determine one’s own skills and areas of academic weakness or need for further education and training</li> <li>• Sense of creativity</li> <li>• Appreciation of and the foundation for lifelong learning, including a desire for further training and education, the knowledge of needed resources for said training, and willingness for further planning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Initial and ongoing skills assessment, both formal and informal</li> <li>• Initial and ongoing career and vocational assessment, both formal and informal</li> <li>• Identification of one’s learning styles, strengths, and challenges</li> <li>• Creation of a personal development plan</li> <li>• Contextualized learning activities such as service-learning projects in which youth apply academic skills to community needs</li> <li>• Monitoring of and accountability for one’s own grades, and creation of a continuous improvement plan based on grades and goals</li> <li>• Showcase of work that highlights one’s learning experience (such as an essay, a painting, an algebra exam, etc.)</li> <li>• Development of a formal learning plan that includes long- and short-term goals and action steps</li> <li>• Group problem-solving activities</li> <li>• Preparation classes for GED, ACT, SAT, or other standardized tests</li> <li>• Peer tutoring activities that enhance the skills of the tutor and the student</li> </ul>



**CHART: Five Areas of Development with Related Outcomes and Activities** *(continued)*

	<u>Intended Youth Outcomes</u>	<u>Suggested Activities</u>
<p><b>Thriving</b></p> <p><b>3</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understanding of growth and development as both an objective and a personal indicator of physical and emotional maturation</li> <li>• Knowledge and practice of good nutrition and hygiene</li> <li>• Developmentally appropriate exercise (will vary depending on age, maturity, and range of physical abilities)</li> <li>• Ability to identify situations of safety and make safe choices on a daily basis</li> <li>• Ability to assess situations and environments independently</li> <li>• Capacity to identify and avoid unduly risky conditions and activities</li> <li>• Ability to learn from adverse situations and avoid them in the future</li> <li>• Confidence and sense of self-worth in relation to their own physical and mental status</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workshops on benefits and consequences of various health, hygiene, and human development issues, including physical, sexual, and emotional development</li> <li>• Role playing adverse situations and how to resolve them</li> <li>• Personal and peer counseling</li> <li>• Training in conflict management and resolution concerning family, peer, and workplace relationships</li> <li>• Community mapping to create a directory of resources related to physical and mental health</li> <li>• Meal planning and preparation activities</li> <li>• Social activities that offer opportunities to practice skills in communication, negotiation, and personal presentation</li> <li>• Sports and recreational activities</li> <li>• Training in life skills</li> </ul>
<p><b>Connecting</b></p> <p><b>4</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quality relationships with adults and peers</li> <li>• Interpersonal skills, such as ability to build trust, handle conflict, value differences, listen actively, and communicate effectively</li> <li>• Sense of belonging and membership (such as valuing and being valued by others, being a part of a group or greater whole)</li> <li>• Ability to empathize with others</li> <li>• Sense of one’s own identity both apart from and in relation to others</li> <li>• Knowledge of and ability to seek out resources in the community</li> <li>• Ability to network to develop personal and professional relationships</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mentoring activities that connect youth to adult mentors</li> <li>• Tutoring activities that engage youth as tutors or in being tutored</li> <li>• Research activities identifying resources in the community to allow youth to practice conversation and investigation skills</li> <li>• Letter writing to friends, family members, and pen pals</li> <li>• Job and trade fairs to begin building a network of contacts in one’s career field of interest</li> <li>• Role plays of interview and other workplace scenarios</li> <li>• Positive peer and group activities that build camaraderie, teamwork, and belonging</li> <li>• Cultural activities that promote understanding and tolerance</li> </ul>
	<b>Youth Leadership Program-Specific:</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ability to communicate to get a point across</li> <li>• Ability to influence others</li> <li>• Ability to motivate others</li> <li>• Ability to seek out role models who have been leaders</li> <li>• Ability to be a role model for others</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workshops in public speaking</li> <li>• Research on historical or current leaders</li> <li>• Contact with local leaders</li> <li>• Strategic planning to change something in the community or within the youth program</li> </ul>



**CHART: Five Areas of Development with Related Outcomes and Activities** *(continued)*

	<u>Intended Youth Outcomes</u>	<u>Suggested Activities</u>
<p><b>Leading</b></p> <p><b>5</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ability to articulate personal values</li> <li>• Awareness of how personal actions impact the larger communities</li> <li>• Ability to engage in the community in a positive manner</li> <li>• Respect and caring for oneself and others</li> <li>• Sense of responsibility to self and others</li> <li>• Integrity</li> <li>• Awareness of cultural differences among peers and the larger community</li> <li>• High expectations for self and community</li> <li>• Sense of purpose in goals and activities</li> <li>• Ability to follow the lead of others when appropriate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Personal plan development with goals, action steps, and deadlines</li> <li>• Resource mapping activities in which youth take the lead in planning and carrying out a search of community resources for youth</li> <li>• Voter registration and voting in local, state, and federal elections</li> <li>• Participation in town hall meetings</li> <li>• Community volunteerism, such as organizing a park clean-up or building a playground</li> <li>• Participation in a debate on a local social issue</li> <li>• Training to be a peer mediator</li> <li>• Participation in a letter-writing campaign</li> <li>• Opportunities to meet with local and state officials and legislators</li> <li>• Participation in a youth advisory committee of the city, school board, training center, or other relevant organization</li> <li>• Learning activities or courses about leadership principles and styles</li> <li>• Group activities that promote collaboration and team work</li> <li>• Mentoring relationships with positive role models</li> <li>• Opportunities to serve in leadership roles such as club officer, board member, team captain, or coach</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Youth Leadership Program-Specific:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ability to motivate others</li> <li>• Ability to share power and distribute tasks</li> <li>• Ability to work with a team</li> <li>• Ability to resolve conflicts</li> <li>• Ability to create and communicate a vision</li> <li>• Ability to manage change and value continuous improvement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mediation and conflict resolution training</li> <li>• Training in team dynamics</li> <li>• Training in project management</li> </ul>



## CHART: Organization and Program Components

<u>ORGANIZATIONAL LEVEL</u>		
<b>Components of Youth Development Programs</b>	<b>Additional Components of Youth Leadership Programs</b>	<b>Additional Components for Disability Focus</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clear mission and goals</li> <li>• Staff are trained, professional, supportive, committed, and youth-friendly</li> <li>• Safe and structured environment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Youth involvement at all levels, including administration and the Board of Directors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Physically and programmatically accessible</li> <li>• Staff are aware, willing, prepared, and supported to make accommodations</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Connections to community and other youth-serving organizations</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knowledge of resources (national and community-specific) for youth with disabilities</li> <li>• Partnerships and collaboration with other agencies serving or assisting youth with disabilities</li> </ul>
<u>PROGRAMMATIC LEVEL</u>		
<b>Components of Youth Development Programs</b>	<b>Additional Components of Youth Leadership Programs</b>	<b>Additional Components for Disability Focus</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus on each young person’s individual needs, assets, and interests</li> </ul>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hands-on experiential and varied activities</li> <li>• Youth involvement in developing and implementing activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hands-on involvement at all programmatic levels such as planning, budgeting, implementing, and evaluating programs</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opportunities for success</li> <li>• Opportunities to try new roles</li> <li>• Youth leadership</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Multiple opportunities to develop and practice leadership skills</li> <li>• Varied, progressive leadership roles for youth: small group, large group, event, program</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mentoring and role models</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure peer and adult role models and mentors include people with disabilities</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Personal responsibility</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self-advocacy skills building</li> <li>• Independent living information and assessment (career, employment, training, education, transportation, recreation, community resources, life skills, financial, benefits planning)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Family involvement and support</li> </ul>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opportunities for youth to develop self-awareness, identity, and values</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education on community and program values and history</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disability history, law, culture, policies, and practices</li> </ul>

## Strategies for Youth Workforce Programs to Become Employer-Friendly Intermediaries

For all youth, especially youth with disabilities, work experiences during their school years are necessary prerequisites to post-school employment success. Therefore, one of the most important functions of many youth-serving organizations is to link youth directly with work experiences and jobs. Although this requires knowledge of individual youth and their circumstances, it is just as important that these organizations have a deep knowledge of individual employers and their operational conditions so that effective matches are made — matches that meet both the youth's goals and the employer's needs. Quality work experiences simply are not possible without interested, willing, and well-prepared employers.

### Meeting Employers' Needs

The term "intermediary" is growing in use in several venues within the public sector with multiple definitions attached to the term. In the broad sense, intermediaries are organizations or agents who form partnerships and develop relationships in order to connect and facilitate communication between two or more parties. For the purposes of this brief, the distinguishing feature of an effective intermediary is that the focus of the intermediary is the pursuit of a dual customer approach: that is, simultaneously serving both youth interested in advancing their careers AND businesses looking for qualified workers. It is with the latter customer that youth intermediaries must continually refine their interactions so that they are responsive to employer

*This brief focuses on how youth-serving organizations can become more effective as intermediary linkages between youth and employers by adopting certain practices. This brief offers basic employer-friendly strategies that will assist intermediaries and their representatives in making productive connections with employer customers that can result in successful work experiences for youth. Increasingly, state and local workforce boards and their youth-service-providing partners are realizing the need to assess their capacities and strategies to link with and provide supports to employers.*

needs. Workforce development organizations that want to become effective intermediaries have the responsibility to deliver competently what employers need if they are ultimately to serve youth effectively.

Employers typically do not have the time or resources to seek out youth on their own. However, with proper information, support, and access, employers can be recruited effectively for partnerships with youth-serving intermediaries. Generally, employers identify four key factors that contribute to both their willingness to bring youth with disabilities into their workplaces and their satisfaction with the contribution youth make in the workplace (Luecking, 2004):

- Competent and convenient assistance in receiving youth referrals;

- Good matches of youth skills and interests to job tasks;
- Support in training and monitoring the youth at the work site; and
- Formal or informal disability awareness and training for the youths' co-workers (when the youth chooses to disclose disability).

### Customer Service Strategies to Gain Employer Partners

Table I illustrates basic employer expectations along with suggested strategies that intermediaries can adopt to serve employer customers. Specific customer service strategies for each area of employer expectation follow.

#### Expectation 1: Competent and convenient assistance in receiving youth referrals

**STRATEGY 1: Conduct informational interviews** with prospective employer partners to find out about their human service and operational needs. This is an easy and effective way to show interest in potential employer customers as well as to identify any human resource needs they have or opportunities for work-based

experience that exist.

Six tips on how to conduct such

interviews

follow:

- Ask to meet with a knowledgeable person in the business.

- Make the meeting





request easy to fulfill. For example, you might say, “I’d like to find out more about your business so I can better understand the human resource needs in your industry.”

Alternatively, you could say, “Many of my students are really interested in [industry type]. Is it possible for me to visit briefly and learn more about your industry’s needs?”

- Be prepared. Thoroughly research the business and prepare questions for the meeting. Here are some examples of appropriate questions: What are the most pressing production or business operation challenges? What are some of the biggest staffing challenges? What kinds of skills do your workers need? What are anticipated

future workforce requirements? What are the ways in which you like to be approached by applicants or youth-serving organizations?

- Indicate an interest in understanding the business’ staffing and operational needs and learning how you may be able to assist the employer in meeting them.
- Keep it short. Respect the employer’s time – 15 to 20 minutes should be more than enough.
- Thank the employer for his or her time. When you get back to your office, send a written thank-you acknowledging the employer’s time and interest.

**STRATEGY 2: Use business language** to describe what you can do for the employer. Nothing confuses employers more than language that is unique to education or workforce development fields. It is important to be able to talk about what intermediaries do in terms the target employer customers understand. For example, say that you offer help with “recruitment assistance” or “prescreened applicants” or “access to an expanded labor pool,” rather than promoting your work “helping youth with disabilities achieve employment.” Emphasize that you are helping prepare the future labor force, rather than promoting the work you are doing to develop work-based learning opportunities for youth. Phrases like “customized responses to human resource needs,” “reduction in

**Table 1:  
Customer service strategies to address employer expectations**

<u>Employer Expectations</u>	<u>Customer Service Strategies</u>
Competent and convenient assistance in receiving youth referrals	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Conduct informational interviews.</li> <li>2. Use business language.</li> <li>3. Establish a single point of contact.</li> <li>4. Maintain professional and responsive contact.</li> <li>5. Under-promise and over-deliver.</li> </ol>
Matching of youth skills and interests to job tasks	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6. Know both the youth’s capabilities and interests and the employer’s circumstances thoroughly.</li> <li>7. Identify tasks that are important to both the youth and the employer.</li> <li>8. Customize assignments as necessary.</li> <li>9. Propose and negotiate task assignments.</li> </ol>
Support in training and monitoring the youth	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>10. Clarify employer expectations about job training, coaching, and follow-up.</li> <li>11. Follow through on agreed-upon follow-up procedures.</li> <li>12. Solicit employers’ feedback on service from the intermediary.</li> <li>13. Adjust support and service to employers based on their feedback.</li> </ol>
Formal and informal disability awareness (only when youth choose to disclose disability)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>14. Deliver information about specific accommodations required by the youth.</li> <li>15. Ask employers what further information they want in order to be comfortable supporting and accommodating the youth.</li> <li>16. Provide disability awareness information based on what the employer requests.</li> <li>17. Model interaction and support appropriate for the youth.</li> <li>18. Be prepared to give employers more guidance and information as needed.</li> </ol>



recruiting costs,” and “help in managing a diverse workforce” are much more meaningful ways to describe your value to employers than trying to sell them on the importance of youth work experience.

Finally, avoid using language, terms, and acronyms such as vocational experience, work-based learning, IEP, WIA, work-study, and cooperative learning. Not only are they usually meaningless to employers; they also tend to take the focus off the needs of the employer customer.

**Streamlining Employer Contacts for Better Service**

Some communities have found that recruiting and partnering with employers is facilitated when multiple organizations coordinate their efforts and resources to create a process for employer single points of contact. One such initiative, jointly created by the Rhode Island One-Stop System and Office of Rehabilitation Services, is called the Employer Service Network (ESN). Through the ESN, over 150 local and state organizations, representing an array of job seekers, agree to follow a protocol for establishing and designating a lead point of contact for individual employer recruitment and employer support. For example, whenever any member of the ESN establishes a relationship with an employer, that member is the liaison through which any other ESN member must go for entrée to that employer.

The protocol assures that employers have the convenience of working with a single account representative who then assists ESN members with entrée into the companies. The ESN members benefit because the protocol expands each organization’s reach to the employer community. Most importantly, the employers benefit because they can develop relationships with individuals who really understand their operation and who can expand the company’s employee recruitment reach to the entire ESN membership.

**STRATEGY 3: Establish a single point of contact** so that employers have an easier time understanding and relating to youth-serving organizations and programs. This simply means designating a single individual to act as an account representative for each employer contact established. This allows the representative from the intermediary to become thoroughly acquainted with the employer’s needs and circumstances, and thus to be more responsive to these needs. It is easier and more convenient for employers when one intermediary representative handles all youth referrals to each company in order to avoid duplicative and time-consuming interactions. For employers, having a single point of contact also considerably decreases the confusion and duplication that typically occur when multiple people from one organization or program come in and out of an employer’s operation to place and supervise youth on the job.

**STRATEGY 4: Maintain professional and responsive contact** with employers; that is, observe basic courtesies such as keeping appointments and being on time, dressing professionally, returning phone calls promptly, and thanking employers for their time. Not only do these courtesies make a good first impression, but also they indicate ongoing regard and respect for employer customers, which will keep employers interested in working with intermediaries and their representatives. In fact, ongoing responsiveness to any employer request is important for maintaining productive relationships.

**STRATEGY 5: Under-promise and over-deliver.** This is a long-standing hallmark of customer service in any business relationship. This simply

refers to giving the customer more than the customer expects so that the customer will come back as well as tell others about the service. In the context of youth employment activities, this means giving employers service over and above what was promised. It can be a simple matter, such as filling an employer’s request before an agreed-upon deadline. Or it can be more involved, such as helping an employer recruit employees from another source (such as another intermediary) if an intermediary representative cannot provide applicants for a specific position.

**Expectation 2: Matching of youth skills and interests to job tasks**

**STRATEGY 6: Know both the youth’s capabilities and interests and the employer’s circumstances.**

This is a basic requirement. However, many intermediary representatives are tempted to bring a youth into a workplace just because an employer expresses an interest or a need without full knowledge of what the youth and the employer require. Short-term expediency of a quick placement can lead to dire consequences if the match is not a good one. Never try to force the match. Ideally, intermediary representatives will have a thorough knowledge of the youth’s interests, skills, preferences, and accommodation needs, as well as a thorough knowledge of an employer’s operation, before a youth is presented for an employer’s consideration.

**STRATEGY 7: Identify tasks that are important** to both the youth and the employer so that they both stay interested and engaged. This closely follows the previous strategy, and represents an important next step after knowing the youth’s interests and employer needs. Regardless of the type of work experience an intermediary



representative is seeking for a youth, it is important to look simultaneously at youth interests and employer tasks. “Make-work” situations are not likely to keep employers any more interested than the youth.

**STRATEGY 8: Customize assignments as necessary.** The availability of resources and the employer’s preferences will be an important determinant of how youth assignments are structured. For example, will a co-worker mentor be assigned to the youth? How much supervisor time will be available? Will

After an in-depth informational interview and tour of a nationally known retail chain store, an intermediary representative was able to recognize areas of operation that needed significant improvement. The most crucial problem areas included the mismatching of sizing tags on clothing with the size nubs on hangers (the local store was fined by national headquarters three months in a row after failing secret tests), the disorganization of the toy department (the only department to go down in sales profits since last quarter), and disorganization in the stock room (requiring personnel to work overtime at least once a week).

Based on this information, the intermediary representative proposed a task list that would address these key problems: 1) weekly accuracy checks of tags to size nubs to reduce incidence of fines and make shopping easier on customers, 2) weekly clean-up and organization of the toy department to make it more accessible and appealing to shoppers and therefore increase sales, and 3) evening clean-up and preparation in the stockroom for the morning shift to make all employees’ jobs run more smoothly and to reduce unnecessary overtime. The representative further proposed that these tasks be done by a youth who liked to work with people and excelled in detail work. After the necessary training supports were organized, the youth began the work. The manager is very pleased with the increased sales as well as with the reduced fines and overtime pay.

the youth receive in-house training? What are the employer preferences for on-site intermediary support? Determine how the tasks can be monitored most effectively through any combination of employer and intermediary oversight so that youth receive effective task training and performance feedback. It will be different for each youth and each employer.

**STRATEGY 9: Propose and negotiate task assignments** based on how it will help the employer. There is a range of competencies that individual youth might bring to any given workplace. Employers may get involved with youth-serving programs because they see it as an important means of addressing a community need, but most often employers’ involvement is based on addressing an immediate or projected workforce need. Negotiating with employers for a youth placement is most successful when employers see a clear advantage for them.

### **Expectation 3: Support in training and monitoring youth**

**STRATEGY 10: Clarify employer expectations about job training, coaching, and follow-up.** Just as youth may require a range of supports and accommodations to learn and perform in the workplace, each employer presents a unique set of circumstances that affect their willingness and ability to host youth. Regardless of the level of support required by the youth, it is important to involve the employer in deciding how the support will be provided. It should not be left to chance. Make sure employer preferences are considered in deciding when, how often, and under what circumstances intermediary support is provided on the job site. The rule of thumb is to provide as much follow-up as you can until the employer says otherwise. It is better for the employer to ask that you reduce follow-up than

for the employer to be frustrated because the intermediary has dropped a youth into a workplace without any support.

**STRATEGY 11: Follow through on agreed-upon procedures.** In business terms, this means service after the sale. Be on the job site as often as the employer expects or requests. It does not hurt to be there more often than expected, as long as it is not an imposition, but it is never good to be there less than expected or promised.

**STRATEGY 12: Solicit feedback from employers.** It is, of course, important to get employers’ feedback on how youth are performing. But it is even more important from a customer service perspective for intermediary representatives to ask for feedback from employers on *what employers think about the intermediary’s service*. In order to elicit useful feedback, ask these basic questions: What does the employer like about the intermediary’s service? What does the employer not like about it? What can be improved? These

A children’s museum located in an urban center managed a program through which youth could volunteer for various activities associated with museum operation. A special education teacher realized that such volunteer experiences would be useful for some of her students. She negotiated with the museum manager to have these students volunteer in various areas of the museum. The teacher constantly solicited feedback from the museum staff about how she could make sure that she was supervising and supporting the students in ways that made their experience at the museum productive for the museum. As a result, she could quickly help re-assign students who were not performing well, or advise students who were not adhering to dress codes, or work with students who were not meeting time commitments. Eventually, the museum manager was so pleased with the teacher’s responsiveness that she contacted the teacher about new volunteers before she advertised openings.



questions can be asked informally during a phone call or a visit. They can also be asked in a more formal way through a brief written survey. No matter how employers' views on intermediary service are solicited, the key is that they be solicited in some way. Not only does this communicate concern for the employers' operation, but in addition, it gives the intermediary the chance to utilize this feedback to improve employer service.

**STRATEGY 13: Adjust support and service based on feedback.** Feedback is only useful if it is acted on. If the employer says he or she wants more or less follow-up on youth on the job, act accordingly. If employers ask for faster response time to a youth problem, be there quicker. Again, such service improvement efforts impress employer customers. They also increase the likelihood that the employer will do two things: continue the partnership with the intermediary and tell other employers about the intermediary. Good service is also good marketing!

#### **Expectation 4: Formal and informal disability awareness**

Whether or not to disclose disability is a personal decision that should be made by each youth, not by intermediary representatives. The strategies that follow are only to be used in those instances in which the youth, acting on his or her own initiative, has given the intermediary permission to disclose the youth's disability and related needs for accommodation to potential and current employer partners.

**STRATEGY 14: Deliver information about accommodations** required by individual youth workers in the context of the specific work environment and specific work tasks. This can be done both during and after the negotiation process. This is best done after tasks are negotiated with

employers (see Strategy 9 above). Therefore, it is important to describe accommodations in terms of how they will help the youth perform to the employer's satisfaction, rather than in terms of legal requirements.

That said, the intermediary should be direct and open about whatever accommodations might be necessary. To provide accommodations effectively, it will be necessary for the intermediary to ascertain the employer's preferences and expectations and to clarify whether arranging accommodations will be the intermediary's or employer's responsibility.

**STRATEGY 15: Ask what further information and help the employer desires** so that he or she will be comfortable in supporting and accommodating the youth. This is a similar concept to Strategy 12 in that the intermediary needs to solicit from employers their comfort level with the accommodations and their satisfaction about the accommodations' effectiveness. This is easy when the accommodations are straightforward, such as giving written directions to the youth rather than verbal directions. However, when the accommodations are extensive or involved, more help by the intermediary may be required to ensure that the employer is comfortable and satisfied in the employment relationship.

**STRATEGY 16: Provide disability awareness** information based on what the employer asks for. For example, one employer was particularly concerned about co-workers' response to having a young man with a significant communication disability in the workplace. She asked the intermediary representative to provide a general disability awareness brown

bag training to the staff, as well as to offer specific techniques to the co-workers on how to interact effectively with the youth. This employer-initiated awareness training was useful in the youth's eventual acceptance into that workplace. Just as importantly, it was useful in making the supervisor and the staff in that workplace comfortable with the youth.

#### **STRATEGY 17: Model interaction and support appropriate for the youth.**

Every time the intermediary representative is at the workplace, he or she has an opportunity to show, by modeling, how best to interact with and support specific youth workers. This is especially true when a youth has unique or involved accommodation needs. While this helps ensure that the youth will receive the necessary support in performing assigned tasks and interacting with co-workers, it is also important in helping supervisors and co-workers become comfortable in interacting with the youth.

**STRATEGY 18: Provide periodic guidance as necessary.** This is another instance in which follow-up, both self-initiated and based on employer feedback, is useful and necessary (see again Strategies 11 and 12). It is important for the intermediary representative not to assume that everything is working fine as long as there is no request from the employer. Checking in periodically to see how accommodations are working gives the employer the impression that the intermediary wants it to work for the employer as much as for the youth. In addition, there is always the possibility that new wrinkles will occur in the workplace that may require adjustment of accommodations or re-acquaintance with disability awareness issues after



the youth begins the work experience.

### An Enhanced Emphasis on Meeting Employer Needs

The success of linking youth with work is as much about meeting employers' needs as it is about serving youth. Therefore, much more emphasis needs to be placed on providing ongoing support and training to intermediary personnel on strategies to recruit and address employers' needs effectively. Viewing the employer as a customer will make the workforce development system for youth with disabilities more attractive and friendly to employers.

### Resources

Employer Referral Assistance Network (EARN) – <http://www.earnworks.com> EARN is a nationwide cost-free referral and technical assistance service for employers.

Job Accommodation Network (JAN) – <http://janweb.icidi.wva.edu>. JAN is

a free consulting service designed to increase the employability of people with disabilities by providing individualized worksite accommodations solutions and providing technical assistance regarding the ADA and other disability-related legislation

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The National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth (NCWD/Youth) is composed of partners with expertise in disability, education, employment, and workforce development issues. NCWD/Youth is housed at the Institute for Educational Leadership in Washington, DC. The Collaborative is charged with assisting state and local workforce development systems to integrate youth with disabilities into their service strategies. Richard Luecking of TransCen, Inc wrote this Information Brief. To obtain this publication in an alternate format, please contact the Collaborative at 877-871-0744 toll free or email [Collaborative@iel.org](mailto:Collaborative@iel.org). This Information Brief is part of a series of publications and newsletters prepared by the NCWD/Youth. All publications will be posted on the NCWD/Youth website at <http://www.ncwd-youth.info>. Please visit our site to sign up to be notified of future publications.

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NCWD/Youth

1-877-871-0744 (toll-free)

1-877-871-0665 (TTY toll-free)

<http://www.ncwd-youth.info>

[contact@ncwd-youth.info](mailto:contact@ncwd-youth.info)



Office of Disability  
Employment Policy



## The Right Connections: Navigating the Workforce Development System

### WHAT IS THE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM?

The National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth (NCWD/Youth) has defined the workforce development system as organizations at the national, state, and local levels that have direct responsibility for planning and allocating resources (both public and private), providing administrative oversight, and operating programs to assist individuals and employers in obtaining education, training, job placement, and job recruitment.

Included are several federal agencies charged with providing specific education and/or training support and other labor market services such as labor market information. At the state and local levels, the network includes state and local workforce investment boards (discussed below), state and local career and technical education and adult education agencies, vocational rehabilitation agencies, recognized apprenticeship programs, state employment and unemployment services agencies, state and local welfare agencies, and/or sub-units of these entities.

A wide array of organizations provides direct education, training, or employment services. Some of the more common entities include technical schools, colleges, and universities, vocational rehabilitation centers, apprenticeship programs, community-based organizations, One-Stop Career Centers, welfare-to-work training programs, literacy programs, Job Corp Centers, unions, and labor/management programs.

*This publication is for administrators and youth service practitioners who provide programming to young people and want to connect their programs to the workforce development system.*

This brief is aimed at helping those who work with youth better understand how to navigate this complex system. While this brief focuses on one piece of legislation that impacts youth, the Workforce Investment Act (WIA), there are a number of other laws relevant to the workforce development system. Visit the NCWD/Youth website for additional information, at [www.ncwd-youth.info](http://www.ncwd-youth.info).

### THE WORKFORCE INVESTMENT ACT (WIA)

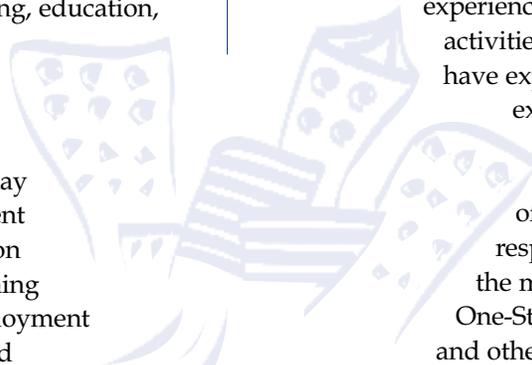
The WIA, enacted in 1998, is the cornerstone of the publicly funded workforce development system and provides workforce investment services and activities through local One-Stop Career Centers, or "One-Stops." The One-Stop delivery system provides a full menu of job training, education, and employment services at a single location where adults, veterans, dislocated workers, and youth may receive skills assessment services, information on employment and training opportunities, unemployment services, job search and

placement assistance, and up-to-date information on job vacancies. Governance responsibilities for the workforce investment system rest with the state's Governor and with local officials through state and local workforce investment boards.

### What is a State Workforce Investment Board (SWIB)?

While the Governor has responsibility for the system, he/she is guided by a State Workforce Investment Board (SWIB). The Board assists the Governor in the planning, administration, and oversight of the state workforce development system. Among its duties are designating local workforce investment areas; developing allocation formula for distribution of funds; and developing comprehensive state performance measures.

Members of a SWIB include the Governor or designee, state legislators (two members of each chamber of the state legislature appointed by the presiding officers of each chamber), and representatives from each of the following appointed by the governor: businesses; elected officials representing cities and counties; labor organizations; those that have experience in youth activities; those that have experience and expertise with workforce activities; state officials with responsibility for the management of One-Stop Centers; and other





representatives and state agency officials responsible for economic development and juvenile justice.

**What is a Local Workforce Investment Board (LWIB)?**

Each state is divided into local workforce investment areas by the state. Each one of these local workforce areas must have a local board called a Local Workforce Investment Board (LWIB) or some variation thereof.

Each LWIB is responsible for the development and oversight of the workforce development activities in its area. LWIB responsibilities include selecting operators and providers of One-Stop services, as well as developing the list of eligible providers of training services; monitoring local system performance, and developing local performance measures with the SWIB and governor.

Local elected officials appoint representatives from the following to serve as LWIB members: local educational entities; labor organizations; community based organizations (including organizations representing individuals with disabilities and veterans); and economic development agencies. A majority of LWIB members must represent businesses. Among these business representatives, LWIB members elect their chairperson.

**What is a Youth Council?**

A Youth Council is established as a subgroup of the LWIB under the WIA. The LWIB serves to ensure that parents, participants, and other members of the community with experience relating to programs for youth are involved in the design and implementation of WIA youth programs.

In cooperation with the chief elected official(s), the LWIB appoints the Youth Council members. Members include those from the LWIB with special

interest or expertise in youth policy, representatives of youth service agencies and local public housing authorities, parents of eligible youth seeking assistance, former participants and representatives of organizations that have experience relating to youth activities, representatives of the Job Corps, and other individuals or representatives deemed appropriate by the LWIB.

**What is a One-Stop Career Center (“One-Stop”)?**

Each local workforce area must establish a One-Stop Career Center delivery system (“One-Stop”), which provides training and other services that improve employment potential. Each area must have at least one full service physical center where individuals can receive services. Services also can be provided through

**Required One-Stop Partners**

- Programs authorized under WIA for adults, youth and dislocated workers;
- Programs that administer the employment services system;
- Adult education and literacy activities;
- Rehabilitation programs;
- Welfare programs;
- Activities authorized under Title V of the Older Americans Act of 1965;
- Postsecondary vocational education activities;
- Activities for workers affected by trade agreements);
- Veterans employment and job training activities;
- Employment and training activities carried out under the Community Services Block Grant Act;
- Employment and training activities carried out by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development; and,
- Programs authorized under state unemployment compensation laws.

a network of affiliated sites and through a network of eligible One-Stop partners. The LWIB enters into a memorandum of understanding with the various One-Stop partners and the Board designates or certifies the operators. Required partners have to make their services available through the One-Stop system. The required partners are listed in the box to the right.

Services at the One-Stop are divided into core and intensive services. Additionally, adult individuals can receive training services through individual training accounts (ITAs).

Core services are available to everyone and include outreach, intake and orientation; initial assessment; determination of eligibility for additional services; job search and placement assistance; career counseling; and, labor market information. Intensive services are services available to those who are unemployed and who are unable to obtain employment through core services. Intensive services include comprehensive and specialized assessments, development of an individual employment plan, counseling and career planning, and shortterm prevocational services.

Training services, which are available to eligible individuals who have not become successfully employed as a result of core and intensive services, are provided through the use of ITAs. An ITA is a type of voucher that allows participants to choose among eligible training providers pre-approved by the LWIB through a competitive process based upon performance-related information.

**What are Youth Services?**

While youth can be served in One-Stop Centers, more frequently they receive services in their local communities by eligible youth service providers chosen



### Low-Income Qualification

Low-income individual is an individual who meets one of the following criteria:

- 1) receives public assistance;
- 2) family income is not above the poverty line, or is 70 percent of the lower living standard income level;
- 3) is a member of a household that receives food stamps;
- 4) qualifies as a homeless individual; or,
- 5) is a foster child on behalf of whom State or local government payments are made.

by the LWIB. Through a competitive process, the LWIB develops a list of eligible youth service providers. Local areas must make sure that the list includes providers that can serve younger and older youth, and youth who are in and out of school. In addition, the selected providers must meet the core performance indicators for youth programs contained in WIA, which include 1) attainment of basic skills; 2) attainment of secondary school diploma; and, 3) placement and retention in postsecondary school, the military, employment, or apprenticeships.

The LWIB must ensure that the ten program elements listed in the WIA are available for youth. While each provider is not required to provide all ten elements, WIA mandates that the ten **youth program elements** be available in every local area so that they can be provided to eligible youth based on their individualized service strategy. These program elements, which are consistent with youth development research, include

1. Tutoring, study skills training, and instruction leading to completion of secondary school, including dropout prevention strategies;
2. Alternative secondary school services;

3. Summer employment opportunities that are directly linked to academic and occupational learning;
4. Paid and unpaid work experiences, including internships and job shadowing;
5. Occupational skills training, as appropriate;
6. Leadership development activities, including but not limited to community service and peer-centered activities, which encourage responsibility and other positive social behaviors during non-school hours;
7. Supportive services;
8. Adult mentoring during program participation;
9. Follow-up for at least 12 months after program completion (this is required for all youth); and,
10. Comprehensive guidance and counseling, including drug and alcohol abuse counseling and referral, as appropriate.

### Who can participate in the Workforce Investment Act Youth Program?

WIA youth services are available for both in-school and out-of-school youth aged 14 to 21. To be eligible, youth must be low-income (see box above for low-income qualification) and face one or more of the following barriers:

- Basic skills deficient;
- School dropout;
- Homeless, a runaway, or foster child;
- Pregnant teen or teen parent;
- Offender; or
- Individual who requires additional assistance to complete an educational program or to secure and hold

employment.

Even if the family of a youth with a disability does not meet the income eligibility criteria, the disabled youth may be considered a “family of one” if the youth’s own income:

- Meets the income criteria established in WIA; or
- Meets the income eligibility criteria for cash payments under any federal, state, or local public assistance program.

In addition, up to five percent of the youth served in a local area can be exempted from the low-income requirement, if they:

- Experience one or more of the barriers listed above;
  - Are one or more grade levels below their age-appropriate grade level;
  - Are **individuals with disabilities, including learning disabilities** (emphasis added); or
- Face a serious barrier to employment as identified by the LWIB.

Youth activities are available to youth who are in-school as well as youth who are not. WIA requires that 30 percent of youth funds be used to address the needs of out-of-school youth. The WIA definition of “out-of-school” includes youth who have dropped out of school, as well as youth who have graduated from high school or hold a GED but are deficient in basic skills, unemployed, or underemployed. To be defined as “out-of-school,” the young person must not be enrolled in school or any alternative educational program when he or she registers for WIA services; however, the young person may be placed in an educational program, such as a GED program or alternative school, as part of the service strategy after registration.



## CONNECT TO THE WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARDS IN YOUR AREA

The WIB and/or One-Stops in your area can be valuable resources as youth with disabilities transition to post-secondary education or enter the workforce.

**Multiple resources in one spot:** One-Stops include many resources at one central location, including services for youth, community colleges, employment services, as well as vocational rehabilitation, and other services. Overall, One-Stop Centers are required to have 19 mandatory partners that can assist in your job search or connect youth with additional resources. In some states, youth may even be eligible to receive assistance otherwise reserved for adults. Youth with disabilities can access job leads and valuable labor market information about the wider community and surrounding areas as they plan to enter the workforce or continue education.

**Access to training requirements and training:** The majority of LWIB members is from the private sector and are individuals who have hiring authority. Because these individuals know what industries may be expanding, as well as the training and educational background required for these and other future jobs, they may be able to assist individuals in tailoring their education and career plans. WIBs or One-Stops can also establish job training, mentoring or apprenticeship programs designed to create better trained employees that are qualified to meet employers' specific requirements.

## HOW TO CONNECT WITH YOUR WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM

**Understand your local Workforce system:** Although having a general understanding of WIA is important, you should know that each state and locality will differ in terms of how WIA is implemented. To get a better sense of how LWIBS and Youth Councils operate in your area, look at the state and local plans that both the state and the LWIB are required to develop. These plans detail the workforce issues that confront them, including services for youth. This information is critical to understanding what the state's priorities will be, what resources may be available, and how they will be allocated. Talking to those serving on the Board or Youth Council may also provide additional insight.

**Learn about services provided:** You can access the list of youth service providers through the WIB. This information can be extremely useful in determining how best to connect to the workforce system and what services might be needed.

**Use the information available at the One-Stop in your programs:** One-Stops provide labor market reports, job postings, and other information that can be useful to both youth service practitioners and to youth and their families. Access to this type of information can provide youth with disabilities and those that assist them with the ability to find out what industries are hiring, what qualifications are necessary, and what initiatives currently exist.

**Attend meetings:** Both the Youth Council and WIB meetings are open to everyone. Once you attend, develop relationships with members so you

are consulted on issues before policies and practices are adopted. Eventually, you may join a Youth Council. While the selection procedures for becoming a Youth Council member may vary slightly depending on the WIB, you should contact the director of the SWIB or LWIB and inquire about the application process. In some places, youth or youth service providers are discouraged from joining the Youth Council.

**Become a resource to the One-Stop and WIB:** Share information from your resource mapping efforts with your SWIB and LWIB. Train staff and/or board members on issues in your area of expertise (e.g., accessibility, assistive technology or disabilities inquiries). The National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth (NCWD/Youth) website contains some materials that can be used in staff or board trainings. Provide One-Stops with access to untapped pools of workers by connecting the WIB to other local disability organizations. Share information on grant and funding opportunities with the WIB. Some of these opportunities require partnerships between disability and workforce organizations; WIBs may be able to offer in-kind support in these opportunities and disability organizations may do the same. Finally, in order for the One-Stop and WIB to understand how you can be helpful, share stories about your work with Board members and staff so that they begin to see you as a resource.

**Become a service provider:** You can ask to be placed on the list to receive notice when service providers are to be chosen. Most LWIBS operate a selection process every several years.

## CONCLUSION

By accessing the workforce development system, youth with disabilities and the professionals that assist them will have increased access



to information, industry employers, and other resources. Youth with disabilities can use these resources to enhance the relevance of their education and increase their chances of professional success.

## LOCATING SERVICES IN YOUR AREA

How do you find Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs), One-Stop Career Centers (One-Stops), and youth services in your area?

*To locate One-Stops, go to:*  
[www.servicelocator.org](http://www.servicelocator.org)

*To locate WIBs in your area, go to the National Association of Workforce Boards website, at:*  
<http://www.nawb.org/asp/wibdir.asp>

*For more information on connecting youth with disabilities to the workforce system, go to:* [www.ncwd-youth.info](http://www.ncwd-youth.info).

This Information Brief was written by [Mac Brantley](#) of National Association of Workforce Boards and [Barbara Kaufmann](#) of the Institute for Educational Leadership. To obtain this publication in an alternate format please contact the Collaborative at 877-871-0744 toll free or email [Collaborative@iel.org](mailto:Collaborative@iel.org). This Information Brief is part of a series of publications and newsletters prepared by the NCWD/Youth. All publications will be posted on the NCWD/Youth website at <http://www.ncwd-youth.info>.

The National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth (NCWD/Youth) is composed of partners with expertise in disability, education, employment, and workforce development issues. NCWD/Youth is housed at the Institute for Educational Leadership in Washington, DC. The Collaborative is charged with assisting state and local workforce development systems to integrate youth with disabilities into their service strategies.

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NCWD/Youth  
 1-877-871-0744 (toll-free)  
 1-877-871-0665 (TTY toll-free)  
<http://www.ncwd-youth.info>  
 contact@ncwd-youth.info



Office of Disability  
 Employment Policy

## The Workforce Development System & the Professional Development of Youth Service Practitioners: Why Professional Development?

The challenges facing youth who are disconnected from employment and education systems are expansive. An estimated 5.4 million youth between the ages of 16-24 are out of school and out of work according to studies by the Center for Labor Market Studies at Northeastern University. Additional studies by the Center indicate that employment prospects for youth between the ages of 16-19 have decreased dramatically in the past three years. Between the summers of 2000-2003, the employment to population ratio of employed teens has declined by 8.5% percentage points, which means that 1.5 million fewer teens found work than did in 2000 (Sum et al, 2002). On the education front, a 2004 research report on graduation rates by the Urban Institute states that the national graduation rate is 68%, with nearly a third of all public high school students failing to graduate. This report also highlights that racial gaps exist in these graduation rates, with students from minority groups (American Indian, Hispanic, and African-American), having little more than a fifty-fifty chance of earning a high school diploma (Swanson, 2004). In today's labor market, without the higher level of skills demanded by employers, opportunities for employment at a living wage, and ultimately self-sufficiency are dismal. It is important for the U.S. workforce development system to strengthen its capacity to provide effective training and preparation for young people both with and without disabilities to enable them to enter and succeed in the labor

*This information brief identifies the benefits to the workforce development system, youth, and the community gained through the professional development of youth service practitioners, including a five-step plan for policymakers interested in supporting the professional development of youth service practitioners in their local areas.*

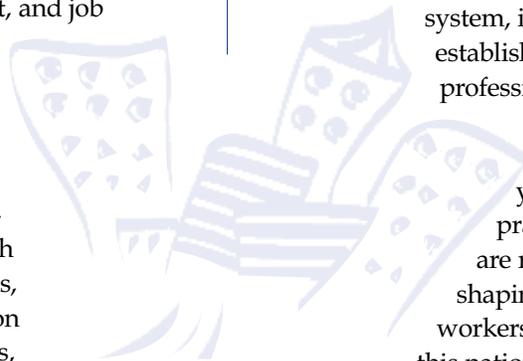
market. In order to assist the youth behind these statistics, individuals in the programs serving them must be armed with particular knowledge, skills, and abilities.

At this time, little or no agreement exists about what type of skills front line workers need in order to provide support to the most vulnerable youth in the country. The "workforce development system" includes all national, state, and local level organizations that plan and allocate resources (both public and private), provide administrative oversight, and operate programs in order to assist individuals and employers in obtaining education, training, job placement, and job recruitment. The types of organizations and array of settings involved in workforce development are quite varied, including One-Stop Centers and youth development programs, vocational rehabilitation programs, high schools,

colleges, after-school programs, and job training programs.

Youth service practitioners, including intake workers, case managers, job developers, teachers, transition coordinators, counselors, youth development group leaders, and independent living specialists, are often the first contact or "face" of the workforce development system. They play an important role in connecting all youth to workforce preparation opportunities and support. Research has shown the importance of caring adults in youth's lives and interactions with staff have been cited repeatedly as the reason that youth stay in or leave a program (Bouffard & Little, 2004; Eccles & Gootman, 2002; McLaughlin, 2000; Rosenthal & Vandell, 1996; Tolman, Pittman Yohalem, Thomases, & Trammel, 2002). Therefore, the ability of youth service practitioners to engage and retain youth is a key piece of the workforce development system's ability to prepare young people for adulthood and the world of work.

In order to build and maintain an effective workforce development system, it is essential to establish an effective professional development system for the youth service practitioners who are responsible for shaping the future workers and leaders of this nation's economy.





We know that the professional development matters. When it occurs, there is a link to increased job satisfaction and retention, more youth involvement, better practice, and improved youth outcomes (Bouffard & Little, 2004; NICHD Early Child Care Research Network, 2001; Norris 2001). These improved youth outcomes such as more community involvement, less risky behaviors, improved academic scores, and better job retention, not only are good for youth and programs, they are good for the entire community.

Professional development of staff is not only important for youth development; it is also a smart financial investment for organizations and funders. Advertising for, selecting, and training a new employee can cost an organization three to six months of productivity and 29 – 40% of a position's salary (Fitz-Enz, 2000). This does not even take into account the burden on other staff in covering the missing staff person's responsibilities when a program is short-staffed. Finally, funding spent on computers, curriculum, and program space is wasted if an effective youth worker is not there to connect youth to these resources. Just as a house is not a home - a building and supplies alone does not constitute a program. Skilled practitioners are necessary to make the most of any program dollars invested. Research has shown that the professional development of staff leads to better practice with youth, improves program quality, and increases the positive outcomes of youth (Center for School and Community Services, Academy for Educational Development, 2002; Hall & Cassidy, 2002; and Westat & Policy Studies Associates, 2001).

### **Identifying Knowledge, Skills, & Abilities Across Systems**

Serving youth effectively calls for both general and specialized knowledge. Certain knowledge, skills, and abilities

(KSAs) are necessary. Youth service practitioners must keep pace with constant changes in the labor market as the nation's economy shifts and new technologies evolve, as well as with the demands of more rigorous academic standards and the evolving needs and culture of today's youth. Therefore the range of necessary competencies must include knowledge drawn from the fields of education, workforce development, and youth development.

In addition, as the U.S. Census has estimated that up to one in eight youth have a disability (some hidden or undiagnosed), it is important for youth service practitioners to be prepared to work effectively with all youth. This is especially important as programs are increasingly emphasizing serving "the neediest youth" in response to the White House Task Force for Disadvantaged Youth Final Report, the Workforce Investment Act Reauthorization, and recent research findings (DHHS, 2003; DOL, 2004; Sum et al, 2002; Swanson, 2004). There is considerable overlap between these targeted populations and youth with disabilities. For example:

- 30 – 40 % of youth in foster care attend special education classes (National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth, 2005).
- 36% of high school dropouts have learning disabilities and 59% have emotional or behavioral disorders (Blackorby & Wagner, 1996).
- 75% of youth in the juvenile justice system has some type of disability (DOJ, PACER, 2005).

Therefore, success in today's workforce development system requires that all staff: have some familiarity with the field of disability; have knowledge of adolescent development; follow appropriate youth employment and disabilities laws; communicate with, motivate, engage, accurately assess and

place youth; connect to employers, communities, and families; and complete all the paperwork required in their jobs. Youth service practitioners with the necessary KSAs can provide all youth with a wider variety of opportunities, resources, and services to best reach their potential and make a positive transition to adulthood and the world of work. Programs and organizations can be more effective when youth service practitioners are equipped with the critical KSAs to do their jobs.

As connecting youth to the workforce development system requires a mix of competencies from the youth development, education, and workforce development fields; no one system can (or should) do it all. Cross-system collaboration is the key to providing youth with all the opportunities, supports, and services they need to successfully transition from adolescence to adulthood and the world of work. In addition, as so many of the "neediest" youth are engaged in several systems at once, cross-system collaboration makes financial and administrative sense.

As part of the Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities Initiative, the National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth (NCWD/Youth) has begun to look at what practitioners from across these three fields need to know to work effectively together on behalf of youth. The KSAs are the knowledge, skills, and abilities, practitioners need to work successfully with all youth in the workforce development arena. The KSAs are organized into ten competency areas which were compiled from a review of over 70 initiatives from the fields of youth development, workforce development, education, and disabilities. All the initiatives reviewed identify competencies, train professionals, and/or provide certification. The initial draft list of competencies was validated by a national group of youth practitioners, program managers, and stakeholders



## TABLE 1: SYNTHESIS OF COMPETENCIES FOR YOUTH SERVICE PRACTITIONERS

Baseline competencies for all youth service practitioners are listed in the first column. These were synthesized from the work of The John J. Heldrich Center, the YDPA Program, the National Association of Workforce Development Professionals (NAWDP), and others. The second column contains the additional competencies for youth service practitioners working with youth with disabilities. These competencies are a combination of those suggested by the Council on Rehabilitation Education (CORE), the Center for Mental Health Services, the Association for Persons in Supported Employment (APSE), and others.

<b>KSAs Needed to Serve All Youth Effectively</b>	<b>Additional KSAs Needed to Serve Youth with Disabilities Effectively</b>
<b>Competency Area #1: Knowledge of the Field</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knowledge of youth development theory, adolescent and human development</li> <li>• Understanding of youth rights and laws including labor, curfew, and attendance</li> <li>• Knowledge of self as a youth development worker, including professional ethics and boundaries, confidentiality, and professional development needs and opportunities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understanding of the values and history of the disability field</li> <li>• Understanding of disability laws including 504, ADA, IDEA, and TWWIIA</li> <li>• Knowledge of key concepts and processes including IEP, IPE, transition, due process procedures, parents' rights, informed choice, self determination, universal access, and reasonable accommodations</li> <li>• Understanding of privacy and confidentiality rights as they relate to disability disclosure</li> </ul>
<b>Competency Area #2: Communication with Youth</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Respect and caring for all youth, including the ability to be open minded and nonjudgmental, develop trusting relationships, and maintain awareness of diversity and youth culture</li> <li>• Ability to recognize and address need for intervention (e.g. drug or alcohol abuse, domestic abuse or violence, and depression)</li> <li>• Ability to advocate for, motivate, recruit, and engage youth</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knowledge of issues and trends affecting youth with disabilities (e.g. low expectations, attitudinal or environmental barriers, need for social integration)</li> <li>• Understanding of disability awareness, sensitivity, and culture</li> <li>• Understanding of how to communicate with youth with various physical, sensory, psychiatric, and cognitive disabilities</li> </ul>
<b>Competency Area #3: Assessment and Individualized Planning</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ability to facilitate person-centered planning, including the ability to assess goals, interests, past experience, learning styles, academic skills, assets, independent living skills, and needs (e.g. transportation, etc)</li> <li>• Ability to involve youth in their own planning process by helping youth to set realistic goals and action steps, make informed choices, exercise self-determination, and actively participate in own development (includes financial/benefits planning and educational requirements)</li> <li>• Knowledge of various assessment tools and strategies and ability to administer assessments (or make referrals, as needed)</li> <li>• Ability to track progress and change plans as needed Ability to ensure appropriate assessment of young peoples' disabilities (in-house or through referrals, as necessary)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understanding how to use information from assessments and records and recognize implications for education and employment, including any potential need for accommodations and assistive technology</li> <li>• Ability to assess independent/ community living skills and needs, including accommodations and supports</li> <li>• Understanding of benefits planning, includes Social Security income and health benefits and their relation to working</li> </ul>



**TABLE 1: (CONTINUED)**  
**SYNTHESIS OF COMPETENCIES FOR YOUTH SERVICE PRACTITIONERS**

**KSAs Needed to Serve All Youth Effectively**

**Additional KSAs Needed to Serve Youth with Disabilities Effectively**

**Competency Area #4: Relationship to Family and Community**

- Engage/build relationships with family members or other significant persons
- Resource mapping/ ability to connect youth to community institutions, resources and supportive adults
- Ability to engage youth in community service and leadership activities

- Involving families, guardians, and advocates, including connections to disabilities specific resources & groups
- Community resources, including disabilities specific resources and organizations

**Competency Area #5: Workforce Preparation**

- Ability to facilitate job readiness skill-building and assess employability strengths/barriers
- Ability to teach job search skills, including use of technology and the Internet
- Ability to coach youth, assist in job maintenance, and provide follow-up support
- Ability to match youth with appropriate jobs and careers, including job analysis and skills standards
- Ability to involve employers in preparation process

- Ability to conduct job analysis, matching, customizing, and carving for youth with disabilities, including accommodations, supports, and modifications
- Knowledge of support required to place youth in jobs, including what employers need to know about reasonable accommodations, undue burden, assistive technology, funding streams, and tax incentives

**Competency Area #6: Career Exploration**

- Knowledge of technology and online search skills
- Knowledge of tools and processes for career exploration
- Ability to engage employers in career exploration
- Knowledge of workplace and labor market trends

- Knowledge of workplace and labor market trends, including options for youth with disabilities such as supported employment, customized employment, or self-employment

**Competency Area #7: Relationships with Employers & Between Employer and Employee**

- Ability to develop relationships with employers
- Ability to communicate effectively with employers
- Ability to mediate/resolve conflicts
- Ability to engage employers in program design and delivery
- Ability to train employers in how to work with and support young people
- Customer service skills

- Ability to identify, recruit, and provide support to employers willing to hire youth with disabilities
- Ability to advocate for youth with disabilities with employers including negotiating job design, job customization, and job carving
- Ability to train employers and their staff in how to work with and support young people, including providing disability awareness training and information about universal access and design, reasonable accommodations, auxiliary aids and services for youth with disabilities



**TABLE 1: (CONTINUED)**  
**SYNTHESIS OF COMPETENCIES FOR YOUTH SERVICE PRACTITIONERS**

**KSAs Needed to Serve All Youth Effectively**

**Additional KSAs Needed to Serve Youth with Disabilities Effectively**

**Competency Area #8: Connection to Resources**

- Ability to identify a range of community resources (people, places, things, & money) that can assist youth
- Ability to create relationships and network with other community agencies and potential partners
- Ability to market own program as a valuable resource to community and a viable partner

- Ability to build collaborative relationships and manage partnerships
- Knowledge about different funding streams for youth  
 Knowledge of community intermediary organizations to assist with disability-specific supports and resources

**Competency Area #9: Program Design and Delivery**

- Knowledge of workforce development system, including technology of workforce development (service management, performance measures, and assessment)
- Ability to work with groups, foster teamwork, and develop leadership and followership among youth
- Ability to manage programs and budgets
- Ability to design programs using best practices (considering age, stage, and cultural appropriateness)
- Service management skills, including how to set measurable goals with tangible outcomes
- Ability to evaluate and adjust programs based on outcome measurement and data

- Ability to access resources from special education, vocational rehabilitation, community rehabilitation programs, disability income support work incentives, and other disability-specific programs
- Knowledge of universal access and design, reasonable accommodation, auxiliary aids, and services

**Competency Area #10: Administrative Skills**

- Ability to complete referrals and service summaries using common reporting formats and requirements
- Written and verbal communication skills
- Time management skills
- Strong interpersonal skills/ability to work within a team

- Ability to complete disability-specific referrals and service summaries, such as IEP, transition plan, IPE, and IWP





from the field through focus groups, conference calls, meetings, and an on-line feedback relating to relevancy, proficiency, and available training. This validation process confirmed the KSAs relevancy to the daily activities of youth workforce development programs.

Once the initial list of competencies was validated, on-line feedback was obtained from practitioners, managers, and administrators regarding the relevancy, proficiency, and level of training for each area to begin to identify training priorities for youth service practitioners. This survey found communication with youth, connection to resources, and assessment/individualized planning were the three competency areas ranked most relevant to the work of youth service practitioners. In addition, the feedback revealed that a significant gap existed regarding the relevance of relationships with employers and employees competency area and the amount of training currently being offered.

The feedback obtained further revealed that practitioners were receiving a significant amount of training in the administrative competency area, and most were receiving at least some training in the KSAs. Thus, this suggests that some system for professional development is already in place in most organizations and may just need to be supported or expanded to ensure that all youth have access to youth practitioners with the required KSAs needed to meet their needs.

### **The Role of Policymakers in Professional Development**

Professional development within a field is often driven by a combination of industry demand, training availability, and government regulation. Industry often recognizes a gap between the skills gained through the typical educational requirements and the specific competencies needed to complete certain jobs. Free public education in the U.S. is only available

up to the completion of high school and, unlike other industrialized nations, the U.S. has never developed a national system of formal linkages between employers and schools to facilitate the transition of young people from school to work. As ever-increasing numbers of individuals have earned a high school diploma, it has decreased in value and unfortunately, has proven to be an unreliable indicator of work readiness (Institute for Educational Leadership Center for Workforce Development, 1993). In addition, with the ever-changing job market and increasing technology advances in so many fields, job skills are becoming more specialized than ever. Federal level recognition of the need for additional skills in various industries was demonstrated when The Carl D. Perkins Act of 1984 (Perkins Act) required the establishment of state committees to set skill standards for occupational clusters. When the Perkins Act was reauthorized in 1990 (Perkins II), it included fiscal support for skills standards development.

Professional development in the fields of youth and workforce development is just beginning and is being driven by similar forces. Organizations within the youth and workforce development fields, such as the Collaboration for Youth and the National Association of Workforce Development Professionals, have recognized the need for specific knowledge, skills, and abilities to work with youth and have begun to develop lists of competencies, provide training and/or grant certifications to meet these needs. The Workforce Investment Act recognized the need for professional development by authorizing the use of some funding for professional development. Lacking, however, are connections between key institutions responsible for the selection and support of youth service practitioners. These connections would help define the professional development needs of practitioners in both fields.

Much of the foundation for professional

development and use of the KSAs has already been laid. Demand and support for the KSAs are building as was demonstrated by the recent KSA validation process. The series of KSA focus groups, conference calls, and stakeholder meetings found widespread support for the KSAs, as well as a system for training and certification of youth service practitioners. Many pieces of current legislation, including the Workforce Investment Act, already have flexible funding streams that can support professional development.

There are local, state, and national training organizations that are already offering training in some of the KSAs. State and local government agencies, as well as funders, could identify or develop trainings to fill the gaps. The KSAs can be used as a framework to organize all these offerings into a cohesive professional development system for youth service practitioners, allowing them to more effectively connect all youth to the best opportunities and resources.

### **A Five Step Plan for Policymakers**

There are many ways that national and state policy makers can support the creation of a system of professional development for youth service practitioners. Some of these include:

- **Step 1: Building Consensus.** Policy makers can bring together important stakeholders – youth, practitioners, administrators, employers, funders, WIBs, and families – to talk about what competencies are needed to best connect all youth to workforce development opportunities and experiences in their area.
- **Step 2: Setting Requirements.** Some cities and states have already started to set training and competency requirements for youth service practitioners. The KSAs could be used as a framework for setting these requirements in a particular area or jurisdiction.



- **Step 3: Maximizing & Blending Funding Streams.** Policymakers can compare the needs identified within their community with the professional development resources available (training capacity, as well as funding allowances within current regulations) and create a funding plan that maximizes current resources. This may include collaborations between agencies to support common trainings, convening, or knowledge-sharing.
- **Step 4: Requiring Professional Development Goals in Request for Proposals (RFPs) Across Systems.** RFPs could have specific questions concerning organization plans for professional development and requiring all staff to reach a certain level of training and competency.
- **Step 5: Providing Opportunities and Funding for Training.** Many cities and states have started to provide training in critical areas to youth service practitioners in their areas. The KSAs could be used as framework to assess the training needs in your area and create a series of professional development activities.

With the important role that caring adults play in improving and achieving positive youth outcomes (higher community participation, lower risk taking); the increasing policy focus on and investment in opportunities for our “neediest youth”; and the high costs of staff turnover (lower productivity, lost relationships with youth), policymakers cannot afford NOT to provide professional development for workforce development practitioners. Because there is a wide range of professional development competencies, trainings, and certifications and a limited capacity for most youth serving organizations to provide their own training [In one survey, the average professional development budget of human service

organizations was \$5000 a year. (Test, Flowers, Hewitt, and Solow, 2004)], policy makers can play an important role in identifying community needs and leveraging community resources to develop a comprehensive professional development system for workforce development professionals. For more information on cross-system collaboration and implementing professional development for youth service practitioners in your local area, please contact the National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth at [www.ncwd-youth.info](http://www.ncwd-youth.info).

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The National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth (NCWD/Youth) is composed of partners with expertise in disability, education, employment, and workforce development issues. NCWD/Youth is housed at the Institute for Educational Leadership in Washington, DC. The Collaborative is charged with assisting state and local workforce development systems to integrate youth with disabilities into their service strategies. This Information Brief was written by Patricia Gill of the National Youth Employment Coalition. To obtain this publication in an alternate format please contact the Collaborative at 877-871-0744 toll free or email [contact@ncwd-youth.info](mailto:contact@ncwd-youth.info). This Information Brief is part of a series of publications and newsletters prepared by the NCWD/Youth. All publications will be posted on the NCWD/Youth website at [www.ncwdyouth.info](http://www.ncwdyouth.info). Please visit our site to sign up to be notified of future publications. This document was developed by the National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth, funded by a grant/contract/cooperative agreement from the U.S.

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NCWD/Youth  
1-877-871-0744 (toll-free)  
1-877-871-0665 (TTY toll-free)  
<http://www.ncwd-youth.info>  
[contact@ncwd-youth.info](mailto:contact@ncwd-youth.info)



ODEP  
Office of Disability  
Employment Policy

## YOUTH WORK COALITION

July 2006

**THE GOAL** of the Next Generation Youth Work Coalition is to help achieve its vision of a strong, valued youth work profession through documentation, education and communications activities and by serving as a locus for joint action and collaboration within the field. We believe this entails progress in five key areas:

- Standards and competencies
- Professional development and training resources
- Learning delivery systems
- Career ladders and compensation guidelines
- Research and evaluation systems

### in this issue:

- 1 What is NextGen?
- 3 Voices from the Field
- 4 Promising Practices From the Field
- 5 Notable Projects, Studies & Events
- 7 Learning from Other Fields

## What is the Next Generation Youth Work Coalition?

*The Next Generation Youth Work Coalition brings together individuals and organizations dedicated to developing a strong, diverse youth work workforce that is stable, prepared, supported and committed to the well-being and empowerment of young people.*

Each of the four workforce characteristics—*stable, prepared, supported and committed*—connects to a concrete strand of work currently underway in organizations and communities to address the challenges that threaten the ability of youth work professionals to do their jobs *and* live their lives.

### Who should be involved in the Coalition?

The mission of the Coalition is to provide a forum and a vehicle for *all* individuals and organizations at the national, state and local levels who work with and on behalf of youth. The Coalition is for those who influence or are influenced by workforce issues to come together to discuss, determine, document and form an action agenda. The action agenda is for building a strong, diverse workforce starting with a commitment to addressing the needs of front-line workers. The focus is the local youth work workforce, in particular those individuals working directly with children and youth.

The Coalition's membership includes:

- youth workers (front-line and management)
- funders (public and private)

- employers (public, private independent and affiliates)
- intermediaries (e.g. state and local networks, coalitions, alliances and support organizations)
- universities and colleges
- policy makers and influencers
- research and training organizations (national, regional and local)
- workforce investment boards
- young people interested in youth work

All are critical links in the chain that connects practice to policy.

### Why should I be involved?

Because, whatever your vantage point, you have a strong desire to:

- understand this rapidly growing workforce;
- engage in discussions about how to strengthen it;
- share information about workforce developments in your organization and community;
- begin or strengthen discussions among and between youth work professionals and others;
- access information, ideas, guides and tools that will help you make the most of your efforts;
- feel structurally connected to a larger movement and have your efforts and insights with those of others—be an active part of the voice and future of the Coalition.

By joining, you will receive the quarterly Next Generation Youth Work Bulletin and be on the mailing list for other publications. You can receive tools to host a workforce discussion in your organization, network or community. The primary role the Coalition will play, however, is to inform and support discussions about the public policy, institutional, organizational and individual practitioner changes needed to create a strong, diverse workforce.

***We are looking for change makers who want to be involved.***

## Youth Work Workforce Goals

### Stable:

**Reduce turnover by improving recruitment, increasing rewards, expanding career paths.**

### Prepared:

**Increase preparation by providing multiple opportunities and delivery systems.**

### Supported:

**Increase job satisfaction and performance by addressing needs for recognition, supervision, training and professional development and work/life balance.**

### Committed:

**Increase youth benefits by making the values, principles and goals of youth work clear and rewarding those who demonstrate them regularly in practice.**

# VOICES FROM THE FIELD - The Front-line Youth Worker

By Alicia Wilson-Ahlstrom, Forum for Youth Investment from Next Generation Youth Work Coalition Report

*"If you are going to be a good youth worker you need someone to check in with on a regular basis, to make sure you are doing alright, taking care of yourself and really embracing your boundaries. That should be more of a focus in this field, making sure people get the help they need so they don't get burned out."*

The Next Generation Youth Work Coalition engaged over 140 front-line youth work professionals from both mid-sized and large urban areas, as well as rural towns, in focus groups across the country. During these discussions, youth workers discussed realities and surfaced tensions related to entry into the field, support and retention.

The quotes outlined below capture key themes raised during the focus groups, and demonstrate both the tremendous diversity of the field and some of the ongoing challenges that need to be addressed in order for youth work to continue as a strong, viable field into the future. The Forum for Youth Investment, which conducted the research on behalf of the Coalition, is developing a forthcoming report on the focus group data which will explore these and other themes in more detail.

## Entry into the field:

*"I was always interested in working with kids, so it felt natural to go into education. So I went to school, and got my teaching certification, and just realized that I did want to work with kids, but my aim was just a little off. So I kind of stumbled into it through AmeriCorps, which, to me, was a great entry."*

*"I didn't realize when I got into this position that I was a youth worker, and that it was youth development that I was doing."*

*"I was a secretary for 16 years, and I was talking to a friend of mine and telling her I wanted to go into another field. I said, 'I'm tired of pushing papers, and I want to do something for somebody. I want to make a difference.'"*

*"I never thought about getting into this field. But I did it as a summer job when I was 18, and all of these talents that were inside of me began to come out."*

## Support:

*"I feel like I am very supported by my supervisor, and I feel very supported as an individual. But youth work is a piece of our organization. But it is not our entire piece, and it is not our entire focus. So I personally feel like when the time comes for cutting something, youth is one of the first things that they look at."*

*"If you are going to be a good youth worker you need someone to check in with on a regular basis, to make sure you are doing alright, taking care of yourself and really embracing your boundaries. That should be more of a focus in this field, making sure people get the help they need so they don't get burned out."*

*“I don’t see youth work—the whole movement—having a voice or face. People can’t identify it, see it. We need a spokesperson who cares enough and can communicate who we are, the work we do, that we’re not going anywhere and that we need your support.”*

*“What would be great is to see where I can go with my experience aside from exactly what I do right now. Because I love what I do, but I’m going to need change and I know that. I can’t have the exact same position for 12 years. So what else can I do with what I’ve learned?”*

**Retention:**

*“After watching this go on for five years, watching the turnover at our agency, I think somebody needs to recognize that if they paid more in this field, they would get people to stick with it. I think about the amount of turnover, and think, do people consider this a career?”*

*“That is a challenge with this work, in general. They want people who have degrees, but then the jobs are so terminal. You cannot progress unless you leave that agency. And that’s kind of frustrating because some people are leaving the field only because there’s no next [position].”*

*“If there was one body representing youth workers that would help. We really are low-income folks, you know. How can we be exposed to incentives like they have for teachers [e.g., homebuyers and loan forgiveness programs]? How can we get counseling and assistance on financing further education? You know, things that would help us stay in this field.”*

## Definition of a Youth Worker

**A youth worker is an individual who works with and on behalf of youth to facilitate their personal, social, and educational development and enable them to gain a voice, influence, and place in society as they make the transition for dependence to independence.**

## PROMISING PRACTICES From the Field

**Glimpse at how one system has used the resources from the Next Generation Youth Work Coalition to strengthen their Professional Development work.**

**By Barbara Stone, National 4-H Headquarters**

**4-H** was taking steps to frame a comprehensive national professional development system at the same time the Next Generation Youth Work Coalition was forming. In fact, National 4-H Headquarters was a co-sponsor and active participant in the Wingspread Conference in 2004 that launched the Coalition and 4-H staff members have served in a leadership position since that time helping to form the Next Generation Youth Work Coalition. The process for outlining goals and objectives (framework) created at the Wingspread Conference in 2004 was a perfect fit for 4-H: their ground-breaking work was verified for use by the National 4-H Professional Development Task Force and a subject matter expert panel. The professional development framework was slightly refined for 4-H and, then officially adopted by 4-H in 2005. The professional development system provides

a common language for 4-H and across the field of youth work. It also strengthens cooperation and innovation within and across organizations in order to meet the broad needs of youth workers across the span of their careers.

This framework is being broadly communicated and implemented across 4-H. To encourage adoption and diffusion, a professional development Community of Practice (CoP) was launched and states are using the 4-H professional development framework to focus their limited resources towards critical areas of learning for 4-H youth workers. The CoP provides an opportunity, based on the matrix, to share resources and ideas for dissemination and enhancement. Funds have been targeted towards studies that will paint a broad picture of 4-H youth worker needs and towards learning and development efforts that promise a strong impact on front-line youth workers and their daily practice.

The goal of the 4-H professional development system is that 4-H educators reflect quality, distinction and leadership in the field of youth development which leads to positive outcomes for young people. State 4-H program executives also expect that the system will help them be more accountable to the organizations, systems and funding partners that support 4-H youth development.

## NOTABLE PROJECTS, STUDIES AND EVENTS

Below are some of the projects, studies and events that document and disseminate notable activities in the youth work workforce arena.

### STATEWIDE SUMMIT ON WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

In December 2006, Community Network for Youth Development, the Youth Development Peer Network and the California School Age Consortium, *in partnership with the national Next Generation Youth Work Coalition*, plan to co-sponsor a statewide summit on workforce development for youth workers in California. The purpose of the summit is to provide youth workers and organizational leaders with an overview of the state of workforce development for the afterschool and youth development field. Participants will have an opportunity to examine national, statewide and local efforts to build a system of support for youth workers and to form a local coalition of stakeholders interested in moving this work forward in the San Francisco Bay Area.

### Forthcoming Coalition Research

This fall, the Next Generation Youth Work Coalition through funding from Cornerstones for Kids will release a report highlighting key findings from two major workforce studies focused on front-line youth workers, conducted by the National Afterschool Association and the Forum for Youth Investment (as host for the Coalition). Together, the studies reflect the views and experiences of over 5,000 workers across the country, working in a range of after-school and other youth development programs. The report will shed important light on key workforce questions such as, Who are youth workers? How are they supported on the job in terms of compensation, training and supervision? How satisfied are they in their work? What do they think would most help advance the field? Implications of these findings for policy and practice are also discussed. Watch for a summary and link to the report in the next issue of the Bulletin!

## MONTANA REPORT ON FRONT-LINE YOUTH WORKERS

A new report provides some surprising and encouraging insights into the status of professional youth workers in one northwestern state. Titled *More Than Child's Play: A Profile of Professional Youth Workers in Montana*, the report collected information from more than 100 youth workers during April and May 2006 using questions from the Indiana Youth Institute and the Coalition's front-line youth worker survey instrument. In sum, Montana youth workers are well-educated and experienced—with an average of 14 years in the youth development field. Montana's youth workers are also more likely to be satisfied with their jobs than counterparts in other states, and are more likely to see themselves working in the youth field in five years time. To read the full report, visit the Montana 4-H Center for Youth Development website at: [www.montana4h.org](http://www.montana4h.org). Click on the "Research" tab.

## FULL PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATION

The **North American Certification Project (NACP)**, sponsored by the Association for Child and Youth Care Practice (ACYCP), began pilot testing of the full professional certification level in May. This event marks a significant development in the establishment of a nationally recognized credential that spans the entire field of child and youth care.

The pilot testing research is being conducted by Dale Curry at Kent State University in collaboration with a committee that represents practitioners, educators, and employers. The research effort focuses on establishing the reliability and validity of the scenario-based certification exam. Information is also being collected on the usability and appropriateness of the application forms, supervisor assessment, reference forms and portfolio.

For additional information about the pilot testing program and competencies, visit [www.acycp.org](http://www.acycp.org). Or contact Jean Carpenter-Williams [jcarpenter@ou.edu](mailto:jcarpenter@ou.edu) or Frank Eckles [passageh2h@aol.com](mailto:passageh2h@aol.com).

## SETTING THE STAGE FOR A YOUTH DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATE CREDENTIAL:

### *A National Review of Professional Credentials for the Out-of-School Time Workforce NIOST*

(National Institute on Out-of-School Time) for Cornerstones for Kids, June 2006.

This paper reviews efforts to create professional and career development systems in the field of youth work. The report explores the value of credentialing programs in enhancing the workforce and improving the quality of programs and positive outcomes for youth. The report additionally includes information from the field of early care and education, which has considerable experience with professional development through credentials, offering valuable lessons for the field of youth work.

This review demonstrates that credentials can offer a support to school-age and youth workers who are committed to their chosen field. If given the opportunity to access training education and advance their careers, front-line workers will be better equipped to "make a career" in this vital industry. If the field can support them in this pursuit by providing healthy work environments with adequate salaries and benefits, out-of-school time workers will be able to provide quality care and services to youth while still being able to provide for their own families.

To download the full report, go to: <http://www.cornerstones4kids.org> or [www.niost.org](http://www.niost.org)

## CAPTURING PROMISING PRACTICES

A common challenge faced by youth service organizations is how to attract and retain qualified individuals. ***Capturing Promising Practices in the Recruitment and Retention of Frontline Youth Workers*** presents numerous strategies from local organizations on how to better recruit and retain direct service providers. To download a copy go to:

<http://www.nydic.org/nydic/CapturingFinalReport.htm>

## THE TALENT CHALLENGE: Developing the Next Generation of Nonprofit Leaders

On September 14th at the **Human Services Leaders Summit in Washington, D.C.**, the Next Generation Youth Work Coalition will present findings from its recent study on front-line youth workers as part of a panel. This panel will also include representatives from the Nonprofit Sector Workforce Coalition who will provide insight into reducing the recruitment and retention barriers faced by professionals of color and the rising student debt as a barrier to careers in the non-profit sector. This is designed to be discussion-based, interactive panel session. For more information, contact [pam@nassembly.org](mailto:pam@nassembly.org).

## FORTHCOMING GUIDEBOOK FOR NON-PROFIT CAREERS

The guidebook encourages diverse, talented, and committed young people to enter the sector, and gives them the necessary tools and information to do so. The book will cover the non-profit sector and its evolving role in American society, the range of sub-sectors and careers/job functions it holds, strategies for finding a position, a complete resource section, and much more valuable information including profiles of great leaders in the non-profit sector. The book will be researched and written by **Shelly Cryer** under the auspices of **American Humanics** ([www.humanics.org](http://www.humanics.org)) and is targeted to undergraduate and graduate students and a range of career “gatekeepers” (e.g., career services directors, academic advisors, service learning program directors, etc.). Watch for its publication in early 2007 and published by the Fieldstone Alliance’s publishing group.

## LEARNING FROM OTHER FIELDS

### Professional Development Systems in Parks and Recreation

By **Peter Witt**, *Texas A & M University*

The Park and Recreation movement began in the late 1800s, spurred by many of the same social forces that guided the development of many of today’s major national youth serving organizations. From its inception, a primary focus of local and county park and recreation departments has been on youth. Efforts to train playground workers began with the creation of the Playground Association of America (PARDs) (1906).

The first university curricula related to parks and recreation was developed before WWII, with an explosion of programs beginning in the 1950s. Today, over 300 universities prepare park and recreation professionals. Through these programs, students develop

the management, programming and planning skills necessary to be successful in operating park and recreation departments (PARDs). In the past this training was fairly general, since most PARDs offer programs for all ages, from tiny tots to older adults.

The development of specific courses to meet the needs of park and recreation students seeking to work with adolescents is a fairly recent phenomenon. However, a number of university park and recreation departments are now offering courses in recreation and youth development, sometimes in conjunction with broader university-wide youth development initiatives.

In addition, most state and national conferences dealing with parks and recreation now feature sessions related to youth development. This is a high demand area of interest among professionals who are seeking to change from a “fun and games” mentality to a focus on planned, purposive programming to help facilitate young people’s efforts to grow to be fully functioning adults. Finally, research on recreation youth development is regularly appearing in the park and recreation literature, and a textbook was published in 2005 to support undergraduate park and recreation youth development courses (*Recreation and Youth Development*, Venture Publishing).

Contact Kathy Spangler for more information on Parks and Recreation at [kspangler@nrpa.org](mailto:kspangler@nrpa.org)

## THE COALITION’S INITIAL STRATEGIES INCLUDE:

- Documenting activity and promising practices underway across the country related to building a strong, valued youth work profession;
- Raising awareness of such activity through regular communications;
- Creating opportunities for front-line youth workers and others committed to workforce issues to connect and communicate;
- Serving as a locus for joint action or advocacy efforts related to building the youth work profession as they arise.

## the next generation **YOUTH WORK COALITION BULLETIN**

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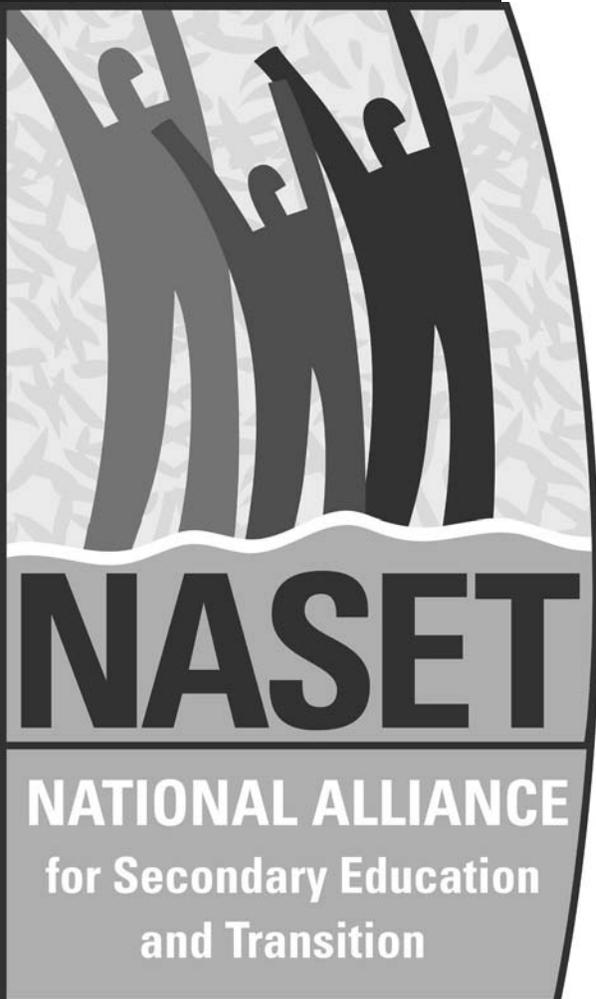


**National Standards  
& Quality Indicators:**  
*transition  
toolkit  
for systems  
improvement*  
2005 National Leadership Summit Edition

# Supporting Evidence and Research

Research must serve as the foundation for state and local technical assistance and improvement efforts. The five key areas of Schooling, Career Preparatory Experiences, Youth Development and Youth Leadership, Family Involvement, and Connecting Activities provide a useful structure for examining critical areas of need for all youth and their families. The standards and indicators developed by the National Alliance for Secondary Education and Transition are based on sound evidence and research that supports their utility in the field. This document highlights the evidence and research that supports each of the key areas and the specific standards and indicators found in this document.

This document identifies and presents research, federal government documents, commissioned reports, and other sources that serve as the foundation upon which the National Standards for Secondary Education and Transition for all Youth are based. This compilation should not be viewed as all-inclusive, but rather as illustrative of the range of research and expert analysis currently available. Cited documents were identified through a variety of sources and strategies including: (a) literature searches within each of the five NASET organizing domains, (b) recommendations by staff of NASET member organizations, (c) members of the five workgroups that developed the standards and indicators, and (d) consultation with recognized experts. It is important to note that this document, and the Standards themselves, will require regular updating in response to new research developments and advancements in professional practice.



# 1. Schooling

## Standards

- 1.1 SEAs/LEAs provide youth with equitable access to a full range of academic and non-academic courses and programs of study.
- 1.2 SEAs/LEAs use appropriate standards to assess individual student achievement and learning.
- 1.3 SEAs/LEAs systematically collect data on school completion rates and postschool outcomes and use these data to plan improvements in educational and postschool programs and services.
- 1.4 SEAs/LEAs offer educators, families, and community representatives regular opportunities for ongoing skill development, education, and training in planning for positive postschool outcomes for all youth.
- 1.5 SEAs/LEAs establish and implement high school graduation standards, options, and decisions that are based on meaningful measures of student achievement and learning.

## Ensuring Access to Academic and Non-Academic Courses and Programs of Study

To prosper and gain the knowledge and skills necessary for success in a variety of settings, all students—including students with disabilities—must have access to educational curriculum and instruction designed to prepare them for life in the 21<sup>st</sup> century (Murnane & Levy, 1996). The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) underscores this assumption, as does federal legislation in the areas of workforce development, youth development, postsecondary education, and other areas. For students with disabilities, this assumption was the basis, in part, for the requirements included in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) legislation of 1990, 1997, and 2004. Under IDEA, states must provide students with disabilities access to the general education curriculum, including: the identification of performance goals and indicators for these students, definition of how access to the general curriculum is provided, participation in general or alternate assessments, and public reporting of assessment results. All of these requirements are embedded within a context of standards-based education, in which standards for what students should know and be able to do are defined at the state level, appropriate standards-based education is provided, and success in meeting expectations is measured through large-scale assessment systems.

The need for access requirements in legislation was supported by research demonstrating both a lack of educational success (or a lack of any information about educational success) for many students with disabilities (e.g., McGrew, Thurlow, & Spiegel, 1993; Shriner, Gilman, Thurlow, & Ysseldyke, 1994-95), and the all too common provision of an inappropriately watered-down curriculum (Gersten, 1998) or a curriculum undifferentiated for students with disabilities (McIntosh, Vaughn, Schumm, Haager, & Lee, 1993). According to Nolet and McLaughlin (2000), the 1997 IDEA reauthorization was “intended to ensure that students with disabilities have access to challenging curriculum and that their educational programs are based on high expectations that acknowledge each student’s potential and ultimate contribution to society” (p. 2). Within the educational context of the late 1990s and early 2000s, this means that all students with disabilities, regardless of the nature of their disability, need to have access to standards-based education.

Providing meaningful access to the general curriculum requires a multifaceted approach. Appropriate instructional accommodations constitute one piece of this picture (Elliott & Thurlow, 2000). Other elements include the specification of curriculum domains, time allocation, and decisions about what to include or exclude (Nolet & McLaughlin, 2000). The process of specifying the curriculum in a subject matter do-

main requires cataloging the various types of information included in the domain (facts, concepts, principles, and procedures) and setting priorities with respect to outcomes. Allocation of time for instruction should be based on the priorities that have been established. Decisions about what to include or exclude in curriculum should allow for adequate breadth (or scope) of coverage, while maintaining enough depth to assure that students are learning the material. Universal design is another means of ensuring access to the general curriculum (Orkwis & McLane, 1998). When applied to assessment, universal design can help ensure that tests are usable by the largest number of students possible (Thompson, Johnstone, & Thurlow, 2002).

Research indicates that a variety of instructional approaches can be used to increase access to the general curriculum and standards-based instruction (Kame'enui & Carnine, 1998). Approaches such as differentiated instruction (Tomlinson, 1999), strategy instruction (Deshler et al., 2001), and technology use (Rose & Meyer, 2000) are showing that access to the curriculum can be substantially improved, with positive outcomes for students with disabilities.

Other researchers have examined the teaching and learning conditions and strategies in schools that lead to positive outcomes for students (Wagner, 1993). Gersten (1998), The National Center on Secondary Education and Transition (2004a), and Nolet and McLaughlin (2000) noted that students with disabilities and other at-risk students need access to the full range of curriculum options, not watered-down versions, if they are to meet content and performance standards. Research by Tralli, Colombo, Deshler, and Schumaker (1999) indicated that many low-achieving students can be taught strategies that will raise their performance to meet content standards. Other academic and non-academic components that have been linked to positive youth outcomes include: (a) a broad spectrum of work-based learning components such as service learning, career exploration, and paid work experience (American Youth Policy Forum & Center for Workforce Development, 2000; Benz, Yovanoff, & Doren, 1997; Hamilton & Hamilton, 1997; National Commission on the High School Senior Year, 2001); (b) academic and related standards (Nolet and McLaughlin, 2000), and a full range of postsecondary options (National Center on Secondary Education and Transition, 2004a); (c) universally designed curricula and materials (Bowe, 2000; Orkwis & McLane, 1998) including culturally appropriate strategies (Burnette, 1999; Hale, 2001); (d) instructional approaches that include the use of technology (Rose & Meyer, 2000) and learning supports including advising and counseling (Aune, 2000); and (e) a move to smaller learning communities (Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, 2001; Darling-Hammond, Aness, & Ort, 2002; Stern & Wing, 2004).

### **Basing Assessment on Appropriate Standards**

States and districts have become engaged in the work of identifying content standards and setting performance standards for what students should know and be able to do in the 21st century (American Federation of Teachers, 2001; Partnership for 21st Century Skills, 2003). While these standards-setting efforts may not initially have considered students with disabilities (Thurlow, Ysseldyke, Gutman, & Geenen, 1998), as time has passed, many states have reconsidered their standards in this light. This reconsideration occurred, if for no other reason, because the IDEA assessment requirements indicate that states need to develop alternate assessments for those students who cannot participate in general assessments. The alternate assessments, like the general assessments, are to be aligned to the state's standards, a requirement reinforced by the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, known as the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB).

The IDEA requirements for inclusion of students with disabilities in assessments and access to the general curriculum have been reinforced strongly by NCLB, which requires that students with disabilities

participate not only in assessments but also in accountability systems. The purpose of these requirements is to ensure that schools are held accountable for access to the general curriculum, high expectations, and improved learning. Requirements for students with disabilities to be included in state accountability systems and for measuring whether schools have achieved adequate yearly progress (AYP) have heightened the importance of access to the general curriculum for all students with disabilities, while also raising concerns about access to transition-related curricula and experiences (Furney, Hasazi, Clark/Keefe, & Hartnett, 2003).

Research (Thurlow, Elliott, & Ysseldyke, 1998) and reviews of standards-based approaches (Elmore & Rothman, 1999; McDonnell, McLaughlin, & Morison, 1997; Thurlow & Johnson, 2000) indicate that assessments and standards must be aligned and that all youth, including those with disabilities, must be included in large-scale assessments and other accountability measures to ensure that accountability systems are valid. Further, schools should provide the supports and resources to help all students meet challenging standards (National Research Council & Institute of Medicine, 2004). Assessment accommodations, alternate assessments, and other performance indicators should be addressed within accountability systems (National Center on Secondary Education and Transition, 2004a; Thurlow et al., 1998), and assessment results should be used in individualized educational planning. Standards should also look beyond purely academic goals and include the knowledge and skills required for desired postsecondary outcomes such as employment, higher education, and civic engagement (Achieve, Inc. 2004; National Center on Secondary Education and Transition, 2004a).

No Child Left Behind requires that educational decisions be based on student performance data and research-based instructional strategies, and that performance data be shared with parents and other stakeholders. Components of this data-based decision-making process that have been identified through research and best practice reviews include: (a) reporting data in understandable language and in useful categories (Halpern, 1990; Hogan, 2001), (b) sharing data and analyses with a broad range of stakeholders and the general public (Halpern, 1990; Hogan, 2001), (c) including stakeholders in the process of developing data collection instruments (Florio & DeMartini, 1993; Halpern, 1990; Hogan, 2001), and (d) using data to evaluate programs and develop additional programs and services (Halpern, 1990; Hogan, 2001).

## **Improving School Completion**

The prevalence of students dropping out of school is one of the most serious and pervasive problems facing special education programs nationally. The National Longitudinal Transition Study (NLTS) found that more than a third of students with disabilities exited school by dropping out. The NLTS data also revealed that factors such as ethnicity and family income are related to dropout rates, and that some groups of special education students are more apt to drop out than others. Of youth with disabilities who do not complete school, the highest proportions are among students with learning disabilities and students with emotional/behavioral disabilities (Wagner et al., 1991).

National data indicate that there has been some improvement in the overall graduation rate of students with disabilities in the United States. Between the 1995-1996 and 1999-2000 school years, the percentage of youth with disabilities graduating with regular diplomas, as reported by states, grew from 52.6% to 56.2%. During the same period, the percentage of students with disabilities reported as having dropped out of school declined from 34.1% to 29.4% (U.S. Department of Education, 2002). While these data are encouraging, the dropout rate for students with disabilities still remains twice that of students without disabilities.

Concern about the dropout problem is increasing because of state and local education agencies' experiences with high-stakes accountability in the context of standards-based reform (Thurlow, Sinclair, &

Johnson, 2002). State and local school districts have identified what students should know and be able to do and have implemented assessments to ensure that students have attained the identified knowledge and skills. However, large numbers of students are not faring well on these assessments. For youth with disabilities, several factors beyond academic achievement affect their performance on these tests, including accurate identification of their disability, provision of needed accommodations, and availability of educational supports that make learning possible regardless of disability-related factors. The provision of accommodations is of particular importance in helping to ensure students' success within state standards and reform initiatives.

In the United States, dropout prevention programs have been implemented and evaluated for decades, but the empirical base of well-researched programs is scant, and well-done evaluations of dropout prevention programs specifically targeted towards students with disabilities are rare. Perhaps the most rigorously researched secondary level program for students with disabilities at risk of dropping out is the Check & Connect program (Christenson, 2002; Sinclair, Christenson, Evelo, & Hurley, 1999). Using randomized assignment to experimental and control groups, these researchers found significant positive effects of their program. Check & Connect includes the following core elements: (a) a monitor/advocate who builds a trusting relationship with the student, monitors the student on risk indicators, and helps problem-solve difficult issues between the student and the school; (b) promotion of student engagement with the school; (c) flexibility on the part of school administrative personnel regarding staffing patterns and use of punitive disciplinary practices; and (d) relevancy of the high school curriculum to students.

The empirical literature on dropout prevention programs for at-risk students (including, but not limited to, students with disabilities) is somewhat broader but still lacking in high-quality research designs. Lehr, Hansen, Sinclair, and Christenson (2003) analyzed dropout studies published between 1980 and 2001; 45 research studies were included in the final integrative review. Of these, less than 20% employed randomized assignment procedures, and not a single study was a true experiment. Nonetheless, the findings were quite consistent with well-researched components of the Check & Connect model and were also consistent with a number of other empirical sources of information. Two common components of successful secondary dropout prevention programs are work-based learning and personal development/self-esteem building (Farrell, 1990; Orr, 1987; Smink, 2002). Equally important, however, is tailoring or contextualizing these and other intervention components to the particular school environment (Lehr et al., 2003). Finally, early intervention also appears to be a powerful component in a school district's array of dropout prevention strategies. In an experimental study collecting longitudinal data for 22 years, Schweinhart and Weikart (1998) documented impressive outcomes of their High/Scope Perry preschool project, which involved three- and four-year-olds who were at risk of school failure.

### **Skill Development as a Means to Improve Educational Results**

Training and professional development for educators and other stakeholders have been identified as critical components of school reform and improving student achievement and other outcomes. Research studies and analyses of best practices have identified the following essential components of training and development programs: (a) ensuring that school personnel have the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to effectively perform their duties (Joyce, 1990); (b) incorporating student performance data and effective strategies for improving student achievement into professional development (National Association of Elementary School Principals, 1996; National Association of Secondary School Principals, 2001); (c) including educators, family members, and other stakeholders on school leadership teams (National Center on Secondary Education and Transition,

2004b); (d) person-centered planning activities for youth, such as involving them in individualized school- and career-related decision-making and planning (National Center on Secondary Education and Transition, 2004b); and (e) collaborative leadership (National Association of Secondary School Principals, 2001).

Many new teachers are entering the field without the specific knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to support transition. Miller, Lombard, and Hazelkorn (2000) report that few special education teachers have received training on methods, materials, and strategies for developing meaningful Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) that include goals and objectives on transition or that specifically address students' transition needs through curriculum and instruction. Further, many special education teachers underutilize community work-experience programs and fail to coordinate referrals to adult service providers.

Beyond preservice training, high-quality continuing professional development is needed to ensure that teachers are up-to-date and fully able to support students in the transition from school to adulthood. Miller et al. (2000), in a national study, found that nearly 8 out of 10 teachers (79%) reported receiving five hours or less of inservice training regarding inclusion of students with disabilities in their districts' school-to-work programs. Further, nearly half (49%) indicated they had received no inservice training related to inclusionary practices for students with disabilities. These findings are consistent with the report published by the National Center for Education Statistics regarding the preparation and qualifications of public school teachers (Lewis et al., 1999). This report notes that fewer than 2 out of 10 teachers (19%) spent more than eight hours per year on professional development activities to address the needs of students with disabilities, despite the fact that teachers report that professional development of longer duration is more effective. The promotion of improved levels of collaboration between general education and special education is in response to another area of need. General education classroom teachers, work-study coordinators, career and technical education instructors, and high school counselors all play an important role in supporting the transition of students with disabilities. These general education personnel need training and other support to help them work effectively with students with disabilities. A recent study of personnel needs in special education (Carlson, Brauen, Klein, Schroll, & Willig, 2001) found that general educators' confidence in serving students with disabilities was dependent on their relationship with special education teachers: those who often received instruction-related suggestions from special educators felt significantly more confident.

### **Basing Graduation Requirements on Meaningful Measures and Criteria**

Requirements that states set for graduation can include completing Carnegie Unit requirements (a certain number of class credits earned in specific areas), successfully passing a competency test, passing high school exit exams, and/or passing a series of benchmark exams (Guy, Shin, Lee, & Thurlow, 1999; Johnson & Thurlow, 2003; Thurlow, Ysseldyke, & Anderson, 1995). Currently, 27 states have opted to require that students pass state and/or local exit exams in order to receive a standard high school diploma (Johnson & Thurlow, 2003). This practice has been increasing since the mid-1990s (Guy et al., 1999; Thurlow et al., 1995). States may also require any combination of the above requirements. Variability in graduation requirements is complicated further by an increasingly diverse set of diploma options. In addition to the standard high school diploma, options now include special education diplomas, certificates of completion, occupational diplomas, and others.

Many states have gone to great lengths to improve the proportion of students with disabilities passing state exit exams and meeting other requirements for graduation. Strategies have included grade-level retention,

specialized tutoring and instruction during the school day and after school, and weekend or summer tutoring programs. While these may be viewed as appropriate interventions and strategies, there is little research evidence supporting these practices. Available research indicates, for example, that repeating a grade does not improve the overall achievement of students with disabilities (Allington & McGill-Franzen, 1992; Holmes, 1989).

The implications of state graduation requirements must be thoroughly understood, considering the negative outcomes students experience when they fail to meet state standards for graduation. The availability of alternative diploma options can have a considerable impact on raising graduation rates. However, the ramifications of receiving different types of diplomas need to be considered. A student who receives a non-standard diploma may find their access to postsecondary education or jobs is limited. It is also important for parents and educators to know that if a student graduates from high school with a standard high school diploma, the student is no longer entitled to special education services unless a state or district has a policy allowing continued services under such circumstances. Most states do not have such policies.

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## 2. Career Preparatory Experiences

### Standards

- 2.1 Youth participate in career awareness, exploration, and preparatory activities in school- and community-based settings.
- 2.2 Academic and non-academic courses and programs include integrated career development activities.
- 2.3 Schools and community partners provide youth with opportunities to participate in meaningful school- and community-based work experiences.
- 2.4 Schools and community partners provide career preparatory activities that lead to youths' acquisition of employability and technical skills, knowledge, and behaviors.

### Youth Benefit from Career Preparatory Activities in Schools and Communities

Several positive academic and vocational effects are attributed to school-based career development—specifically, career advising and curriculum-based interventions such as computer-based career guidance. These positive effects include higher grades, better relationships with teachers, increased career planning, greater knowledge of careers, improved self-esteem, improved self-knowledge, and less career indecision (Hughes & Karp, 2004; Lapan, Gysbers, & Sun, 1997).

Participating in Career and Technical Education (CTE) results in short- and medium-term earning benefits for most students at both the secondary and postsecondary levels and increased academic course taking and achievement by students, including students with disabilities (Castellano, Stone, Stringfield, Farley, & Wayman, 2004; Plank, 2001; Stone & Aliaga, 2003). Those who complete both a strong academic curriculum and a vocational program of study (*dual concentrators*) may have better outcomes than those who pursue one or the other (Silverberg, Warner, Fong, & Goodwin, 2004; Plank, 2001; Stone & Aliaga, 2003). CTE participants are more likely to graduate from high school (Schargel & Smink, 2001; Smink & Schargel, 2004), be employed in higher paying jobs, and enroll in postsecondary education (Hughes, Bailey, & Mechur, 2001).

The Workforce Investment Act (WIA) of 1998 reinforces the need for career preparatory experiences for all youth. WIA services include: (a) comprehensive career development services based on individualized assessment and planning, (b) youth connections and access to the One-Stop career center system, and (c) performance accountability focused on employment.

While work experiences are beneficial to all youth, they are particularly valuable for youth with disabilities (Blackorby & Wagner, 1996; Colley & Jamison, 1998; Kohler, 1993; Kohler & Rusch, 1995; Luecking & Fabian, 2000; Mooney & Scholl, 2004; Morningstar, 1997; Rogan, 1997; Wehman, 1996). Youth who participate in occupational education and special education in integrated settings are more likely to be competitively employed than youth who have not participated in such activities (Blackorby & Wagner, 1996; Colley & Jamison, 1998; Luecking & Fabian, 2000; Mooney & Scholl, 2004; Rogan, 1997).

### Activities in School-Based and Community Settings

Career preparation components that are related to positive secondary and postsecondary school outcomes include: (a) opportunities for both school-based and community-based experiences that expose youth to a broad array of career paths, experiences, and occupations; (b) opportunities for youth to build relevant skills, academic knowledge, and personal competencies required in the workplace and for continued

education; and (c) opportunities for youth to tailor their career experiences to meet their individual needs (American Youth Policy Forum & Center for Workforce Development, 2000; Castellano, Stringfield, Stone & Lewis, 2002). School-based and community-based career preparatory activities provide the skills and knowledge young people need to make more informed decisions, to progress toward postsecondary education, and to be successful in a career (National Commission on the High School Senior Year, 2001). Career preparatory activities also provide youth with the opportunity to test academic theories through real-world applications (Partnership for 21st Century Skills, 2003). Contextual learning is at the core of career preparatory activities; community-based learning helps youth to build upon their life experiences and apply existing knowledge at the workplace (Pierce & Jones, 1998). Additionally, such activities allow students to see the practical value of the high school curriculum (National Research Council & Institute of Medicine, 2004).

Quality career development goes beyond simple academic or vocational guidance to help align academic experiences with student interests and strengths, learning preferences, and education goals. Through activities such as career awareness in the elementary years and career exploration in secondary grades, youth not only learn about a variety of careers and occupations but also begin to identify the skills required to succeed in these areas, allowing them to make better-informed career decisions (American Youth Policy Forum & Center for Workforce Development, 2000; Castellano, Stringfield, Stone & Lewis, 2002).

### **Integrated Career Development Activities**

Effective career development approaches that integrate academic and non-academic components include: (a) a process for career planning and goal setting (Benz, Yovanoff, & Doren, 1997; Goldberger, Keough, & Almeida, 2001), (b) alignment of school-based career preparatory experiences with employer and occupational requirements and with postsecondary education plans (Bremer & Madzar, 1995; Carnevale & Desrochers, 2003; Haimson & Bellotti, 2001), and (c) teaching of basic skills needed for career success and growth (Haimson & Bellotti, 2001; Luecking & Fabian, 2000; Phelps & Hanley-Maxwell, 1997).

### **Meaningful School- and Community-based Work Experiences**

Through partnerships with employers, schools are able to provide a range of learning experiences for students. Nearly 55% offer job shadowing, 44% offer co-op programs, 40% provide school-based enterprises, 35% provide mentoring activities, and 34% offer student internships (Medrich, Ramer, Merola, Moskovitz, & White, 1998). With the number of school/employer partnerships on the rise, participating businesses are now recognizing that improved work-based learning for youth means better-prepared future employees, reduced recruitment costs for firms, and reduced employee turnover (Wills, 1998).

Components of meaningful school- and community-based work experiences include high-quality work experiences, careful planning to match work experiences with each youth's interests and assets, linkages between work experience and academic content or school curriculum, and individual supports and accommodations (American Youth Policy Forum & Center for Workforce Development, 2000; Benz et al., 1997; Bremer & Madzar, 1995; Colley & Jamison, 1998; Goldberger et al., 2001; Haimson & Bellotti, 2001; Luecking & Fabian, 2000; Mooney & Scholl, 2004; Phelps & Hanley-Maxwell, 1997; Scholl & Mooney, 2005).

### **Acquisition of Employability and Technical Skills, Knowledge, and Behaviors**

Work-based learning is an integral part of the academic curriculum, reinforcing academic and occupational skills learned in the classroom, providing career exploration and a broad understanding of an occupation or industry, motivating students, introducing generic workplace skills, and teaching entry-level

technical skills (American Youth Policy Forum & Center for Workforce Development, 2000). Working closely with employers allows schools to define the knowledge and skills necessary for graduates to successfully perform in college and the workplace (Achieve, 2004).

Through formal and informal work-based learning, students begin to apply academic knowledge to workplace settings and gain greater respect for and facility in the types of learning required by the workplace. Students acquire skills and develop attitudes that are critical to on-the-job success, including: (a) an understanding that learning often is related to a clear and meaningful goal, (b) the need for quality and the consequences of compromised quality, (c) critical thinking, (d) different approaches to problem-solving, (e) the importance of immediate feedback for learning and improvement, (f) improved skills for working in teams, (g) appreciation of the importance of deadlines, and (h) a higher motivation to examine a particular subject more deeply (Center for Workforce Development, 1998).

Strategies leading to the acquisition of employability and technical knowledge, skills, and attitudes include: (a) instruction in employability skills (Bremer & Madzar, 1995; Kohler, 1994; Phelps & Hanley-Maxwell, 1997); (b) assessments of career interests and abilities (Bailey & Hughes, 1999; Hamilton & Hamilton, 1997; Phelps & Hanley-Maxwell, 1997), (c) exposure to and understanding of workplace expectations and conditions (Luecking & Fabian, 2000; Phelps & Hanley-Maxwell, 1997); (d) life skills instruction and development in areas such as self-determination, self-evaluation, planning, and social-behavioral skills (Kohler, 1994; Phelps & Hanley-Maxwell, 1997); and (e) job-seeking activities (Phelps & Hanley-Maxwell, 1997).

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## 3. Youth Development and Youth Leadership

### Standards

- 3.1 Youth acquire the skills, behaviors, and attitudes that enable them to learn and grow in self-knowledge, social interaction, and physical and emotional health.
- 3.2 Youth understand the relationship between their individual strengths and desires and their future goals, and have the skills to act on that understanding.
- 3.3 Youth have the knowledge and skills to demonstrate leadership and participate in community life.
- 3.4 Youth demonstrate the ability to make informed decisions for themselves.

### Youth Develop Skills, Behaviors, and Attitudes That Enable Them to Learn and Grow

Ferber, Pittman, and Marshall (2002) identified five areas in which youth development should be promoted: learning (developing positive basic and applied academic attitudes, skills, and behaviors), thriving (developing physically healthy attitudes, skills, and behaviors), connecting (developing positive social attitudes, skills, and behaviors), working (developing positive vocational attitudes, skills, and behaviors), and leading (developing positive civic attitudes, skills, and behaviors). While noting the limited amount of quality research on youth development and leadership (Benson & Saito, 2000; Eccles & Gootman, 2002; Edelman, Gill, Comerford, Larson, & Hare, 2004), a number of studies and program evaluations have identified components of effective youth development programs and curricula. These components include: strong relationships with adults (Boyd, 2001; James, 1999; Moore & Zaff, 2002; Woyach, 1996); training in mediation, conflict resolution, team dynamics, and project management (Edelman et al., 2004); new roles and responsibilities based on experiences and resources that provide opportunity for growth (Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2003); teamwork and peer networking (Boyd, 2001; Woyach, 1996); and opportunities to practice communication, negotiation, and refusal skills (ACT for Youth, 2003).

Youth development is best promoted through activities and experiences that help youth develop competencies in social, ethical, emotional, physical, and cognitive domains (Eccles & Gootman, 2002; Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2003). The Konopka Institute (2000) identified components of effective youth development programs, including: decision-making; interaction with peers; acquiring a sense of belonging; experimenting with their own identity, with relationships to others, and with ideas; and participating in the creative arts, physical activity, and health education. The American Youth Policy Forum conducted a national review of 50 evaluations of youth interventions and identified nine basic principles of effective youth programming and practice, including: (a) high quality implementation; (b) high standards and expectations for participating youth; (c) participation of caring, knowledgeable adults; (d) parental involvement; (e) taking a holistic approach; (f) viewing youth as valuable resources and contributors to their communities; (g) high community involvement; (h) long term services, support, and follow-up; and (i) including work-based and vocational curricula as key components of programming (James, 1999). The Sexuality Information and Education Council of the U.S. (SIECUS) *Guidelines for Comprehensive Sexuality Education* (1997) included: (a) providing accurate information about human sexuality; (b) providing an opportunity for young people to question, explore, and assess their sexual attitudes; (c) helping young people develop interpersonal skills, including communication, decision-making, assertiveness, and peer refusal skills; and (d) helping young people exercise responsibility regarding sexual relationships.

## **Youth Understand the Relationship between Their Strengths and Their Goals, and Have the Skills to Act on That Understanding**

Research on social-emotional learning has found that instruction in self-awareness, social awareness, self-management, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making results in greater attachment to school (Blum, McNeely, & Rinehart, 2002; Eccles & Gootman, 2002). Greater attachment to school, in turn, leads to less risky behavior, more developmental assets, better academic performance, and improved long-term outcomes such as higher graduation rates, higher incomes, lower arrest rates, and fewer pregnancies (Blum, Beuhring, & Rinehart, 2000; Wilson, Gottfredson, & Najaka, 2001).

Youth who participate in organizational leadership roles, planning activities, making presentations, and participating in extra-curricular activities show higher levels of self-efficacy, self-advocacy, and self-determination (Edelman et al., 2004; Larson, 2000, Sagawa, 2003). Other components of effective youth development programs include discussing conflicting values and formulating value systems (Konopka Institute, 2000); developing ethics, values, and ethical reasoning (Boyd, 2001; Woyach, 1996); developing personal development plans; assessing individual strengths and weaknesses; and skill-building in goal-setting, planning, and self-advocacy (Edelman et al., 2004). Wehmeyer and Schwartz (1997) identified similar self-determination and self-advocacy skills needed by students with disabilities such as communicating interests and preferences, setting achievable goals, planning and time management, problem-solving, negotiating and persuading, leadership skills, and self-monitoring and reinforcement.

Youth development and youth leadership experiences can have positive effects on behaviors and skills including self-efficacy, self-determination, communication, and problem-solving. Each of these skills is linked to higher student achievement, lower dropout rates, and/or better postschool outcomes (Eccles & Gootman, 2002; Pittman, Irby, Tolman, Yohalem & Ferber, 2003; Sagawa, 2003). Adolescents involved in community volunteer service-learning programs that featured both community volunteering and classroom activities were less likely to be sexually active and become pregnant than teens not involved in such programs. Combining sex education with youth development activities (such as educational mentoring, employment, sports, or the performing arts) also reduced frequency of sexual activity as well as pregnancies and births (Manlove et al., 2002).

Youth involved in civic engagement programs were more likely “to be more involved in school, to graduate from high school, to hold more positive civic attitudes, and to avoid teen pregnancy and drug use than those who are not” (Zaff, Calkins, Bridges, & Margie, 2002, p. 1). Teens’ relationships with adults outside their families—teachers, mentors, neighbors, and unrelated adults—can promote their social development and overall skills. These relationships can be informal or part of formal mentoring programs (Hair, Jager, & Garrett, 2002; Tierney & Grossman, 1995). Research by Gambone, Klem, and Connell indicates that supportive relationships, particularly with parents, have “strong, positive effects on adolescents’ learning to be productive and to navigate by the end of their high school years” (2002, p.38).

## **Youth Develop the Knowledge and Skills to Demonstrate Leadership and Participate in Community Life**

A study by Woyach (1996) identified 12 principles for effective youth leadership programs, including knowledge and skills related to leadership; the history, values, and beliefs of communities; leadership styles; awareness, understanding and tolerance of other people, cultures and societies; experiential learning and opportunities for genuine leadership; and service to others in the community, country, and world. Boyd (2001)

and Ferber et al. (2002) also found experiential learning, such as service-learning projects, to be an effective method for teaching leadership skills and applying academic skills. Additional experiential learning or on-the-job leadership experiences that have proven to be effective include mentoring and counseling, formal leadership training programs, internships, special assignments, and simulations or case studies (James, 1999; Lambrecht, Hopkins, Moss, & Finch, 1997); activities that convey information about life, careers, and places beyond the neighborhood, as well as community service opportunities (Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development, 1995); and activities providing a sense of connection to the community, problem solving and social skills, and after-school recreation programs (Komro & Stigler, 2000).

Effective youth leadership experiences identified by research include placement in a variety of challenging situations with problems to solve and choices to make under conditions of manageable risk; and placement in a supportive environment with supervisors who provide positive role models and constructive support, and mentors who provide counseling (James, 1999; Lambrecht et al., 1997). For many youth, leadership skills are developed during structured extracurricular (recreational and social development) activities, such as clubs, service organizations, sports programs, and fine arts (Larson, 2000; Wehman, 1996). Few youth with disabilities participate in these types of activities and groups unless teachers, families, and other advocates facilitate these conditions (Amado, 1993; Halpern et al., 1997; Moon, 1994). Wehmeyer and Schwartz (1997) found that students with disabilities who have self-determination skills have more positive educational outcomes and have a greater chance of being successful in making the transition to adulthood, including achieving employment and community independence. For youth with disabilities, the importance of developing self-advocacy skills (those skills individuals need to advocate on their own behalf) has been well-documented (Agran, 1997; Sands & Wehmeyer, 1996; Van Reusen, Bos, Schumaker, & Deshler, 1994; Wehmeyer, Agran, & Hughes, 1998).

Research on factors promoting resilience in youth at risk has shown that the consistent presence of a single caring adult can have a significant positive impact on a young person's growth and development (Garmezy, 1993). Well-designed programs include experiences that promote positive relationships with both peers and adults (National Collaborative on Workforce and Disabilities for Youth, 2004).

Successful youth development programs must be able to adapt to the social, cultural, and ethnic diversity of the young people that they serve and the communities in which they operate (Eccles & Gootman, 2002; Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2003). Programs that promote understanding and tolerance in their participants have been shown to promote the development of positive social behaviors, attitudes, and skills (Edelman et al., 2004; Ferber, Pittman & Marshall, 2002).

Youth leadership is part of the youth development process and has internal and external components, such as the ability to analyze one's own strengths and weaknesses, set and pursue personal and vocational goals, guide or direct others on a course of action, influence the opinions and behaviors of others, and serve as a role model (Wehmeyer et al., 1998). Evaluations of youth development programs have demonstrated that young people who participate in youth leadership and civic engagement activities consistently get the supports and opportunities needed for healthy youth development (Innovation Center for Community and Youth Development, 2003).

### **Youth Have the Ability to Make Informed Decisions**

Parents, educators, and researchers agree on the need to promote self-determination, self-advocacy, and student-centered planning. Self-determination, the combination of skills, knowledge, and beliefs that enable a person to engage in goal-directed, self-regulated, autonomous behavior, has become an important

part of special education and related services provided to individuals with disabilities (Abery & Stancliffe, 1996). Self-determination skills include self-advocacy, social skills, organizational skills, community and peer connection, communication, conflict resolution, career skill building, and career development and computer/technological competency (Martin & Marshall, 1996; Wehmeyer, Kelchner, & Richards, 1996). Research has found that helping students acquire and exercise self-determination skills is a strategy that leads to more positive educational outcomes. For example, Wehmeyer and Schwartz (1997) found that one year after graduation, students with learning disabilities who received self-determination training were more likely to achieve positive adult outcomes, including being employed at a higher rate and earning more per hour, when compared to peers who had not received the training. Youth development programs foster self-determination by increasing participants' capacity for independent thinking, self-advocacy, and development of internal standards and values. (Catalano, Berglund, Ryan, Lonczak, & Hawkins, 2002).

Starting with the 1990 IDEA legislation, transition services must be based on students' needs and take into account students' interests and preferences. To accomplish this goal, students must be prepared to participate in planning for their future. The IDEA 1997 regulations support students' participation in planning for their future by requiring that all special education students be invited to their IEP meetings when transition goals are to be discussed. The U.S. Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) has played a major role in advancing a wide range of self-determination strategies through sponsored research and demonstration projects.

Research indicates that many students are attending their IEP meetings (Hasazi, Furney, & DeStefano, 1999; Johnson & Sharpe, 2000). There remain, however, a significant number who are not involved. This raises questions as to whether these students are not being extended opportunities for involvement, or are simply choosing not to attend. Effective student participation in the IEP process requires that students have the skills to move their lives in the directions they themselves choose, and have the support of their school and family and the adult service system in accomplishing their goals.

A common element of many exemplary self-determination programs is the presence of an individual with a philosophy, and the accompanying motivation, to see self-determination practices implemented or enhanced in his or her school or district. Exemplary self-determination programs also have strong administrative support encouraging the implementation of self-determination programs in schools. Without administrative support, student self-determination programs are often limited to individual classrooms and teachers who are dedicated to doing what they can to further their students' self-determination despite limited resources and inadequate administrative commitment (Wood & Test, 2001).

Educators, parents, and students consistently recommend that self-determination instruction begin early, well before high school. This recommendation is consistent with published recommendations for self-determination instruction (Wood & Test, 2001). Natural opportunities for making choices occur throughout life, and increased opportunities to express preferences and choices, beginning in early childhood, can heighten an individual's sense of self-esteem and self-direction. Izzo and Lamb (2002) suggested that schools seeking to encourage self-determination and positive postschool outcomes for students with disabilities should: (a) empower parents as partners in promoting self-determination and career development skills; (b) facilitate student-centered IEP meetings and self-directed learning models; (c) increase students' awareness of their disability and needed accommodations; (d) offer credit-bearing classes in self-determination and careers; (e) teach and reinforce students' internal locus of control; (f) develop self-advocacy skills and support student application of these skills; (g) infuse self-determination and career development skills into the general education curriculum; and (h) develop and implement work-based learning programs for all students.

Youth who participate in developmentally appropriate decision making activities and those who have access to meaningful youth development supports and opportunities are better equipped to make a successful transition to adult life (Gambone, Klem, and Connell 2002). Effective practices relating to decision-making include: opportunities for critical thinking and active, self-directed learning (ACT for Youth, 2003); setting goals and solving problems (Boyd, 2001; Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development, 1995); and gaining experience in decision-making (Boyd, 2001; Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development, 1995; Konopka Institute, 2000).

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## 4. Family Involvement

### Standards

- 4.1 School staff members demonstrate a strong commitment to family involvement and understand its critical role in supporting high achievement, access to postsecondary education, employment, and other successful adult outcomes.
- 4.2 Communication among youth, families, and schools is flexible, reciprocal, meaningful, and individualized.
- 4.3 School staff actively cultivate, encourage, and welcome youth and family involvement.
- 4.4 Youth, families, and school staff are partners in the development of policies and decisions affecting youth and families.

### Demonstrating Commitment to Family Involvement and the Family's Role in Supporting High Achievement and Postschool Results

A number of research studies, literature reviews, and program evaluations have linked family involvement and support to positive outcomes for youth with and without disabilities (Henderson & Berla, 1994; Henderson & Mapp, 2002; Hughes et al., 1997; James & Partee, 2003; Keith et al., 1998; Kohler, 1996; Sanders, Epstein, & Connors-Tadros, 1999; Shaver & Walls, 1998; Simon, 2001; Yap & Enoki, 1994). These outcomes include improved achievement test results, decreased risk of dropout, improved attendance, improved student behavior, higher grades, higher grade point average, greater commitment to schoolwork, and improved attitude toward school. Some studies have found that characteristics of family involvement are correlated with social, racial/ethnic, and economic variables (Catsambis & Garland, 1997; Harry, 2002; Kalyanpur, Harry, & Skrtic, 2000; Lamorey, 2002; Muller & Kerbow, 1993). Research findings indicate the appropriateness of refraining from broad generalizations with regard to family involvement and its relationship to increased student achievement, as such generalizations mask the complexity of the issue. The research literature indicates that student achievement outcomes differ depending on: (a) the particular component(s) of family involvement studied, and whether data analyzed were provided by parents or by schools; (b) achievement measure(s) used (e.g. achievement test scores, grades, GPA); (c) cultural or racial/ethnic groups involved; (d) the subject matter (e.g. mathematics, reading, science) being tested; (e) income levels of the parents; and (f) gender of the parents (Harry, 2002; Kalyanpur, Harry, & Skrtic, 2000; Lamorey, 2002; National Middle School Association, 2000).

Although several studies have examined the relationship between family involvement during the K-12 years and student outcomes (Cotton & Wicklund, 1989; Desimone, 1999), the majority have focused on the elementary school setting. Much less is understood about the impact of family involvement on middle and high school students (Balli, Demo, & Wedman, 1998; Brough, 1997; Keith et al., 1993; Rutherford & Billing, 1995; Trivette et al., 1995). Morningstar, Turnbull, and Turnbull (1995) found that secondary students with disabilities themselves report the need for their families to guide and support them as they plan for the future.

Components of effective family involvement identified in the literature include: (a) engaging and supporting families in a wide range of activities from preschool through high school (Epstein, Simon, & Salinas, 1997; Henderson & Berla, 1994; Henderson & Mapp, 2002; James & Partee, 2003; Kalyanpur, Harry, & Skrtic, 2000; Sanders & Epstein, 2000), (b) collaborative plans based on annual feedback (Kessler-Sklar & Baker, 2000; Mapp, 1997), (c) regular staff development on student and family involvement (Boethel, 2003; Furney, & Salembier, 2000; Harry, 2002; Harry, & Skrtic, 2000; James & Partee, 2003;

Kalyanpur, Harry, & Skrtic, 2000; Kohler, 1998; Lamorey, 2002; National PTA, 1997; Rutherford & Billing, 1995), and (d) clear information on school or program expectations, activities, services, and options (Catsambis, 1998; Grigal & Neubert, 2004; Hoover-Dempsey, & Sandler, 1997; Leuchovius, Hasazi, & Goldberg, 2001; National PTA, 1997; Phelps & Hanley-Maxwell, 1997).

### **Strengthening Communication Between Youth, Families, and Schools**

The National Standards for Parent/Family Involvement Programs (National PTA, 1997) states that “communication between home and school is regular, two-way and meaningful.” Outreach, communication, and relationships with families have been identified as key ingredients of effective programs and schools (Henderson & Mapp, 2002; James & Partee, 2003; Keith, et al., 1998; Mapp, 1997; Rutherford & Billing, 1995; Sanders, et al., 1999; Yap & Enoki, 1994) and are especially important for students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds (Espinosa, 1995; Martinez & Velazquez, 2000). Effective communication strategies identified in the literature include: (a) a variety of communication methods (James & Partee, 2003; National PTA, 1997; Sanders & Harvey, 2000), (b) communication based on individual student and family needs and that includes alternate formats and languages as needed (Brough & Irvin, 2001; Christenson & Sheridan, 2001; Comer & Haynes, 1991; Harry, 2002; Henderson & Mapp, 2002; James & Partee, 2003; Kalyanpur, Harry, & Skrtic, 2000; Kohler, 2000; Lamorey, 2002; National Center for the Dissemination of Disability Research, 1999), (c) reports of positive student behavior and achievement (Epstein et al., 1997; National PTA, 1997), and (d) improving the literacy skills of English Language Learners (Boethel, 2003; Espinosa, 1995; Yap & Enoki, 1994).

Family relationships and support can play a particularly influential role in the lives of youth from diverse cultural communities (Harry, 2002; Hosack & Malkmus, 1992; Irvin, Thorin, & Singer, 1993; Kalyanpur, Harry, & Skrtic, 2000; Lamorey, 2002; Leung, 1992). Despite recognition of the importance of student and family involvement, families are resources that have been underutilized by transition and vocational rehabilitation professionals (Czerlinsky & Chandler, 1993; DeFur & Taymans, 1995; Marrone, Helm, & Van Gelder, 1997; Salembier & Furney, 1997). Although parents and professionals are working to forge new relationships, there remains a need to build the level of trust and collaboration between them (Guy, Goldberg, McDonald, & Flom, 1997).

The importance of establishing credibility and trust with culturally and racially diverse populations cannot be overemphasized; cultural responsiveness is essential to establishing such confidence (Harry, 2002; Kalyanpur, Harry, & Skrtic, 2000; Lamorey, 2002; National Center for the Dissemination of Disability Research, 1999). Tailoring training to the cultural traditions of families improves recruitment and outcome effectiveness (Kumpfer & Alvarado, 1995). For example, parents from culturally and racially diverse populations may prefer one-on-one meetings rather than more traditional training formats such as workshops (Minnesota Department of Children, Families & Learning, 1998; National Center for the Dissemination of Disability Research, 1999). Additional strategies may include family-mentoring programs, needs assessment surveys, and working with culturally specific community organizations that have created relationships of trust (Harry, 2002; Kalyanpur, Harry, & Skrtic, 2000; Lamorey, 2002; National Center on Secondary Education and Transition, 2002). Establishing effective levels of communication between youth, families, and school professionals is critically important in relation to these research findings.

### **Embracing Youth and Family Involvement**

While the value of family involvement is well-understood, the current system does not make it easy for families to be effective partners in the transition process. Multiple service programs form a confusing,

fragmented, and inconsistent system (General Accounting Office, 1995). Parent centers report that families of young adults with disabilities are deeply frustrated by the lack of coordinated, individualized services for high school students and the paucity of resources, programs, and opportunities for young adults once they graduate (PACER, 2000). Cultural differences may further complicate relationships with professionals (North Central Regional Educational Laboratory, 1998).

Recent surveys indicate that families seek information on a variety of issues including: helping youth develop self-advocacy skills; balancing standards-based academic instruction with functional life skills training; inclusive education practices at the secondary level; postsecondary options for young adults with developmental and cognitive disabilities; pre-employment experiences and employment options that lead to competitive employment; financial planning; resources available to youth through the workforce investment, vocational rehabilitation, Medicaid, and Social Security systems; better collaboration with community resources; housing options; and interacting with the juvenile justice system (PACER, 2001).

A number of studies and program evaluations highlight the importance of actively encouraging family involvement and creating a welcoming school or program climate for families (Boethel, 2003; Brough & Irvin, 2001; Henderson & Mapp, 2002; James & Partee, 2003; Rutherford & Billing, 1995; Simon, 2001; Yap & Enoki, 1994). Strategies for cultivating family involvement include: (a) a formal process identifying strengths and needs and connecting families and students to support and assistance (Kohler, 1993; Rutherford & Billing, 1995); (b) meeting schedules that accommodate scheduling, transportation, and other family needs (Henderson & Mapp, 2002; Martinez & Velazquez, 2000; National PTA, 1997); (c) family training on positive family-child relationships (James & Partee, 2003; National PTA, 1997; Simmons, Stevenson, & Strnad, 1993); (d) staff development on welcoming and working collaboratively with families and students (Boethel, 2003; Espinosa, 1995; Kessler-Sklar & Baker, 2000; Kreider, 2002; National PTA, 1997); (e) supports and materials that reflect community diversity (Boethel, 2003; Furney & Salembier, 2000; Harry, 2002; Kalyanpur, Harry, & Skrtic, 2000; Lamorey, 2002; Martinez & Velazquez, 2000); and (f) referrals to community resources (Henderson & Mapp, 2002).

### **Youth, Families, and School Staff as Partners in Policy Development and Decision Making**

Family involvement as well as training in program design, planning, and implementation are significant factors leading to positive youth outcomes (Catalano, Berglund, Ryan, Lonczak, & Hawkins, 1998; Sanders et al., 1999; Simon, 2001). Research also indicates that parent participation and leadership in transition planning are important in successful transitions for youth with disabilities (DeStefano, Heck, Hasazi, & Furney, 1999; Furney, Hasazi, & DeStefano, 1997; Hasazi, Furney, & DeStefano, 1999; Kohler, 1993; Taymans, Corbey, & Dodge, 1995). Strategies for effective partnering of families, educators, and community members include: (a) an accessible and understandable decision-making and problem-solving process for partners (National PTA, 1997); (b) dissemination of information about policies, goals, and reforms to families and students (Kohler, 2000; Lopez, 2002; National Center for the Dissemination of Disability Research, 1999); (c) policies that respect diversity (Boethel, 2003; Harry, 2002; Kalyanpur, Harry, & Skrtic, 2000; Lamorey, 2002; National PTA, 1997); (d) adequate training for families on policy, reform, and related issues (James & Partee, 2003; National PTA, 1997); and (e) the inclusion of students and families on decision-making, governance, and other program and school committees (Furney & Salembier, 2000; James & Partee, 2003; National PTA, 1997; Sanders et al., 1999).

Further, meaningful family involvement and participation must expand beyond the individual student level. Student and family involvement are important in making service systems and professionals aware of their needs (Gloss, Reiss, & Hackett, 2000). Family members can be fully included in the research process (Turnbull, Friesen, & Ramirez, 1998) and at all levels of policy and service delivery planning. Involving family members in the development and evaluation of federal, state, and local policies and practices helps assure that the services and supports available to youth with disabilities are of the highest quality (Federal Inter-agency Coordinating Council, 2000). In addition, research indicates that family participation and leadership in transition planning practices enhances the implementation of transition policy (President's Commission on Excellence in Special Education, 2002). In order for family members to expand participation beyond their own child, they must have opportunities to increase their own knowledge and develop leadership skills.

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## 5. Connecting Activities

### Standards

- 5.1 Organizations coordinating services and supports align their missions, policies, procedures, data, and resources to equitably serve all youth and ensure the provision of a unified flexible array of programs, services, accommodations, and supports.
- 5.2 Organizations connect youth to an array of programs, services, accommodations, and supports, based on an individualized planning process.
- 5.3 Organizations hire and invest in the development of knowledgeable, responsive, and accountable personnel who understand their shared responsibilities to align and provide programs, services, resources, and supports necessary to assist youth in achieving their individual postschool goals.

### **Organizations Collaborate to Serve all Youth Equitably With a Variety of Programs and Services**

Effective transition planning and services depend upon functional linkages among schools, rehabilitation services, and other human service and community agencies. However, several factors have stood as barriers to effective collaboration. These include: (a) lack of shared knowledge and vision by students, parents, and school and agency staff around students' postschool goals and the transition resources necessary to support students' needs and interests (Johnson, Stodden, Emanuel, Luecking, & Mack, 2002); (b) lack of shared information across school and community agencies, and lack of coordinated assessment and planning processes (Benz, Johnson, Mikkelsen, & Lindstrom, 1995); (c) lack of meaningful roles for students and parents in a transition decision-making process that respects both students' emerging need for independence and self-determination, and parents' continuing desire to encourage and support their children during the emancipation process that is part of becoming a productive, contributing young adult (Furney, Hasazi, & DeStefano, 1997); (d) lack of meaningful information on anticipated postschool services needed by students, and lack of follow-up data on postschool outcomes and continuing support needs of students that can be used to guide improvement in systems collaboration and linkages (Hasazi, Furney, & DeStefano, 1999; Johnson & Sharpe, 2000); (e) lack of effective practices for establishing and using state and local interagency teams to build capacity for collaboration and systems linkages; and (f) lack of coordinated eligibility requirements and funding for agency services (Luecking, Crane, & Mooney, 2002).

These barriers to effective collaboration are not insurmountable. Research suggests that systems can work more effectively together, and student achievement of meaningful secondary and postschool outcomes can be improved, through: (a) the use of written and enforceable interagency agreements that structure the provision of collaborative transition services (Johnson et al., 2002); (b) the development and delivery of interagency and cross-agency training opportunities; (c) the use of interagency planning teams to facilitate and monitor capacity building efforts in transition (Furney et al., 1997); and (d) the provision of a secondary curriculum that supports student identification and accomplishment of transition goals and prepares youth for success in work, postsecondary, and community living environments (Hasazi et al., 1999). Promising collaboration strategies have been proposed to link secondary education systems with employers and community employment services funded under the Workforce Investment Act (Luecking, Crane, & Mooney, 2002; Mooney & Crane, 2002) and with postsecondary education systems (Flannery, Slovic, Dalmau, Bigaj, & Hart, 2000; Hart, Zimbrich, & Whelley, 2002; Stodden & Jones, 2002).

Collaborative approaches bring together community agencies to focus their collective expertise and combined resources to improve the quality of transition planning and services for youth. This sharing of resources, knowledge, skills, and data requires planned and thoughtful collaboration among all participants. The President's Commission on Excellence in Special Education (2002) suggested connecting special education to outside services such as vocational rehabilitation, as a way to improve postschool outcomes for youth. The Commission also found that not enough interagency activity occurs between schools and vocational rehabilitation agencies. Further, fiscal disincentives should be removed and waiver options provided to promote cost-sharing and resource-pooling among agencies to improve the availability and cost effectiveness of transition services and supports for students with disabilities.

### **Knowledgeable, Responsive, and Accountable Personnel are in Place to Help Youth Achieve Their Goals**

In addition to the need for collaboration among youth-serving organizations, these organizations must be committed to supporting the development and retention of personnel who are knowledgeable, responsive, and accountable. State and local education agencies across the United States are experiencing a shortage of qualified personnel to serve children and youth with disabilities. In 1999-2000, more than 12,000 openings for special education teachers were left vacant or filled by substitutes (U.S. Department of Education, 2001). Further, an additional 31,000 positions were filled by teachers who were not fully certified for their positions (U.S. Department of Education, 1999).

New teachers are entering the field without the specific knowledge and skills needed to support transition. Miller, Lombard, and Hazekorn (2000) reported that few special education teachers have received training on methods, materials, and strategies for developing meaningful IEPs that include transition goals and objectives and specifically address students' needs through curriculum and instruction. Further, many special education teachers underutilize community work-experience programs and fail to coordinate referrals to adult service providers.

Teachers and others assisting students in the transition from school to adult life need specialized skills and knowledge. Several states have developed state licensure or certification for transition coordinators, support services coordinators, work experience coordinators, and school vocational rehabilitation counselors. However, these licensure and certification programs are few in number and have been difficult to maintain, due to costs and competing demands for personnel in other, broader classifications of special education teacher licensure, such as learning disabilities and emotional/behavioral disorders.

Rehabilitation and career counselors are often the only link that school programs have to postschool environments, including employment. Concern about the quality of services in the area of rehabilitation counseling led to the mandate for the Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD) in the 1992 and 1998 amendments to the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. This directive seeks to ensure that personnel are qualified by establishing CSPD minimum standards (U.S. Department of Education, 2002). However, the CSPD initiative is being implemented in the context of what may be the largest turnover and retirement of counselors in the history of the state-federal system of rehabilitation (Bishop & Crystal, 2002; Dew & Peters, 2002; Muzzio, 2000). Turnover and retirements have been reported to be as high as 30-40% of personnel in some states (Institute on Rehabilitation Issues, 2001). In general, job openings across all categories of counseling occupations is expected to increase 36% or more through 2010, faster than the average for other employment categories (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2002a). The existing counseling training programs

cannot be expected to meet this expanding need. Bishop and Crystal reported that in the preceding five-year period, less than one-third of vacant positions were filled by staff with a master's degree in rehabilitation counseling. The implications of losing experienced qualified professionals and replacing those individuals with less qualified and inexperienced staff are clear. This trend will have a tremendously detrimental impact on transition services, and the situation warrants a concerted effort to address this concern. In the immediate future, the collaboration needed to provide effective transition services may be in jeopardy until new counselors fill the vacant positions, stabilize their workload responsibilities, and receive needed training.

As young people with disabilities prepare to exit their public school programs, a significant number will need access to community services that address their community living, social and recreational, health, and other related needs. Persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities, in particular, will need to rely on service program personnel to support their everyday living needs. Significant worker shortages and the associated factors of compensation, recruitment, training, and support and supervision have become increasingly prominent issues within the adult service-delivery system for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (Larson, Lakin, & Hewitt, 2002). As the national movement from institutional to community settings has occurred, community service agency professionals and direct support personnel have been requested to do more with greater individual responsibility, less direct supervision, less structure, and greater competency, but without preparatory or ongoing training. Direct support staff, in particular, have been the most difficult to recruit, retain, and provide with proper training to ensure that they have the ability to address the residential and employment needs of the individuals they serve in community settings.

Direct support professionals play a key role in the lives of young people with disabilities exiting public schools by supporting them in their own homes, in community employment situations, and in other community settings. There are over 410,000 direct support professionals working in community residential programs and 90,500-120,000 of these personnel are working in vocational and employment settings (Larson, Hewitt, & Anderson, 1999; Prouty, Smith, & Lakin, 2001). In addition, the number of personal and home care aides and home health aides supporting adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities is estimated respectively at 414,000 and 615,000 nationwide (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2002b, 2002c). In the past quarter-century, annual staff turnover rates have consistently averaged between 43%-70% in community residential settings alone (Larson, Lakin, & Bruininks, 1998). Low average wages and lack of training for those filling these positions have compounded these difficulties.

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National Alliance for Secondary Education and Transition. (2005). *National standards and quality indicators: Transition toolkit for systems improvement*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, National Center on Secondary Education and Transition.



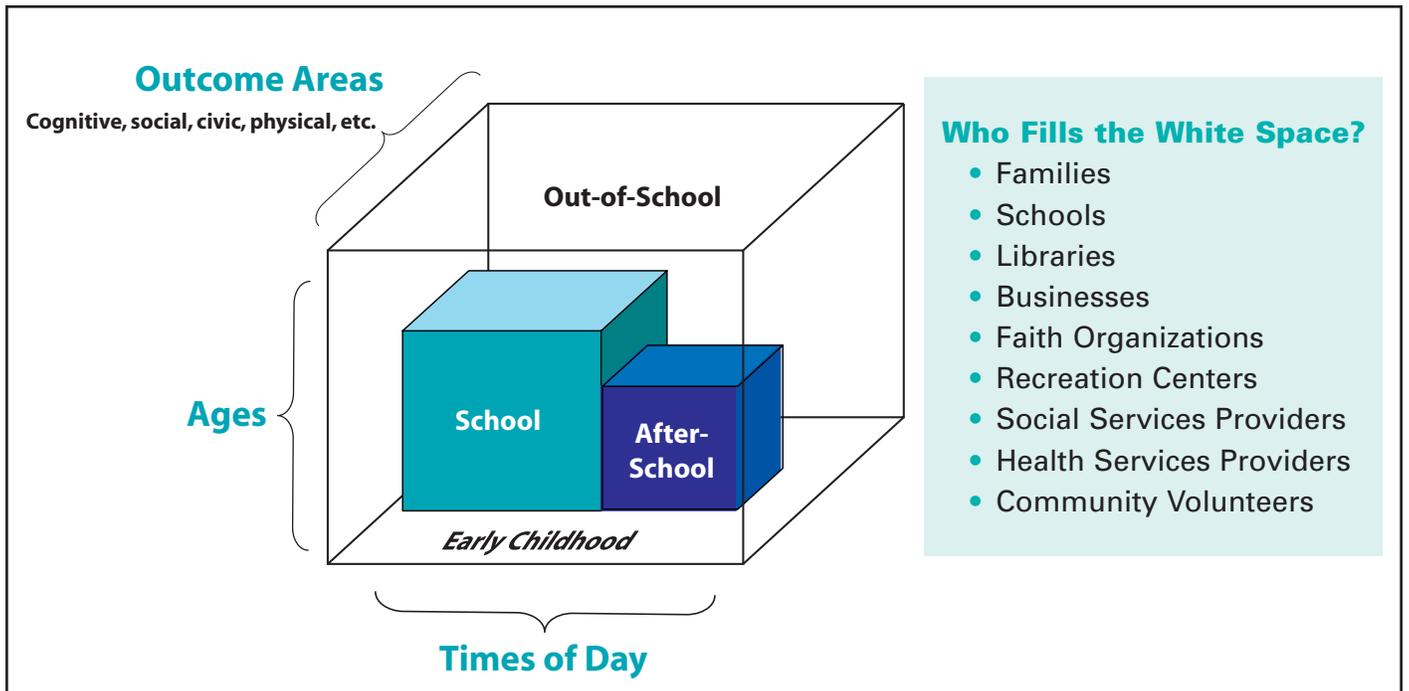
**For further information about NASET, contact:**

David R. Johnson, Project Director  
National Center on Secondary Education and Transition  
Institute on Community Integration (UCE) • University of Minnesota  
102 Pattee Hall, 150 Pillsbury Dr SE • Minneapolis, MN 55455  
612-624-2097 (phone) • 612-624-8279 (fax) • [johns006@umn.edu](mailto:johns006@umn.edu)

*This document available in alternate formats upon request. Please contact Donna Johnson at 612-624-1143 or [johns042@umn.edu](mailto:johns042@umn.edu).*

COMMUNITIES NEED TO ENSURE THAT			
<i>...throughout their developmental years</i>	<b>AGE GROUPS</b>	Early childhood Elementary Middle	High School Young Adults
<i>...and throughout their waking hours</i>	<b>TIME</b>	During School Before/After-School Evenings	Weekends Summers Holidays
ALL CHILDREN AND YOUTH			
<i>...need constant access to a range of services, supports and opportunities</i>	<b>SUPPORTS</b>	<b>Basic Care and Services</b> <b>Safety (Physical/Psychological)</b> <b>Appropriate Structures</b> <b>Positive Social Norms</b> <b>Supportive Relationships</b> <b>Opportunities to Belong</b> <b>Opportunities to Contribute</b> <b>Opportunities for Skill Building</b> (adapted from NAS)	
<i>...in the settings where they spend time</i>	<b>SETTINGS</b>	<b>Families</b> <b>Youth Organizations</b> <b>Schools/Colleges</b> <b>Work Places/Businesses</b> <b>Faith Organizations</b> <b>Community Places</b> <b>"Deep-End" Systems</b> (JJ/Child Welfare)	
<i>...and in ways that address challenges, strengthen skills and build connections</i>	<b>GOALS</b>	<b>Protection/Treatment</b> <b>Prevention</b> <b>Promotion/Preparation</b> <b>Participation</b>	
<i>...in order to be well-prepared for college, work and life</i>	<b>OUTCOMES</b>	<b>Learning</b> <b>Working</b> <b>Thriving</b> <b>Connecting</b> <b>Contributing</b>	(Cognitive) (Vocational) (Physical) (Social/Emotional/Spiritual) (Civic Engagement)
ACHIEVE TO THEIR FULL POTENTIAL			
<i>...and get additional supports, if needed.</i>	<b>CHALLENGES</b>	<b>Examples</b> <b>Poverty</b> <b>Disabilities</b>	<b>Race, Culture, Language</b> <b>Identity</b>

# How Do We Fill the Developmental White Space

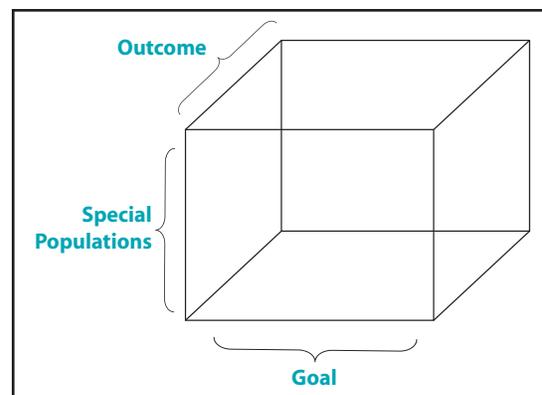
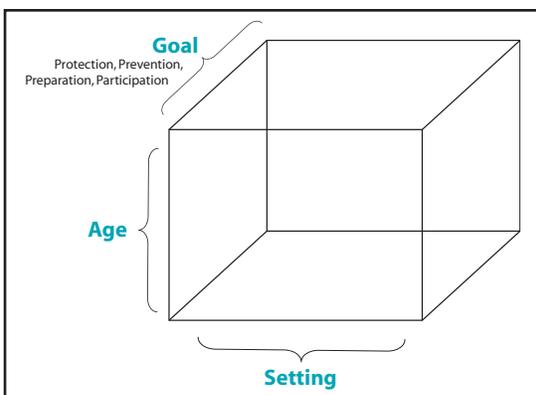


This country's commitment to public education is unwavering, but the broader commitment to “youth development” — to ensuring that all young people have the services, supports and opportunities they need to be ready for college, work and life — is not as strong. This is in part, we would argue, because responsibility for these larger preparatory goals is not clear.

Schools are the primary “preparatory” institutions in this country. But schools are not accountable for all of the developmental space. Nor should they be. And after-school programs, if allowed to be narrowly defined as 3–6 programs for elementary school students, will not completely fill the void. Communities that ask the broad question, “Who fills developmental space?” quickly find that the answer is “Everyone.”

Outcomes by age by time is one way to build “the cube.” Other views can include goals, settings, supports or special populations. Beyond “who,” the cube can be used to answer questions like “how much need?” or “how many resources?”

## More examples of how to use the cube:



# Ready for Work



All youth ready for college, work & life.

## Advocates' Series

## Action Brief #2

Ready by 21™ is the bold new national initiative started by the Forum for Youth Investment in 2005 to challenge states and localities to better harness their collective horsepower to ensure that all youth are Ready by 21: Ready for college, work and life.™ Advocates' work is critical.

The Forum has compiled this brief as a part of our work with KIDS COUNT grantees focused on older youth. The working group and this series have been generously supported by the Annie E. Casey Foundation.

The Forum is pleased to present this action brief series in conjunction with two national dissemination partners:

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The Forum for Youth Investment  
The Cady-Lee House  
7064 Eastern Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20012  
T: 202.207.3333 • F: 202.207.3329  
Youth@ForumFYI.org  
www.ForumFYI.org

*To succeed in today's economy, all young people have to be ready for college, work and life — those in school and those not in school. Reports from higher education, business and youth development leaders suggest that while the pathways to college, work and adult responsibilities are different, the skills needed are largely the same.<sup>1</sup> Research studies and population surveys, however, suggest that too few young people have the skills needed to succeed.<sup>2</sup>*

*Nationally, 3.8 million 18–24 year olds are neither in school nor in the workforce — almost one in six.<sup>3</sup> Several research studies suggest that a small number of these young adults have opted out of school and work in order to start families or see the world. Most, however, are on the sidelines because they are ill-prepared for college or work or life.<sup>4</sup>*

*Who are these young people? Why are they getting lost in the systems? How can we get them back? What can be done to not lose them?*

### Forty percent of public high school graduates say they are unprepared for college or work.<sup>5</sup>

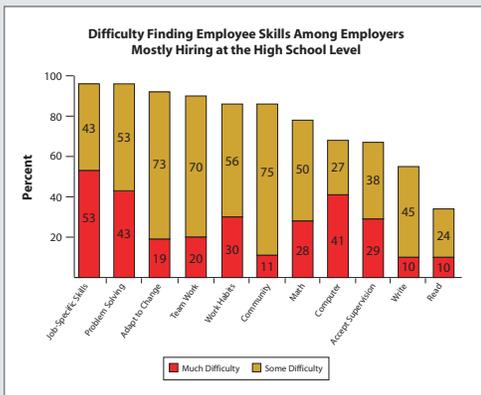
Business people, community leaders, educators, parents and young people themselves are becoming increasingly concerned that young people don't have the 21st century skills they need to succeed in the workforce. Leadership is needed. Schools can do more to align curricula and learning experiences with the demands of the 21st century workplace. Businesses and community organizations are places where young people can apply classroom skills, build new skills and earn credit for work experience.

To ensure that every student has the opportunity to learn and develop 21st century skills, educators, business and community leaders need to work together — to acknowledge that youth need a broader skill set to be prepared for work, to develop opportunities for young people to learn the skills employers value in school and on the job, and to develop common assessments and credentials that measure and document those skills.

- **There is a disconnect between youth skills and employer needs.** More than a third of high school graduates say there are gaps in their preparation for the expectations in their current jobs — gaps in academic skills like writing, research, math, and science. Employers expressed similar dissatisfaction in high school preparation.<sup>6</sup> A recent poll of National Association of Manufacturers reports that 84 percent of its members believe that K–12 schools are not doing an adequate job preparing students for the workplace and nearly half reported that their current employees lacked basic employability skills such as attendance, timeliness, and work ethic.<sup>7</sup>
- **Youth, especially low-income minorities, are having a hard time finding quality jobs.** Teen employment is now the lowest it has been in 57 years and unemployment rates are particularly high for low-income African American and Hispanic high school graduates.<sup>8</sup> Low-income minority youth actually remain the least likely to be employed while still in high school, creating additional school-to-work transition barriers.<sup>9</sup> Those jobs that are available are typically in lower level service industries, often lacking benefits, training, and opportunities for advancement.<sup>10</sup>

## Employers Want Skills

According to a 2003 survey conducted by the Washington State Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board, employers who hire high school graduates report not only that their recruits lack job-specific skills, but also basic cognitive, personal and social skills needed: Problem solving skills top the list.<sup>14</sup>



A new 2006 survey fielded by Corporate Voices for Working Families, the Partnership for 21st Century Skills, the Society for Human Resource Managers and The Conference Board will be available fall 2006. This survey asks business leaders to rate the work readiness of entry level workers with high school diplomas, associate degrees and four year degrees. All are found lacking.

Many studies have found a positive relationship between paid employment and educational and occupational success after high school.<sup>11</sup> Today’s teens, however, especially those with fewer skills and fewer quality work opportunities, are becoming increasingly concentrated in retail trade, hospitality, leisure (fast food restaurants), and lower level service industries where the probability of receiving on-site training — computer training, formal training or apprenticeship training — is unlikely.<sup>12</sup>

While much attention has been given to the number of students disengaging and/or dropping out of school, few have noted the reduced opportunities along the developmental “work experience pipeline” from middle school through early adulthood. While some studies have shown that too much work (more than 20 hours per week) can interfere with learning and skill development, part-time and summer work experience can provide the kinds of experiences young people need to gain a broader skill set, assessments, certificates and the work exposure that enables them to apply learning to a real-world context. According to the Bureau of Labor and Statistics, “Enhancing employment experiences during the teen years may play an important role in the long-term reduction of welfare rolls by providing at-risk youth with skills and experience that can be translated into later labor force successes.”<sup>13</sup>

## Supports Youth Need to Enter and Succeed in the Workforce

It is important that assessment tools measure the full range of work-related skills young people need, and highlight career possibilities for them. Young people also need businesses to collaborate with their schools to offer skill-based certificates and credits that showcase their skills, and quality job opportunities that complement and expand on the knowledge and skills they learn in the classroom.

**Support for building a broader skill set.** Education and business leaders need to work together to align academic requirements with the key skills expected in the workplace. In the 21st century global economy, employers are seeking skills beyond core competencies in science, math, and reading comprehension. Educators need to partner with the business and higher education communities to develop a broad consensus on the 21st century skills employers value in potential employees and integrate those skills into the curriculum. Education and business leaders need to acknowledge and support the role that community-based organizations can play in providing opportunities for skill- and experience building for both teens and older disconnected youth.<sup>15</sup> To learn more about the key skill set as defined by the Partnership for 21st Century Skills, see the sidebar on page 3.

**Opportunities to assess youth skills.** Once stakeholders have acknowledged that today’s youth need a broader set of skills to prepare them for work, businesses and communities can partner to measure young people’s 21st century skills, serving as indicators for high school reform initiatives that align the curriculum with workplace needs. Youth can also benefit from a variety of assessments that highlight both their aptitudes and appropriate career options.

In Washington state, the Franklin-Pierce school district offers Navigation 101 classes that meet twice a month during the school year to assess students’ personal interests and aptitudes.<sup>16</sup> To learn more about this assessment, see the sidebar on page 5.

**Skill-based certificates and credits that demonstrate work readiness.**

Efforts to define and assess 21st century skills help students take charge of their preparation for college and work. But increasingly, employers are looking for evidence that young people have the cognitive, personal and social skills they need to succeed. Certificate programs and alternative credit offerings supported by schools, businesses and community organizations can help young people get credit for the skills they have learned in school, on the job, or in community programs that provide opportunities for applied training, work and service. These credentials ensure that young people applying for jobs have tangible evidence that they're prepared for work whether they have a GED, a high school diploma or an Associates Degree.

In September, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, five states, Washington, D.C. and Junior Achievement Worldwide will unveil the Work-Readiness Credential, a voluntary national assessment, to a limited number of states and communities.<sup>17</sup> See the Resources sidebar on page 4 to find out how you can learn more. In Sonoma County, California, New Ways to Work is partnering with the Sonoma County Office of Education and Sonoma County's Youth Council to design the county-wide, industry-driven Work Readiness Certificate program to ensure that students have the skills they need to enter the workforce. Student skills will be evaluated by employer groups and certificates will be awarded to those who prove they are ready for work.<sup>18</sup> To learn more about New Ways to Work, see the Profile on page 5.

**Appropriate early work exposure.** The differences between school and workplace cultures and expectations are considerable, especially for teens whose families have marginal labor force attachments or negative attitudes towards work. Business and community organizations are places where young people can apply classroom skills, build new skills and earn credit for work experience. The development value of these experiences can be enhanced if young people receive intentional training and ongoing career development support. School to career programs, internships, and supported work experiences sponsored by schools, businesses or intermediaries can not only increase the likelihood that all youth have work experiences, but increase the chances that these work experiences are developmental because the tasks and the staff are supportive. To learn more about New Ways to Work, an organization in California striving to provide young people with quality work exposure, see the Profile on page 5.

**Ready for Work: State of the States**

Across the country, policy makers are looking for new and innovative ways to prepare the nation's young workforce. Below is a compilation of information on policies aimed at increasing the number of prepared, competent and competitive workers in the United States.

**Providing youth with 21st century skills.** Five states (California, Indiana, Nebraska, New York and Wyoming) have gone through an alignment process that includes collaboration with the business and higher education communities to ensure that high school standards reflect workforce skill demands. Indiana was the first state to take this approach by allowing the business, industry, labor, post-secondary and K-12 communities to complete a thorough review and revision of its high school standards. The new standards were then used to create more rigorous high school academic programs.<sup>20</sup> Through the American Diploma Project Network, 22 states are collaborating with Achieve, Inc. to align what employers and colleges expect of students with the knowledge and skills they need to graduate from high school.<sup>21</sup>

**Partnership for 21st Century Skills Challenges Schools to Create 21st Century Learning Settings**

The Partnership for 21st Century Skills is one of several business collaboratives that have defined the skills young people need if they want to be successful in the workforce.<sup>19</sup>

- **Core Subjects.** English, reading or language arts, math, science, foreign languages, civics, government, economics, arts, history and geography (As identified by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001).
- **21st Century Content.** Global awareness, financial, economic, business and entrepreneurial literacy, civic literacy and wellness awareness.
- **Learning and Thinking Skills.** Critical-thinking and problem-solving skills, communication skills, creativity and innovation skills, collaboration skills, contextual learning skills and information and media literacy skills.
- **Information and Communications Literacy.** Use technology to learn, think critically, solve problems, use information, communicate, innovate and collaborate.
- **Life Skills.** Leadership, ethics, accountability, adaptability, personal productivity, personal responsibility, people skills, self-direction, and social responsibility.

The Partnership for 21st Century Skills isn't the only organization highlighting the need to expand the skill set youth need to be prepared for work.

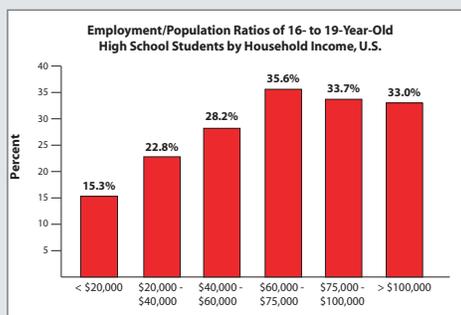
[Click here](#) to see what skills the Chamber of Commerce believes young people need to be prepared for the workforce.

[Click here](#) to see what employer's in Kentucky view as the skills needed for work.

## Teens Need Jobs

Between 2000 & 2004, the Employment/Population ratio of the nation's teens has declined nine percentage points to 36.4 percent. Andrew Sum and the Northeastern University Center for Labor Market Studies revealed information on teen employment in 2005, and while their analysis found small differences in teen employment based on gender and age, the more significant disparities were seen in family income, race and educational attainment.

**Family Income Matters:** In each race-ethnic group (African Americans, Hispanics, Whites), youth from the lowest income households and those living in high poverty neighborhoods were the least likely to be employed.



**Race Matters:** Even when you control for family income, racial disparities still matter, seeing as fewer than seven percent of African American male high school students in low-income households were employed in 2004 versus 12 percent of low-income Hispanic males and 23 percent of low-income White males. Between 2000 and 2004, teens in each of the three major race-ethnic groups (African Americans, Hispanics, Whites) encountered sharp drops in their employment rates, ranging from eight to nine percentage points. On an average month in 2004, four out of ten white teens were employed, compared to three out of ten Hispanics and only two of ten African Americans.

**Education Matters:** Only 50 percent of those without a high school diploma (GED) were employed while 76 percent of those who completed at least one year of post-secondary education were employed.<sup>22</sup>

The value of the (E/P) ratio is obtained by dividing the estimated number of employed teens (E) by the number of teens in the civilian non-institutional population (P).<sup>23</sup>

**Assessing work readiness skills.** States rely on assessments and data systems to hold high schools accountable for improving student transitions to college and work. Indiana, New York, North Carolina and Oklahoma hold high schools accountable for improving the college and work readiness of their students while nine more plan to do so. Businesses also play a role in assessing youth skills.<sup>24</sup> In April, New York City-based Conference Board and partner organizations sent out a survey to about 10,000 human-resource and training executives to get a better sense of what knowledge and skills their companies are looking for in job applicants so that educators can then take that information and integrate it into school curriculums.<sup>25</sup>

**Expanding pathways to work.** Portland, Oregon has co-located and integrated the resources of youth services and alternative schools to allow for youth's easier access to career development and career ladder programming. Portland benefits from Oregon state policy which allows for significant autonomy in alternative learning programs.<sup>26</sup> In 2007, the California Department of Education will establish three to five new schools through the Diploma Plus program. Created by the Commonwealth Corporation and New Ways to Work, this innovative small-school program allows students to enroll in college courses and work on internships and community service projects in order to strengthen what they learn in the classroom. Graduates earn a high school diploma as well as valuable real world experience.<sup>27</sup>

**Increasing work opportunities.** Young people aren't the only ones who benefit from career exposure and job training in the workplace. The Youth Registered Apprenticeship Tax Credit is a state-based tax credit program that provides incentives to more than 70 certified Michigan employer sites to sponsor federally approved registered apprenticeships. Students between the ages of 16 and 19 who are enrolled in high school or a GED preparation program are employed part time, and their on-the-job training is combined with classroom work. Employers receive a tax credit of up to \$2,000 annually per apprenticeship.<sup>28</sup>

## Policy Data Resources

*Look here to find resources where you can track federal policies related to work readiness*

**National Youth Employment Coalition (NYEC).** In their legislative updates section, you can find information about WIA reauthorization and other important federal legislation. The best information can be obtained by becoming a member and accessing their Members Only database. [www.nyec.org](http://www.nyec.org)

**National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth (NCWD-Y).** Visit the policy maker section of the homepage to find information about federal policies relevant to helping youth with disabilities enter the workforce. [www.ncwd-youth.info](http://www.ncwd-youth.info)

*Look here to find resources where you can track state data and policies related to work readiness*

**National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL).** Access information about Vocational/Technical Education by looking under Postsecondary in the Education Bill Tracking Database.

[www.ncsl.org/programs/educ/educ\\_leg.cfm](http://www.ncsl.org/programs/educ/educ_leg.cfm)

**Annie E. Casey Foundation (AECF).** Access data on youth, including idleness and employment. You can also find data on some cities and counties.

[www.aecf.org/kidscount/sld/profile.jsp](http://www.aecf.org/kidscount/sld/profile.jsp)

## Profile: Advocates Improving the Odds

New Ways to Work (NWW) is a California-based organization working on the local, state and national level to build community connections that ensure young people's access to quality educational and career opportunities. Their team of experienced practitioners is particularly interested in supporting the development of sustainable systems that leverage local resources and create powerful partnerships among schools, the community and the workplace.

In 2003, participants in the federally funded School-to-Work Intermediary Project called upon NWW to serve as a facilitating partner who could help them create a self-funded network to sustain their work. Together, they created the Intermediary Network (INet). NWW assisted INet member organizations in exploring connections to the after-school and small schools movements and worked to support college access and success for under-represented populations. Since then, the network has expanded to engage new local and affiliate members. INet members leveraged over 18 million dollars in public and private investments and provided services to 89,000 students, 13, 473 teachers, 2,000 schools and 6,422 employers.

Steve Trippe, president and executive director of NWW, recognizes that the competencies needed for work and college are similar, but he explains that NWW encourages the development of common-sense work readiness skills in young people. "In addition to the skills needed for college, young people need programs that more closely emulate workplace practices such as teamwork expectations. Often, in school, teamwork is parallel to cheating whereas in the workplace, it is encouraged. Of course, simple things like dress, absenteeism and tardiness become more critical in the workplace as well."

Trippe warns advocates that our systems are targeted toward either children or adults, not for adolescents/young adults' social or cognitive developmental needs. Therefore, he identifies a need for a coherent youth policy for the 14–24 age groups. "The programs to support 18- to 24-year-olds are buried in adult systems, and the data is not disaggregated," he says. "It is important to keep searching for new ways to connect youth and adult policy across funding streams."

For more information on New Ways to Work, visit their Web site, [www.nww.org](http://www.nww.org).

### Where to Learn More

#### Broader Skills

Read Tom Bailey, Katherine Hughes and David Moore's 2004 study, *Working Knowledge: Work-Based Learning and Education Reform*, to learn more about including work-based learning as part of a broad education reform strategy to prepare young people for the workforce.

#### Better Assessments

[Click here](#) to read the *21st Century Skills Assessment Paper*, a state-of-the-art summary of individual skill assessment tools that can be used in schools.

For more about the *Navigation 101* assessment program in Washington state, [click here](#).

#### Options for Certification

*Jobs for the Future* publishes research and analysis on ways to provide youth with the learning and credentials they need to make the transition to productive adulthood. For more, [click here](#).

The *Work Readiness Credential* was designed by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and its partners to improve the quality of job applicants entering the workforce, and to help employers in the hiring process. To read more, [click here](#).

For more on the *Work Readiness Certificate* program, [click here](#).

#### Early Work Exposure

*Promising and Effective Practices Network* run by the National Youth Employment Coalition, provides a wealth of knowledge on effective practices (both policy and programmatic) in the professional development of youth. To read more, [click here](#).

*Workforce Alliance* provides background information and analysis on existing federal policies that could expand education and workforce training. In addition, the Workforce Alliance provides key research on the effectiveness of investment in workforce skill development. For more, [click here](#).

Read Andrew Sum, Neeta Gogg and Garth Magnum's book *Confronting the Youth Demographic Challenge: The Labor Market Prospects of Out-of-School Youth* to learn about the wide array of private and social economic and educational benefits that can be generated by expanding substantive employment opportunities for the nation's teen's and young adults.

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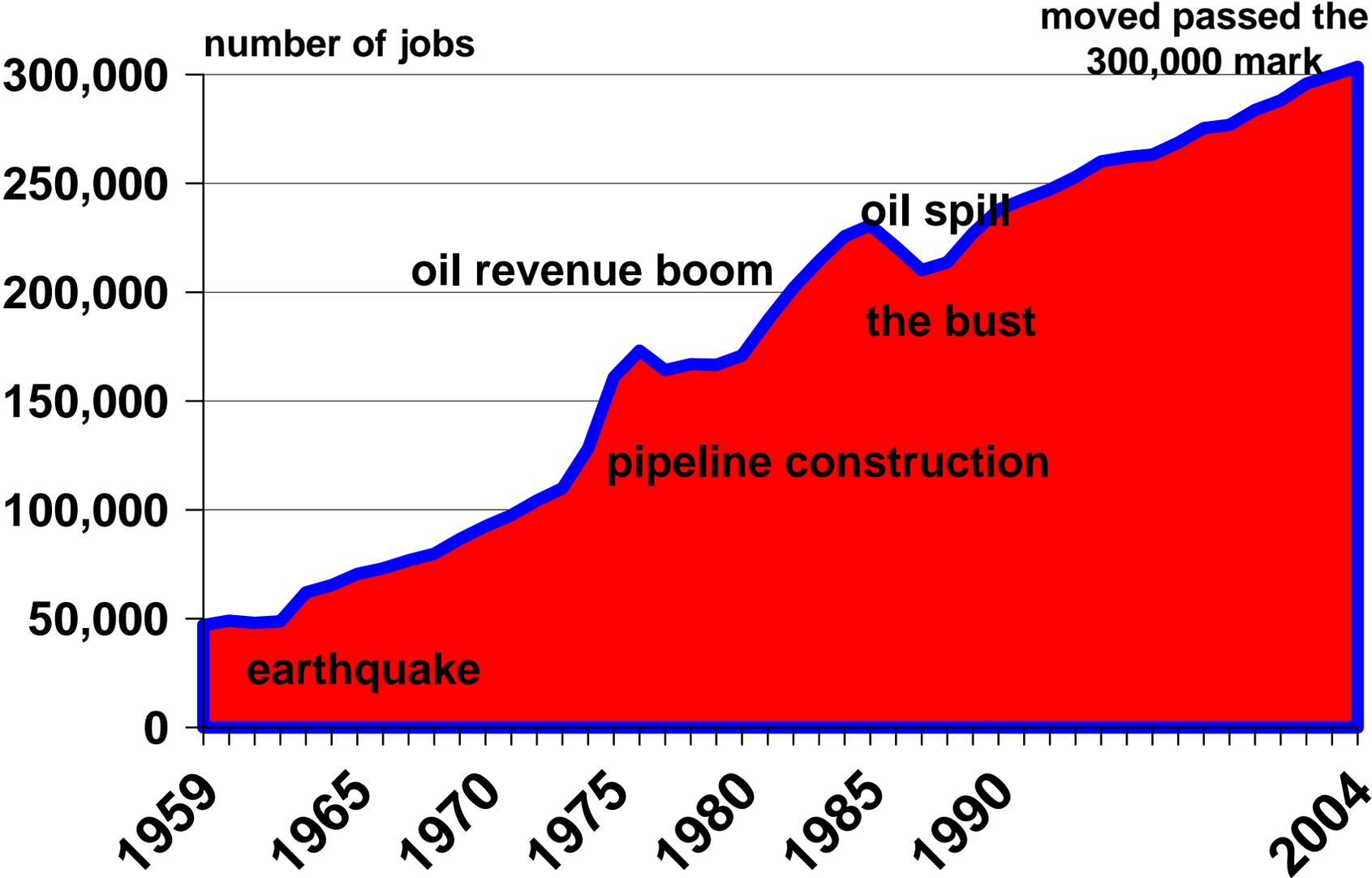
# Alaska's Labor Market – An Overview

## Alaska Job Corp

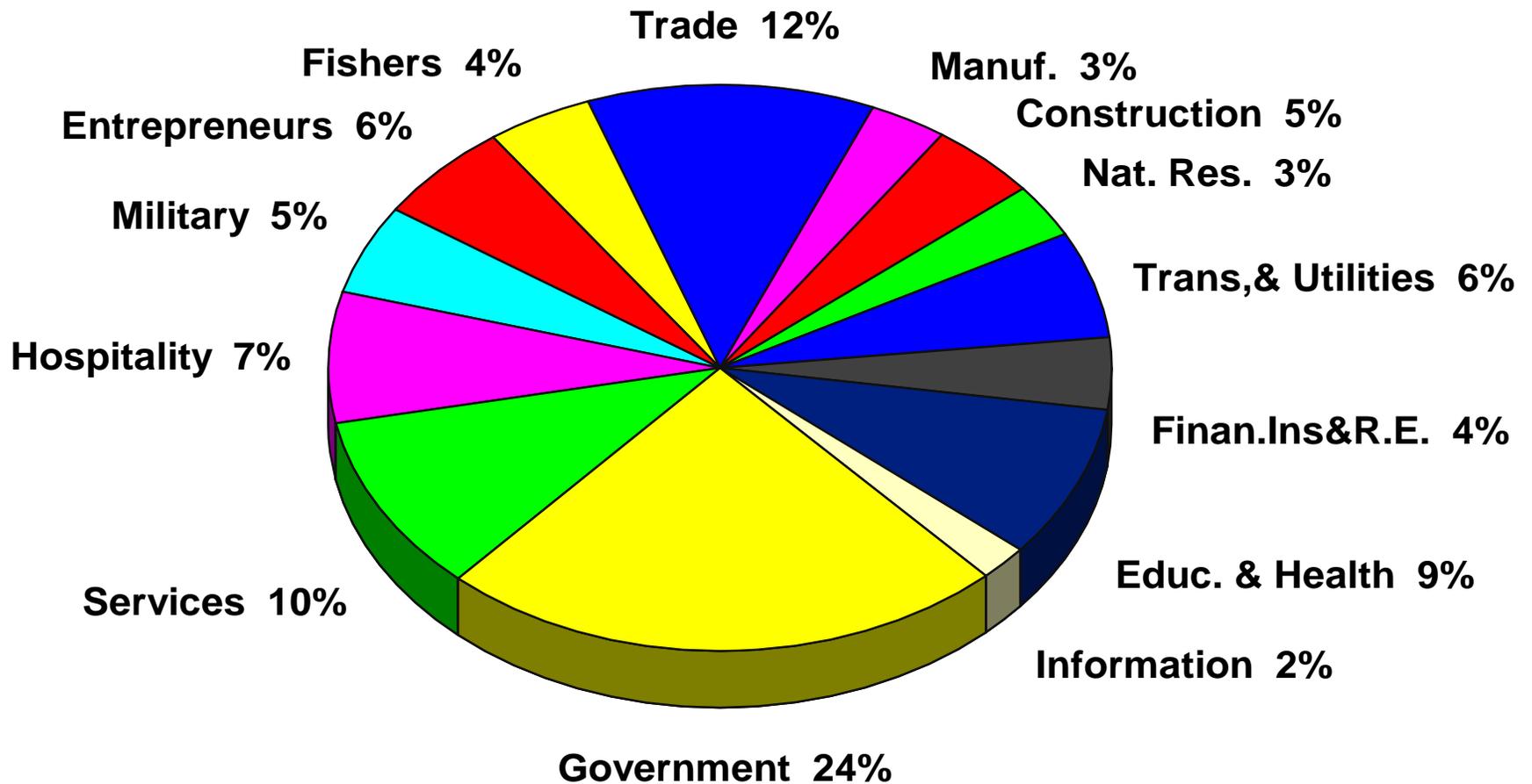


Brynn Keith, Research Chief  
Research & Analysis Section  
Alaska Department of Labor &  
Workforce Development  
October 14, 2005

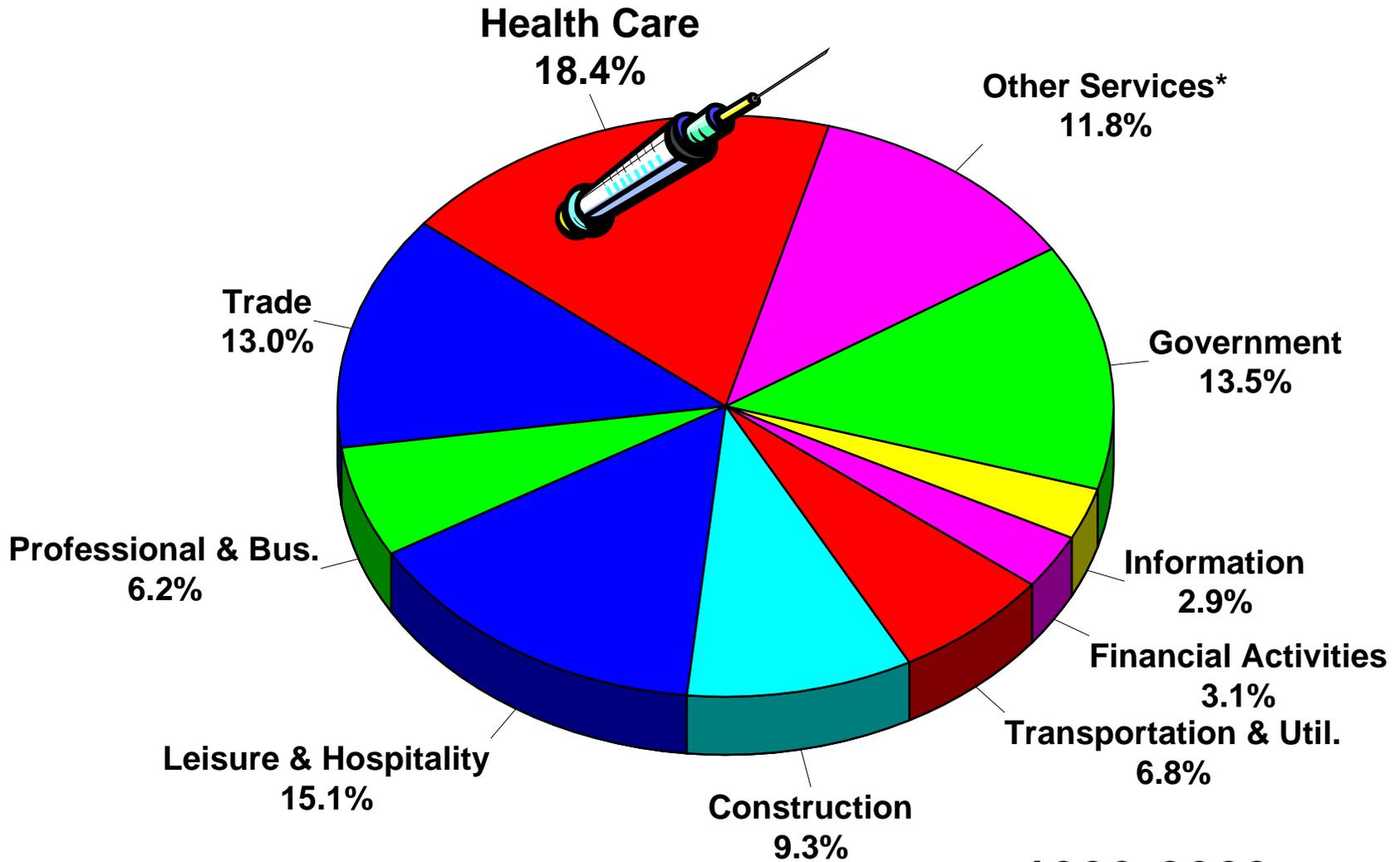
# Alaska Finished its 17th Year of Uninterrupted Growth--the Longest Run in Our History



# Where The Jobs Are In Alaska



# Where The New Jobs Have Come From Over The Past Decade

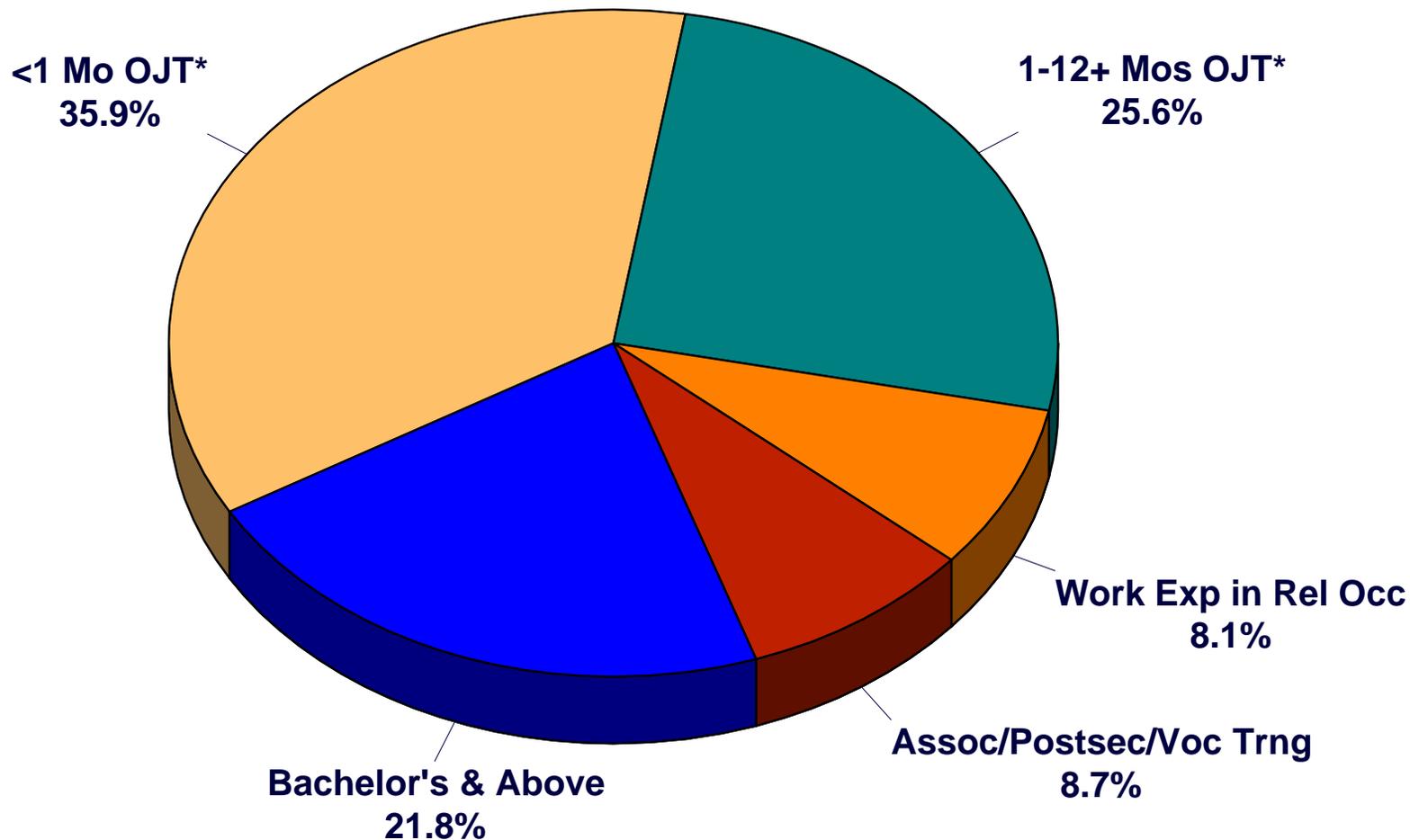


\*includes education and social services

**1993-2003**

# Alaska's Current Jobs by Level of Required Education

Estimated 2002



\* On-the-job training

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

A hand holding a crystal ball. Inside the crystal ball, there is a blue map of Alaska and the text "Alaska's" in a bold, black, sans-serif font. The background is dark and blurry.

**Alaska's**

**Occupational  
Outlook**

# Alaska's Fastest Growing Occupations

Projected 2002-2012



# Alaska Occupations with the Largest Numeric Increase Projected 2002-2012



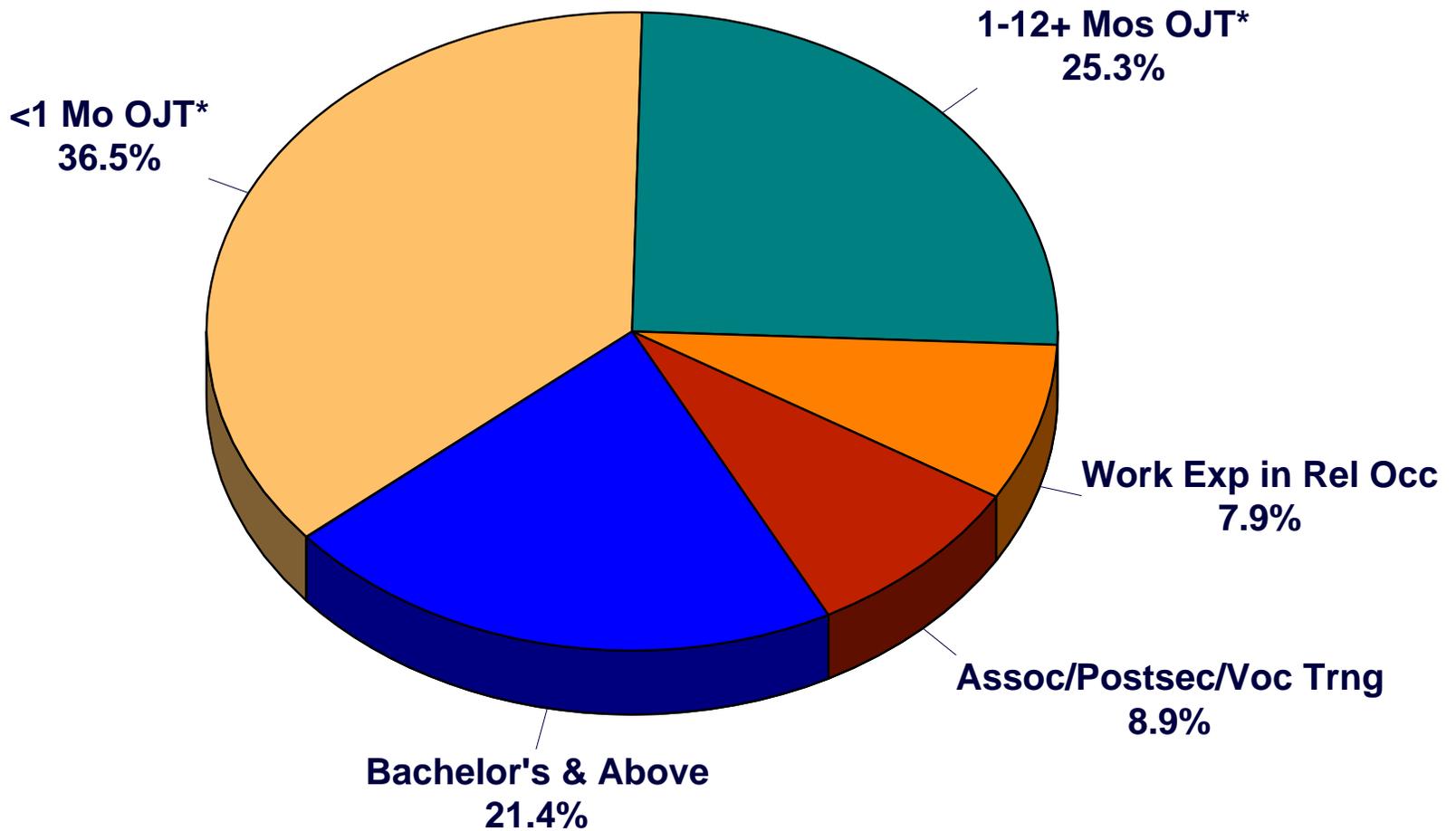


# Workforce Myth # 1

- **In the future, most jobs will require a four year degree.**

# Alaska's Future Jobs by Level of Required Education

## Projected 2012

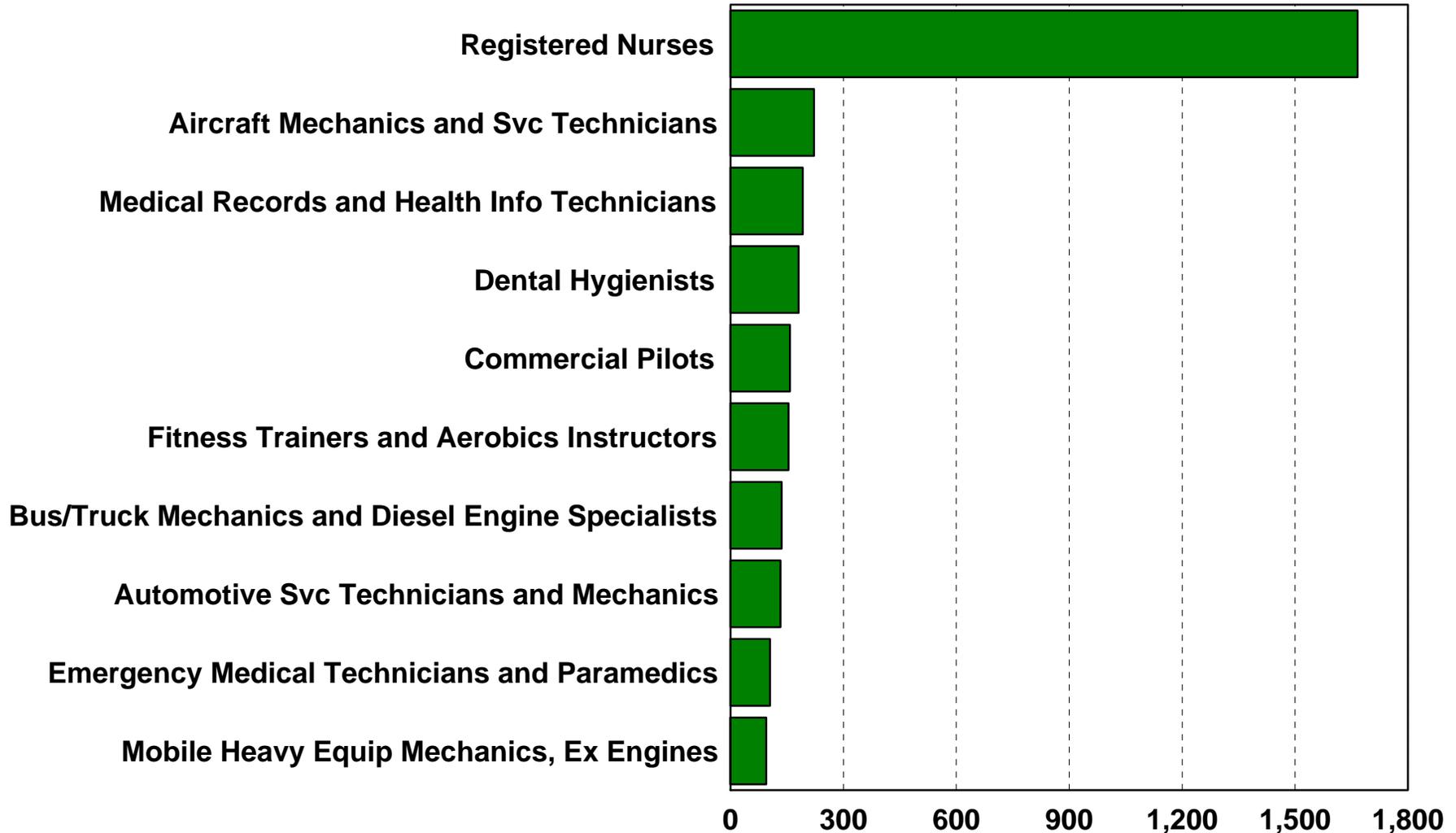


\* On-the-job training

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

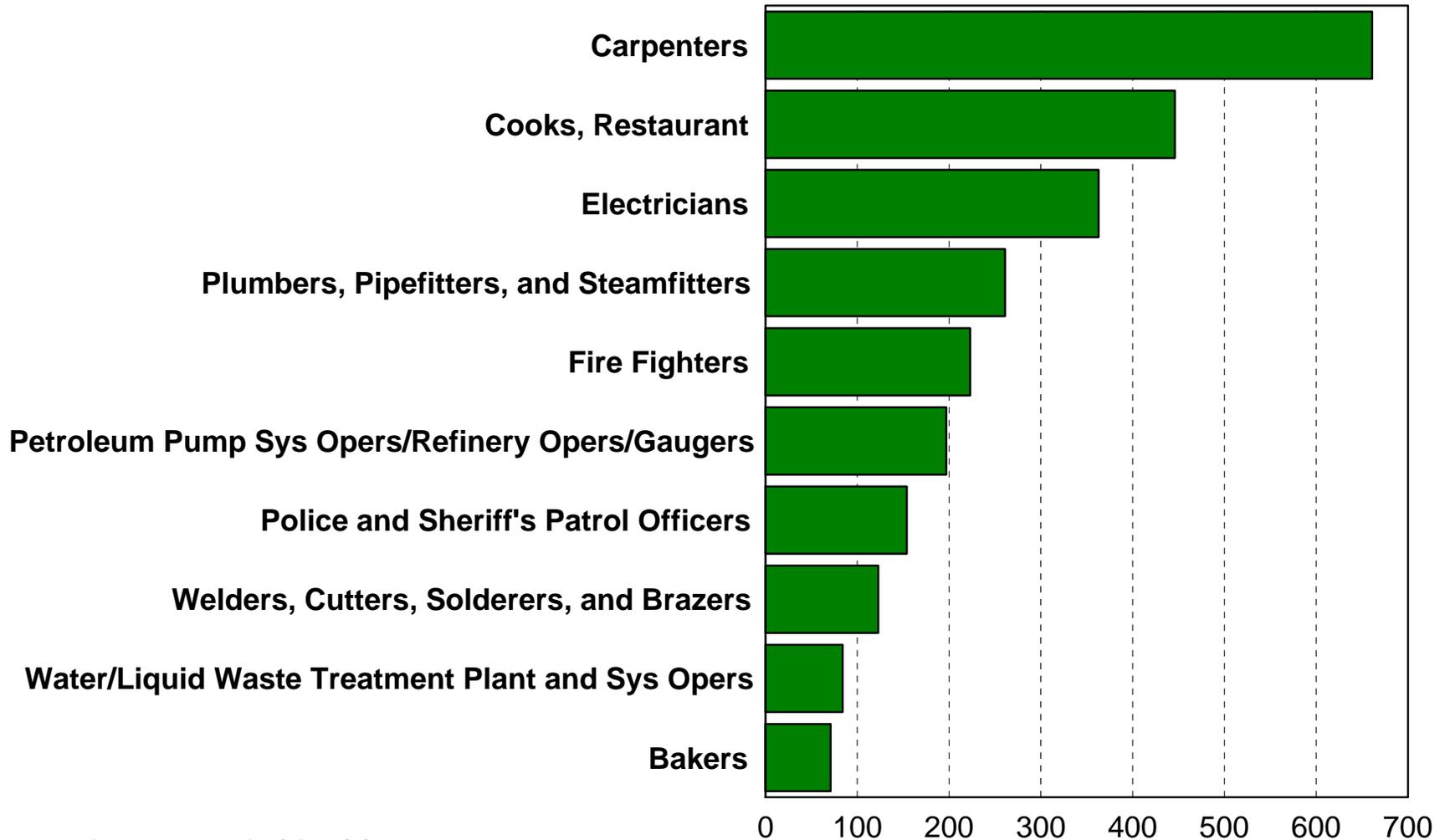
# Alaska Occupations with the Largest Numeric Increase Requiring an AA Degree or Postsecondary Training

Projected 2002-2012



# Alaska Occupations with the Largest Numeric Increase Requiring Long-term OJT\*

Projected 2002-2012

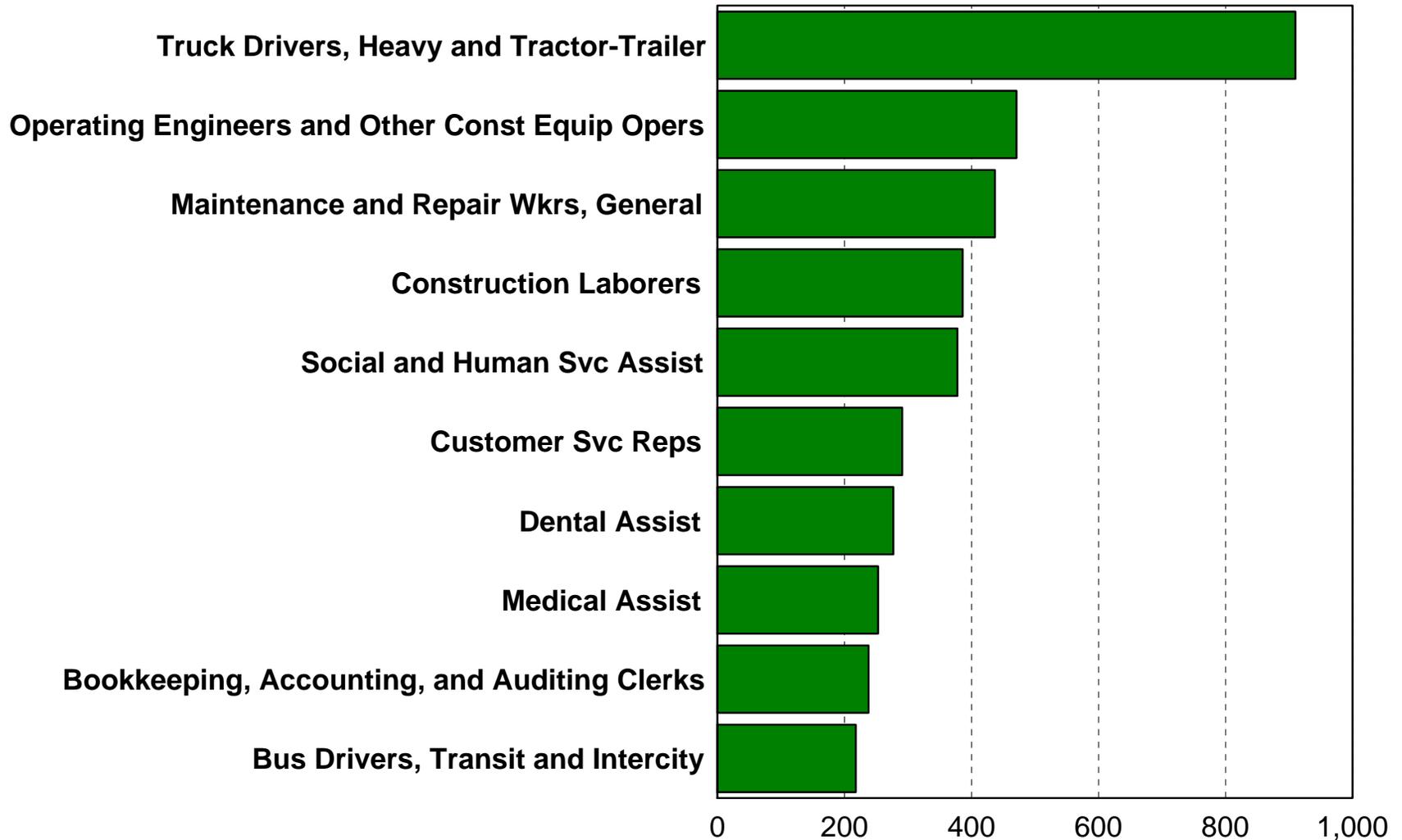


\* 12 months or more on-the-job training

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

# Alaska Occupations with the Largest Numeric Increase Requiring Moderate-term OJT\*

Projected 2002-2012



\* 1-12 months on-the-job training

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

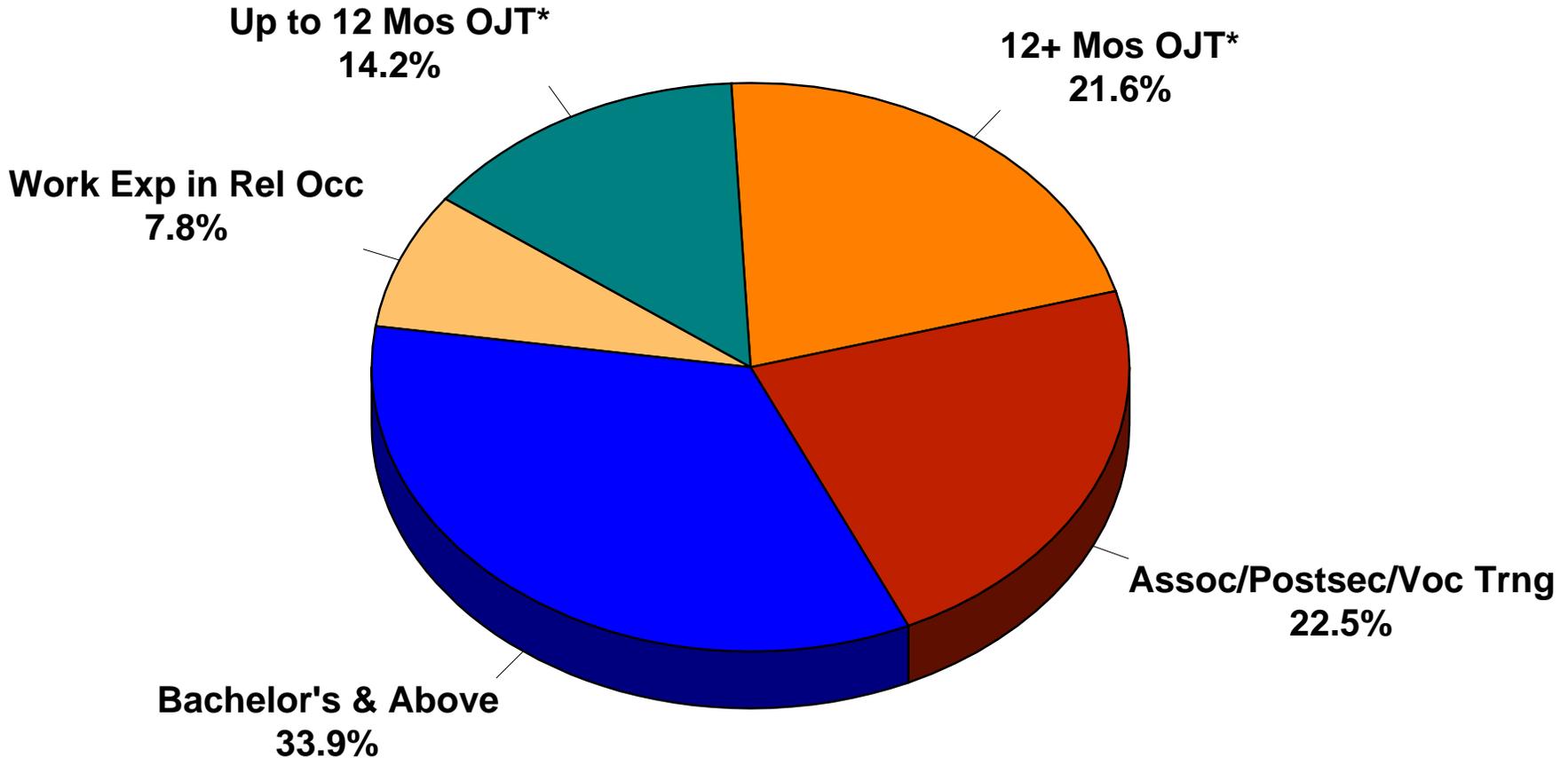


## Workforce Myth # 2

- **In the future, all high-wage jobs will require a college degree.**

# Alaska's Best Bets by Level of Education

Projected 2002-2012

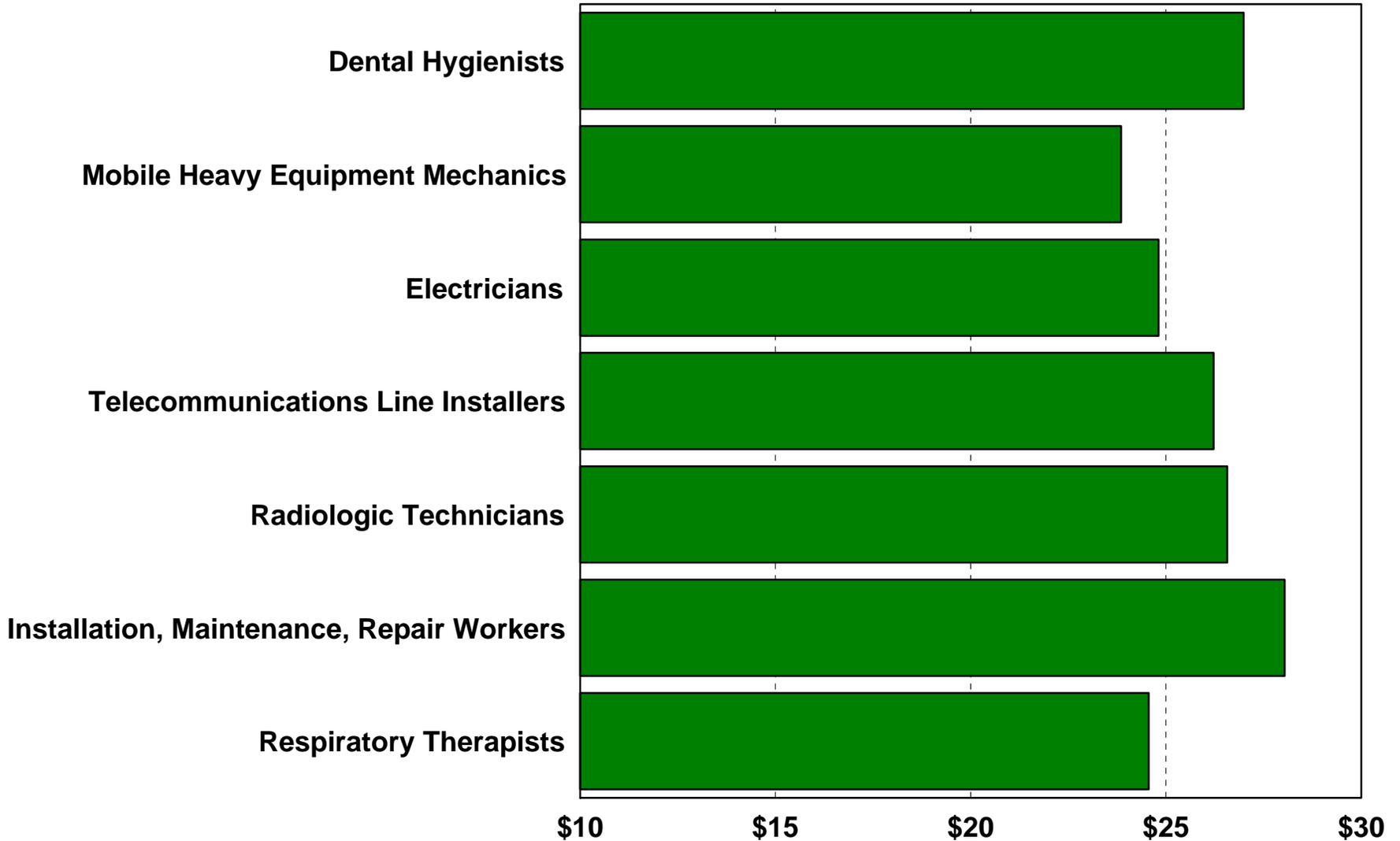


\* On-the-job training

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

# High Wage Occupations Requiring an AA Degree or Less

Projected 2002-2012



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



# Workforce Myth # 3

- **Technical skills trump all others in the labor market.**



# Alaska's Best-Bet Skills

- ✓ **Communication**
- ✓ **Problem Solving**
- ✓ **Math & Science**
- ✓ **People Skills**
- ✓ **Management Skills**
- ✓ **Working with Things**



*For more information contact:*

**Brynn Keith, Research Chief  
Alaska Department of Labor  
Research and Analysis Section**

**P.O. Box 25501**

**Juneau, Alaska 99802-5501**

**Phone: (907) 465-4518**

**FAX: (907) 465-4506**

**E-mail: [brynn\\_keith@labor.state.ak.us](mailto:brynn_keith@labor.state.ak.us)**

# ALASKA ECONOMIC **TRENDS**

MAY 2006

## Employment Forecast

Growth streak expected to reach 20 years

### WHAT'S INSIDE

#### Employment Scene

Job count continues seasonal climb



ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF LABOR  
& WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Frank H. Murkowski, Governor  
Greg O'Claray, Commissioner

# ALASKA ECONOMIC TRENDS



ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF LABOR  
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Cover: Lillian Lundy works in general maintenance and as a laborer at the Kensington gold mine north of Juneau. She's worked for Coeur Alaska Inc., the company that owns the mine, since 2001. Photo courtesy of Coeur Alaska Inc.

*Alaska Economic Trends* is available on the Internet. See URL above.

**Frank H. Murkowski, Governor of Alaska**  
**Greg O'Claray, Commissioner**

*Susan Erben, Editor*

*Layout and cover design by Sam Dapcevich*

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## **Alaska's Employment Forecast: More Good Jobs for Alaskans**

**By Governor Frank H. Murkowski**

In last month's *Trends*, we reported that Alaska has enjoyed 18 consecutive years of job growth. In this issue's employment forecasts for 2006 and 2007, economists are confident that we'll see continued job growth due to high oil prices, a generally favorable national and international economy and significant federal spending in Alaska.

In addition to the more than 14,800 new jobs already created during my administration, the two-year forecast discussed in this issue includes an estimated 3,600 new jobs, many of which are in the high-growth industries of mining, energy, construction and health care. The current 10-year occupational forecast estimates that 43,000 jobs will be created by 2012.

Alaska's anticipated job growth goes hand-in-hand with two programs in my administration: the Alaska Hire Initiative and the Jobs are Alaska's Future campaign. Both aim to ensure that all Alaskans have the opportunity to make a good living and raise their families in their home state.

My Alaska Hire Initiative sets a goal of a 90-percent or higher resident hire rate in construction, oil and gas, mining, seafood and forest products, and tourism industries, as well as in state and federal government. We've made progress, as illustrated by numerous employers in the state who have already surpassed the 90-percent goal. And the construction industry as a whole reported fewer nonresident workers employed in 2004 (the most recent statistic available).

Although a large number of nonresident workers are still employed in the state, a \$7 million federal High Growth Energy Grant received by the Alaska Department of Labor & Workforce Development has increased the state's capacity to recruit and train workers for careers in the energy and construction industries. The construction industry in particular has benefited from the state's increased investment in training programs.

In 2004, we launched our Jobs are Alaska's Future program, aimed at putting Alaskans to work in good-paying jobs at home. The Department of Labor & Workforce Development has become Alaska's biggest hiring hall, with its highest priority being to make sure Alaskans are trained for jobs coming down the pike on the gas pipeline, in mining and maritime transportation, health care and in the construction trades.

The Department focuses on three key areas: job training for youth and adults; making sure Alaska businesses hire Alaskans; and aggressive outreach to employers and job seekers, promoting the professional resources available to them at any of the 24 Alaska Job Centers across the state. The Department has also added two mobile job centers to travel to some of the remote areas of our state, so more Alaskans can benefit from the one-stop services the Job Centers offer. In 2005, Job Center staff put 30 percent more Alaskans in jobs than in 2004.

Jobs are Alaska's future, and this issue of *Trends* confirms they will be there for Alaskans.

# Employment Forecast for 2006 and 2007

by Dan Robinson, Neal Fried,  
Neal Gilbertsen and Brigitta  
Windisch-Cole, Economists



## Growth streak expected to reach 20 years

By Dan Robinson, Economist

**F**or 18 consecutive years Alaska has added jobs to its economy and two more years of growth are forecast in 2006 and 2007. (See Exhibits 2 and 3.) In the short term, high oil prices, a generally favorable national and international economy, and significant federal spending in Alaska

practically assure continued job growth over the forecast period.

## Natural resources and mining

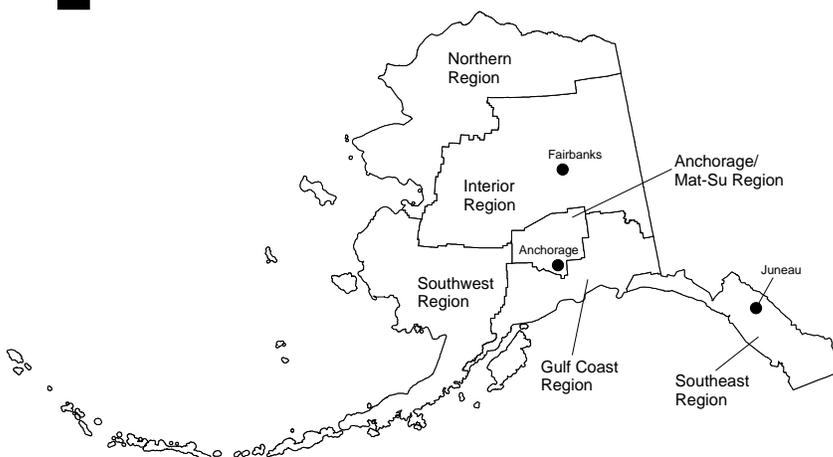
Despite high prices over the last few years, oil companies in Alaska have been somewhat cautious about investing in exploration and development of new projects because of past price volatility and the state's relatively high costs. Some of that caution appears to be dissipating, however, as oil and gas employment rose by 500 jobs in 2005. For perspective, the 8,700 oil and gas jobs statewide in 2005 were still 200 fewer than in 2002 and 800 fewer than in 2001.

Most signs point to more growth in 2006 and 2007. Construction spending by the oil and gas industry is expected to grow 19 percent in 2006.<sup>1</sup> Total wells are forecast to increase from 243 to 257 and total well footage from 1.58 million square feet to 1.67 million square feet. British Petroleum has announced that it will hire up to 200 workers in 2006, and Shell Oil has returned to Alaska, purchasing Beaufort Sea offshore leases with a stated intention to begin drilling in 2007. Finally, interest from a number of smaller producers is high and growing.

Tempering the bullish news is the fact that production from the major fields is declining and new exploration and development will only partially offset those declines. The Alaska Department of Revenue forecast calls for production of 865,000 barrels a day in fiscal year

<sup>1</sup> According to the University of Alaska's Institute of Social and Economic Research (ISER) forecast

## 1 Alaska's Economic Regions



2006,<sup>2</sup> a 5.6 percent decrease from 2005. Barring major new finds, which is unlikely, production is expected to continue to decline over the decade to an estimated 800,000 barrels a day in 2016. All told, employment in the oil and gas industry is expected to grow by 300 in 2006 and an additional 200 in 2007.

A smaller source of employment in this sector is mining for precious and base metals. High prices have invigorated the Alaska mining industry and there is no sign of a slowdown over the next two years. The Pogo gold mine, near Delta Junction, began operations in early 2006, adding several hundred mining jobs to the state's total. Another major project expected to begin production during the forecast period is the Kensington gold mine between Juneau and Haines. About 200 new mining industry jobs are expected in 2006 and 200 more in 2007.

Overall, employment in the sector is forecast to grow by 500 jobs in 2006 and 400 more in 2007. High-paying oil and gas jobs will also create growth in the broader economy; the average job in oil and gas extraction paid \$139,320 in 2004 and the average job in oil and gas support services paid nearly \$80,000.

## Construction

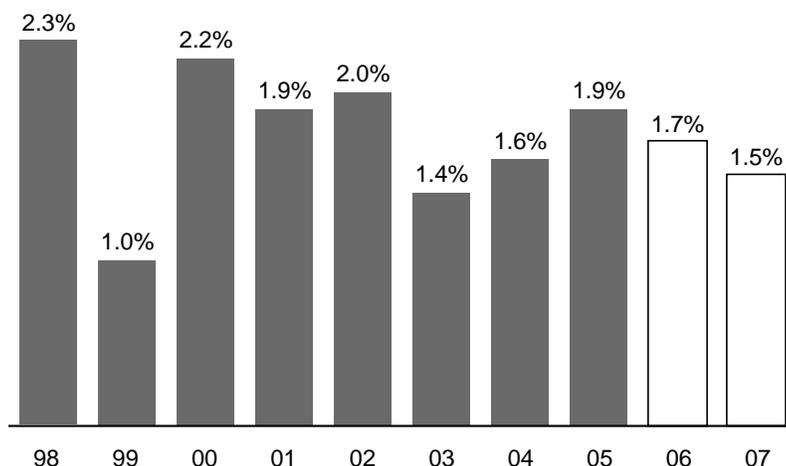
An estimated 13 percent increase in total construction spending in 2006<sup>3</sup> will create even more jobs for an industry that has been growing at an average annual rate of 5.7 percent over the last five years. Interest rates are expected to rise slightly over the forecast period, which will dampen residential construction, but publicly funded projects, commercial building, and oil and gas construction will more than make up for it.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers reports that spending in Alaska grew from \$492 million in 2004 to more than \$792 million in 2005 and that it will exceed \$800 million in 2006 and

<sup>2</sup> The state fiscal year runs from July 1 to June 30.

<sup>3</sup> According to the ISER forecast

## Moderate Job Growth Expected Statewide forecast for 2006 and 2007 **2**



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

2007. Corps officials said Alaska is the only district where major programs are underway in all three of its areas of responsibility – military, civil works and environmental regulation.

Construction expenditures related to the oil and gas industry, which are expected to account for 31 percent of all construction spending in 2006, are forecast to rise by 19 percent in 2006. Some of the jobs created by the higher spending levels will be counted in the oil and gas industry, but a significant number will also go to construction. Total construction jobs are forecast to increase by 700 in 2006 and an additional 600 in 2007.

## Manufacturing

Alaska's manufacturing sector is dominated by the seafood processing industry, which provides about two-thirds of all manufacturing jobs in the state. Overall, seafood processing has enjoyed a significant rebound in the last three years, adding 1,000 jobs from 2002 to 2005. The state recorded the third-largest salmon catch ever in 2005, but forecasts for 2006 are for a significantly smaller harvest, which will affect processing employment.

# 3 Statewide Wage and Salary Employment Forecast for 2006 and 2007

					Forecast					
	2004 Monthly Average	2005 Monthly Average	Change 2004 to 2005	Percent Change 2004 to 2005	2006 Monthly Average	Change 2005 to 2006	Percent Change 2005 to 2006	2007 Monthly Average	Change 2006 to 2007	Percent Change 2006 to 2007
Total Nonfarm Wage and Salary	304,200	309,900	5,700	1.9%	315,300	5,400	1.7%	319,900	4,600	1.5%
Goods-Producing <sup>1</sup>	40,100	41,700	1,600	4.0%	43,000	1,300	3.1%	44,200	1,200	2.8%
Service-Providing <sup>2</sup>	264,100	268,200	4,100	1.6%	272,300	4,100	1.5%	275,700	3,400	1.2%
Natural Resources and Mining	10,100	10,700	600	5.9%	11,200	500	4.7%	11,600	400	3.6%
Oil and Gas	8,200	8,700	500	6.1%	9,000	300	3.4%	9,200	200	2.2%
Construction	17,700	18,600	900	5.1%	19,300	700	3.8%	19,900	600	3.1%
Manufacturing	12,300	12,400	100	0.8%	12,500	100	0.8%	12,700	200	1.6%
Seafood Processing	8,500	8,600	100	1.2%	8,600	0	0.0%	8,700	100	1.2%
Trade, Transportation and Utilities	62,000	63,200	1,200	1.9%	64,300	1,100	1.7%	65,200	900	1.4%
Wholesale Trade	6,200	6,300	100	1.6%	6,400	100	1.6%	6,500	100	1.6%
Retail Trade	35,000	35,900	900	2.6%	36,600	700	1.9%	37,200	600	1.6%
Transportation, Warehousing and Utilities	20,800	21,000	200	1.0%	21,300	300	1.4%	21,500	200	0.9%
Information	6,900	6,900	0	0.0%	6,900	0	0.0%	7,000	100	1.4%
Financial Activities	14,600	14,700	100	0.7%	14,800	100	0.7%	15,000	200	1.4%
Professional and Business Services	23,300	23,800	500	2.1%	24,200	400	1.7%	24,500	300	1.2%
Educational <sup>3</sup> and Health Services	34,700	35,700	1,000	2.9%	36,600	900	2.5%	37,300	700	1.9%
Health Care	24,900	25,800	900	3.6%	26,600	800	3.1%	27,200	600	2.3%
Leisure and Hospitality	30,100	31,100	1,000	3.3%	31,700	600	1.9%	32,300	600	1.9%
Other Services	11,200	11,400	200	1.8%	11,600	200	1.8%	11,700	100	0.9%
Government <sup>4</sup>	81,300	81,400	100	0.1%	82,200	800	1.0%	82,700	500	0.6%
Federal Government <sup>5</sup>	17,200	17,000	-200	-1.2%	17,000	0	0.0%	17,000	0	0.0%
State Government	24,100	24,200	100	0.4%	24,600	400	1.7%	24,800	200	0.8%
Local Government	40,000	40,200	200	0.5%	40,600	400	1.0%	40,900	300	0.7%

<sup>1</sup> Goods-producing sectors include natural resources and mining, construction and manufacturing.

<sup>2</sup> Service-providing sectors include all those not listed as goods-producing sectors.

<sup>3</sup> Private education only

<sup>4</sup> Includes employees of public school systems and the University of Alaska

<sup>5</sup> Excludes uniformed military

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

The largest single challenge to the long-term health of Alaska's fishing industry continues to be competition from salmon farming, but the outlook is more positive than it was a few years ago thanks to a growing demand for wild salmon. In other fisheries, the effects of ongoing management changes, such as the institution of individual fishing quotas in the crab fishery, will take some time to sort out.<sup>4</sup>

No growth in seafood processing jobs is expected in 2006, followed by an increase of 100 jobs in 2007. The remainder of the manufacturing sector, a mix of industries that

includes everything from petroleum refineries to bakeries and breweries, is expected to roughly match the growth of the broader economy, adding 100 jobs each year.

## Trade, transportation and utilities

This sector's three main components – wholesale trade, retail trade, and transportation, warehousing and utilities – are expected to follow the trend of the broader economy and grow moderately. That's typically the case since the industries in this sector primarily serve the local population.

Anchorage, Fairbanks and the Mat-Su area are all attracting a growing number of national retailers, which will help lift retail jobs by 700

<sup>4</sup> Individual quotas have significantly reduced the number of permit holders and crew members participating in the crab fishery, but it is not yet clear what effect they will have on processors since the total amount harvested should be unaffected.

in 2006 and 600 in 2007. Retail spending was boosted by steeply declining interest rates from 2000 to 2004, which gave refinancing homeowners an additional source of spending money, but with interest rates on the way up, that well has mostly gone dry.

Transportation employment has been mostly flat since 2001 as a result of offsetting losses in air transportation and gains in trucking, water transportation, and scenic and sightseeing transportation. High fuel prices will slow growth, but with significant resource development throughout the state and consistent visitor interest, a limited number of new jobs are expected in 2006 and 2007.

## Information

The telecommunications industry, which provides about 60 percent of the jobs in Alaska's information sector, lost 300 jobs in 2002 and has only managed to gain 100 of them back in three years. The newspaper, television and radio industries make up the largest slice of the remaining information jobs and those industries have also seen little growth in recent years. The Internet has hurt the business of traditional news and entertainment providers and the telecommunications industry faces almost constant technological change. Little net change to the job count is expected in 2006 or 2007.

## Financial activities

The banking and real estate industries got a nice boost in 2003 and 2004 from the refinancing push and a very hot housing market, but no additional growth occurred in 2005, due most likely to rising interest rates. Still, the high level of construction activity, fueled by resource growth and public-sector spending, should help create 100 jobs in 2006 and 200 more in 2007.

## Professional and business services

Much of this sector is made up of industries that tend to mirror the health of their local economies. For example, interior designers, advertising agencies and landscaping companies all grow when there are jobs available and

money is circulating. Since 2001, the sector has grown at a slightly slower rate than the overall job count.

The industries most likely to do well in 2006 and 2007 are those connected to construction and government spending on capital projects. Architects, engineers, drafters and surveyors, for example, are expected to be in growing demand.

The sector's strong growth of 500 jobs in 2005 will not quite be matched in 2006 or 2007, but high spending on natural resource development, military installations, infrastructure, schools, and other publicly funded projects will create about 700 jobs over the forecast period – 400 in 2006 and 300 more in 2007.

## Educational and health services

From 2001 to 2005, Alaska added 20,600 jobs to its economy; 7,800 of them, or 38 percent, came from the educational and health services sector. It's not entirely clear what all the causes are for such heady growth, but it's been especially strong in Alaska. Over the same period, the sector has grown by 28 percent in Alaska compared to 15 percent for the nation as a whole.

The health care industry makes up about three-fourths of the sector, and it has provided the lion's share of the new jobs both nationally and in Alaska.<sup>5</sup> Growth has slowed considerably – from over 9 percent in both 2002 and 2003 to around 3 percent the last two years – suggesting that Alaska's health care market may be reaching a saturation point. On the other hand, health care jobs in Alaska make up 8.3 percent of all wage and salary employment, compared to 9.2 percent for the United States, indicating the potential for more growth.

Presumably, part of the growth has come as a

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<sup>5</sup> Employers categorized under "social assistance" – such as those who provide child and youth services and services for the elderly and disabled – make up the largest remaining share of the educational and health services sector. The educational component is made up of private educational and instructional schools, which generate about 2,000 jobs in Alaska. Public school employment is published under state and local government.

result of Alaska health care providers capturing a larger percentage of the market. In other words, as the population and provider network has grown, there has been less need to fly to Seattle or some other Lower 48 destination to see a specialist or seek specialized treatment.

Another factor for both the state and the nation is the aging baby boomers. Alaska's population is still younger, on average, than the nation's, but because the baby boomers are such a large population cohort, the average age – and demand for health care services – is rising.

The forecast for 2006 calls for 800 new health care jobs and 900 new jobs for the entire educational and health services sector. In both cases, growth is expected to slow slightly from recent years. In 2007, the forecast is for 600 additional health care jobs and 700 for the broader sector.

### **Leisure and hospitality**

The leisure and hospitality sector added 2,800 jobs from 2001 to 2005, reflecting healthy growth for the state's tourist industry. Food services and drinking places accounted for 1,600 of that amount; hotels, inns and lodges added 800; and the remaining 400 came from a loose grouping of museums, historical sites, and amusement and recreational businesses, among others.

There are indications that some of Southeast Alaska's cities and towns are nearing a saturation point for cruise ship visitors. The Juneau Convention & Visitors Bureau forecasts growth of 1 percent in cruise passenger capacity in 2006, the lowest projected growth since 1995, and Ketchikan is expecting a decline of about 100,000 visitors in 2006.

Numbers for independent travelers have been flat over the last few years and high gas prices will have a dampening effect in 2006 and probably in 2007. On the other hand, an increasing number of cruise ships are crossing the Gulf of Alaska to ports such as Seward and Whittier. Passengers who begin or end their cruises in Alaska often add train or bus trips to Anchorage and the Interior, generating

additional tourist-related revenue and jobs. Overall, growth is forecast to slow from 1,000 jobs in 2005 to 600 jobs in 2006. Modest growth will continue in 2007, barring a shock to either the national or international economies.

### **Other services**

This sector is a loose combination of employers ranging from automotive repair shops to barber shops, dry cleaners and parking garages. It's forecast to grow at about the same rate as the broader economy.

### **Government**

Federal government spending has played a critical role in the state's economic growth. In federal fiscal year 2004,<sup>6</sup> total federal spending in Alaska was nearly \$13,000 per person, the highest of all states and nearly twice the national average. Total federal spending of \$8.4 billion in 2004 was 6.3 percent higher than in federal fiscal year 2003.

Since the mid-1990s federal spending has nearly doubled. Part of the increase has come from a growing investment in Alaska's military installations. Defense-related expenditures have grown from \$1.4 billion in 1995 to \$2.5 billion in 2004. But even more dramatic has been the growth in non-defense related expenditures, which have swelled from \$2.8 billion in 1995 to \$5.9 billion in 2004. The majority of that increase – nearly \$2 billion – has come in the form of grants.

Such an infusion of funds into the state's economy has gone a long way toward helping the state add jobs year after year, although the actual number of federal government employees has declined slightly over the last decade, falling from 17,300 in 1996 to 17,000 in 2005. No growth in federal government employment is expected in 2006 or 2007, although federal spending will fuel growth in nearly every other sector of the state's economy.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>6</sup> The federal fiscal year runs from Oct. 1 through Sept. 30.

<sup>7</sup> There is concern that federal spending in Alaska will decline due to federal budget deficits and increasing pressure to reform the process that allows for "earmark" funding. It is unlikely, however, that any reductions would significantly affect spending levels in 2006 or 2007.

Similarly, high oil prices do a lot more for the state than merely increase the job count in the oil and gas industry. The primary beneficiary of high oil prices is state government, which is still funded largely by oil revenue.<sup>8</sup> Budget surpluses are likely to extend through 2007, reducing pressure to cut costs and increasing the likelihood of limited growth in state government employment.

Local government employment has grown very little in recent years, adding just 300 jobs from 2001 to 2005. Local school districts will benefit, however, from increased education spending by the state, some of which will translate into job growth. On the other hand, current population estimates show slightly fewer children being born, which may reduce the demand for teachers and school employees.

For their part, municipal governments, which have struggled to replace state revenue sharing funds, are expected to receive a portion of the state's budget surplus. Total local government employment is expected to grow by about 400 jobs in 2006 and 300 in 2007.

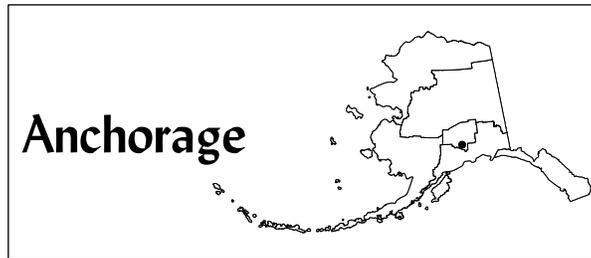
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<sup>8</sup> The Department of Revenue expects oil revenues to provide 85 percent of unrestricted revenues through fiscal year 2008.

### The Timing of Forecasts

Publishing a forecast for 2006 in May 2006 might seem a little like betting on the winner of a football game when it's almost half-time. The primary reason for the delay is that the process by which the prior year's numbers are revised is not completed until February.

After the revised data are available, the first articles prepared for publication in *Alaska Economic Trends* are the detailed reviews of the previous year's activity; then the following issue contains the two-year forecasts. The Alaska Department of Labor & Workforce Development believes having a solid base from which to forecast is worth the delay.



## Anchorage's economy should stay on the upswing

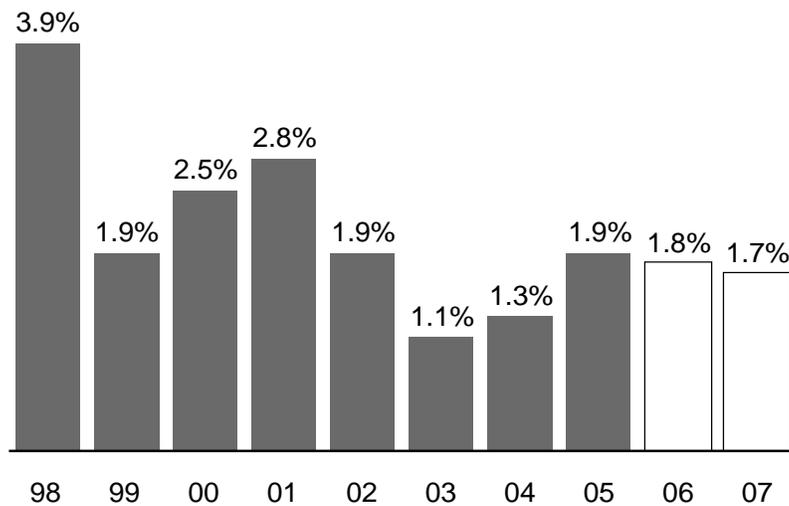
By Neal Fried, Economist

Because Anchorage's economic growth cycle has now stretched out to 17 straight years, a deviation from this trend is hard to imagine. Another year of growth almost appears as certain as the theory of thermodynamics. Is Anchorage's economy destined to grow forever? Not likely. Yet, given what we know now, it appears Anchorage's economy will be getting a little bigger each year, at least this year and in 2007. The forecast calls for 1.8 percent growth in 2006 and 1.7 in 2007, which is close to the 10-year annual average employment growth of 2 percent. (See Exhibits 4 and 5.)

After such a long period of expansion, the prolongation of this trend may be simply taken for granted – yet it's a dangerous assumption, even though the economic fundamentals for the state's largest city remain solid. A number of factors should continue to provide loft for Anchorage's economy: high oil prices, a healthy national economy, low interest rates, a positive outlook for the visitor industry, a healthy flow of federal dollars, expansion in the international air cargo business, state revenue surpluses, an emerging mining industry, the possibility of a gas pipeline on the horizon, an overall sense of optimism, as well as other factors.

Economic vulnerabilities, though, are always lurking in the background. A collapse in oil prices, a dramatic drop in federal dollars or something beyond our current imagination could derail all of this. They just aren't likely.

## 4 Growth for Another Two Years Anchorage forecast for 2006 and 2007



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

### Recovery in oil patch numbers

With a year of \$50-plus per barrel oil behind us, three years of above-average oil prices and the Alaska Department of Revenue's expectation for continued high oil prices for the next two years, the forecast for employment in the oil and gas industry is for modest growth in Anchorage and more rapid growth on the North Slope.

The oil industry employment numbers are not significant but their direction is. Most of the players are planning some upswing in development work during the forecast period. ConocoPhillips will continue to develop a number of satellite fields around its Alpine field, as well as its West Sak heavy oil project. Spending is slated to increase 8 percent in 2006.

After many years of reducing the size of their work force, British Petroleum is planning to hire up to 200 workers in 2006, and some of them will be based at the company's Anchorage headquarters. BP says it's hiring the workers for its Kuparuk field, other field development work and to replace retirees. As the headquarters to the state's oil industry, Anchorage is also benefiting from the growing list of independents and other new or returning players like Shell Oil, which returned to Alaska after a seven-year hiatus.

### Anchorage's contractors should remain busy

Anchorage's construction industry has grown for more than 15 years, year in and year out. Each year, one segment of the industry gives the overall Anchorage industry an extra boost. One year it might be a spate of new retailers, hotels, financial institutions, schools or new Native corporation headquarters. Other years it might be an above-average level of road construction or new homes. Or it might be tens of millions of dollars worth of work at Anchorage's two major military installations.

But overall, the construction activity has come from different sectors without any one project playing a dominant role. And it looks like this year and next year aren't going to be much different. University of Alaska economists forecast that Alaska's construction activity will increase by 13 percent in 2006.<sup>9</sup> Since Anchorage is essentially the hub for Alaska's construction industry, the increase in construction activity around the state bodes well for Anchorage contractors.

It should be another strong year for commercial-related activity in Anchorage. Developers are set to break ground this year or in 2007 for two large Midtown office towers, one of which will be 15 stories, have 300,000 square feet and cost \$70 million. A third high rise in downtown could possibly get underway by the end of 2007. As many as three large retail projects could get started in 2006 – two Wal-Mart "supercenters" and Glenn Square, a 275,000-square-foot mixed-use retail center in Mountain View.

Another two to three large retail establishments may be built in 2007 – one more Wal-Mart supercenter and possibly two or more national chain stores. After a lull in hotel construction in 2005, there are plans for three new mid-size hotels in Anchorage. Two of them are slated for Midtown; another is planned for Dimond Boulevard in South Anchorage.

<sup>9</sup> According to the University of Alaska's Institute of Social and Economic Research forecast

# Anchorage Wage and Salary Employment Forecast for 2006 and 2007 5

	Forecast									
	2004 Monthly Average	2005 Monthly Average	Change 2004 to 2005	Percent Change 2004 to 2005	2006 Monthly Average	Change 2005 to 2006	Percent Change 2005 to 2006	2007 Monthly Average	Change 2006 to 2007	Percent Change 2006 to 2007
Total Nonfarm Wage and Salary	144,100	146,800	2,700	1.9%	149,500	2,700	1.8%	152,100	2,600	1.7%
Goods-Producing <sup>1</sup>	13,000	13,700	700	5.4%	14,300	600	4.2%	14,600	300	2.1%
Service-Providing <sup>2</sup>	131,100	133,100	2,000	1.5%	135,200	2,100	1.6%	137,500	2,300	1.7%
Natural Resources and Mining	2,000	2,100	100	5.0%	2,300	200	8.7%	2,400	100	4.2%
Oil and Gas	1,900	2,000	100	5.3%	2,100	100	4.8%	2,200	100	4.5%
Construction	9,200	9,700	500	5.4%	10,000	300	3.0%	10,200	200	2.0%
Manufacturing	1,800	1,900	100	5.6%	2,000	100	5.0%	2,000	-	0.0%
Trade, Transportation and Utilities	33,000	33,200	200	0.6%	33,500	300	0.9%	34,000	500	1.5%
Wholesale Trade	4,700	4,700	0	0.0%	4,700	-	0.0%	4,700	-	0.0%
Retail Trade	17,300	17,400	100	0.6%	17,700	300	1.7%	18,100	400	2.2%
Transportation, Warehousing and Utilities	11,000	11,100	100	0.9%	11,100	-	0.0%	11,200	100	0.9%
Information	4,400	4,400	-	0.0%	4,400	-	0.0%	4,400	-	13.6%
Financial Activities	9,000	9,100	100	1.1%	9,300	200	2.2%	9,400	100	1.1%
Professional and Business Services	16,000	16,400	400	2.5%	16,700	300	1.8%	17,000	300	1.8%
Educational <sup>3</sup> and Health Services	18,400	19,100	700	3.8%	19,700	600	3.0%	20,300	600	3.0%
Leisure and Hospitality	14,700	15,100	400	2.7%	15,500	400	2.6%	15,800	300	1.9%
Other Services	5,600	5,700	100	1.8%	5,700	-	0.0%	5,800	100	1.7%
Government <sup>4</sup>	30,000	30,100	100	0.3%	30,400	300	1.0%	30,800	400	1.3%
Federal Government <sup>5</sup>	9,700	9,500	-200	-2.1%	9,400	-100	-1.1%	9,400	-	0.0%
State Government	9,600	9,700	100	1.0%	9,900	200	2.0%	10,100	200	2.0%
Local Government	10,700	10,900	200	1.9%	11,100	200	1.8%	11,300	200	1.8%

<sup>1</sup> Goods-producing sectors include natural resources and mining, construction and manufacturing.

<sup>2</sup> Service-providing sectors include all those not listed as goods-producing sectors.

<sup>3</sup> Private education only

<sup>4</sup> Includes employees of public school systems and the University of Alaska

<sup>5</sup> Excludes uniformed military

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

Residential activity will probably remain close to last year's levels, or even fall a bit. Last year, developers built 1,725 new units. What will continue to change is that more of these homes will be multifamily as a growing share of the single-family market moves out to the Mat-Su area.

The anchors for public construction over the next two years will be the \$111 million new Anchorage Convention Center that will begin in 2006 and the \$75 million expansion of the Anchorage Museum that should get underway in 2007.

A \$177 million renovation of Ted Stevens International Airport's A and B concourses, scheduled

to begin this year, will last at least four years. Contractors are already working on the airport's new \$65 million rental car parking garage and a host of other projects.

Work on Anchorage's military bases will also remain a major source of work in Anchorage. Some of these projects include more than a total of \$100 million in family housing on Elmendorf Air Force Base and Fort Richardson Army Post. Elmendorf is also slated for a \$17 million fitness center, a \$25 million to \$50 million corrosion control facility, plus hangar facilities for the new C-17 and F-22 Raptor aircraft. Fort Richardson will get a \$10-plus million child development center, among other projects.

Public school construction will slow down in 2006 but University of Alaska Anchorage planners hope to begin construction on its \$85 million integrated science building in 2007.

Highway construction in the central region of the state could come in a bit slower in 2006 than last year but ramp up again in 2007. The Port of Anchorage's planned expansion will continue in 2006 with roughly \$40 million worth of work; the Port has bigger plans for 2007 and future years.

### **Manufacturing could get a boost**

Immediate Care, a local health care provider, has announced plans to manufacture pharmaceuticals in Anchorage as early as late 2007. If everything goes as planned, manufacturing employment could get a bump in 2007 and a much larger one in later years.

### **Turbulence and growth keep transportation at an even keel**

Anchorage's broad-based economic growth should keep the transportation industry from veering into the red. Predictions of strong visitor and construction seasons, along with continued growth in the international cargo business, stack up well for business.

International cargo activity should continue to rise 2 to 3 percent per year as trade with China continues to expand. Air China will be increasing its flights from 10 a week to 22. Both FedEx and UPS plan to add a significant number of parking spaces for their growing fleet of planes and most other international carriers are adding flights. By the end of 2006, FedEx will expand its package-sorting capabilities from 12,000 an hour to 15,000, which will also mean building additional facilities.

There are, however, some negative trends in transportation. Virtually all segments of the industry will likely be affected by high fuel costs. And Alyeska Pipeline Service Company, the state's third-largest private sector transportation company, plans to cut its work force in 2007. (The numbers for Anchorage are not yet available.)

### **Should be clear skies for the visitor industry**

All the makings for another strong visitor season are in place: a strong national economy, a relatively healthy international economy, more cruise ship capacity coming across the Gulf of Alaska to the Railbelt, and an expanding inventory of available hotel beds. By all indications bookings are up. In fact, some are reporting that the increase in early bookings for hotels and land tours are returning to pre-9/11 levels. Convention activity also looks positive. Bookings are up for the number and size of national conventions.

The industry most affected by visitors is leisure and hospitality, which includes accommodations, food services, arts, entertainment and recreation. This industry has been experiencing steady growth over the past five years, a trend that should continue through 2007. Last year was the first year in a while where no new hotels were built. This will not be the case in 2006 and possibly in 2007. There are plans for the construction of at least three new hotels in 2006 – an indication that faith remains strong for a continually expanding visitor industry. The new hotel construction, though, won't affect employment levels until the latter part of 2007, when the hotels will open their doors.

The food services category, which represents two-thirds of all employment in the leisure and hospitality industry, will expand – benefiting both the visitor industry and what appears to be an insatiable local demand for new eateries. At least two good-size local eating and drinking places and two sizeable national chain operators plan to open this year and there certainly will be others that have yet to announce their intentions. Smaller players are also certain to open.

### **Anchorage's giant health care industry should grow a little more**

Health care generated half the new jobs in Anchorage in 2004 and last year it produced slightly less than a quarter of the new jobs.

Although it was still the single-largest contributor to employment growth in 2005, it wasn't quite the player of the last two or three years. Even so, there is little doubt health care will continue to grow, likely at a more moderate pace.

Anchorage's second- and third-largest non-profit Native health care providers, the Alaska Native Health Consortium and the Southcentral Foundation, plan to continue to grow at a slower pace than many of the past years. Constraints on federal dollars could also become a factor.

But Providence Hospital, Anchorage's largest private-sector employer, is going through another significant expansion phase, so that will mean job growth. The hospital's employment grew by roughly 100 in 2005. Gains will also come from medical clinics, doctors' and other health practitioners' offices, medical laboratories and other outpatient care providers.

### **Retail growth will remain modest but a boomlet is coming**

Employment growth in retail has been modest and this trend should continue through the end of 2007. The construction of a number of smaller and larger stores will probably get underway during the next two years, but many of those won't open until late 2007 or 2008.

Aside from the two and possibly three new Wal-Mart supercenters in the works for this year and 2007, another large chain – one of the nation's largest retailers – is firming up possible plans to enter the Alaska market. The retailer is considering a number of stores throughout the state, including at least two in Anchorage.

Construction on Glenn Square in Mountain View, the 275,000-square-foot retail development mentioned earlier, should begin this season. It will house a number of medium and smaller local and national retailers. Some known names include Michaels, PETCO, Old Navy and Best Buy.

### **Professional and business services should continue to expand**

Broad economic growth along with hearty levels of construction, oil industry and other mining activity should contribute to gains in the professional and business services industry. Architectural, engineering, environmental and other consulting services are an important slice of this industry, and all should be kept busy designing projects. Legal accounting, computer and other professional type services should also continue to expand gradually with the rest of the economy.

### **Financial industry should stay positive**

Continued low interest rates and a healthy real estate market should keep banks, insurance companies, credit unions and other financial companies in relatively good shape. But as interest rates creep up, activity in this industry could slow some.

### **Uniformed military will grow a bit more**

After more than a decade of decline in the overall troop levels in Anchorage, the trend began to reverse itself in 2003 and has grown since. The Army, and more specifically, Fort Richardson, has been responsible for nearly all the growth, which will continue through 2006. Fort Richardson troop levels began to grow in 2003; by 2005 their count had reached 4,100, more than 1,500 stronger than just two years earlier.

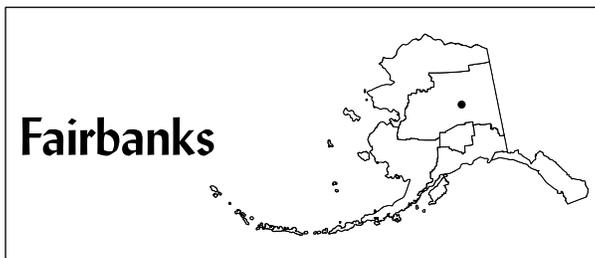
After the ongoing expansion of Fort Richardson's new Airborne Brigade Combat Team is completed later this year, station strength should reach 4,500 – the largest number of troops stationed at the post since 1988. Although the new troops tend to be young and have fewer dependents than their Air Force counterparts, additional soldiers will be living off-post and more soldiers will be spending dollars in the local economy.

### **Small gains in the public sector**

Overall public-sector employment should inch up the rest of the year and in 2007. At the federal level, employment is not likely to change

much – it could actually fall a bit again next year. In light of oil revenue surpluses, state government employment will likely grow some in 2006 and possibly again in 2007.

The University of Alaska Anchorage's budget should follow a similar pattern. And the story for local government is not much different. School enrollment will probably change little but employment counts could increase moderately as oil revenue surpluses help the budgets of Alaska's school districts. Employment levels at the Municipality of Anchorage could also increase slightly.



## Fairbanks' growth momentum will continue

By Brigitta Windisch-Cole, Economist

Fairbanks has geared up for another two years of continued employment growth with up to 500 new jobs being created each year. The annual growth rate will be 1.3 percent in both 2006 and 2007, and the growth will be broad-based. (See Exhibit 6.)

The construction industry in 2006 should remain on par with the industry's stellar 2005 performance, and it could expand its work force in 2007 to deal with military projects. (See Exhibit 7.) The leisure and hospitality sector, which benefits from tourism, should add the most jobs in 2006 and remain a strong contributor in 2007.

The local retail industry will also add jobs as it continues to expand. All other service-providing industries will gain employment from expected brisk economic activity and population growth. Incoming military personnel from overseas and

the return of currently deployed troops will also help stimulate the Fairbanks economy.

## Construction readies for strong seasons

Although several large Fairbanks construction projects will be completed in 2006, the city's construction pace should remain strong through 2007. A repeat of last year's performance is likely in 2006, and that should result in 100 additional construction jobs in 2007.

Military-related construction in Fairbanks and on other nearby installations will take the lead. The Alaska District Corps of Engineers lists 11 major construction projects on Fort Wainwright and Fort Greely army posts, Eielson Air Force Base and the Air Force's Clear Air Station costing more than \$300 million that have started or will start this year. Major projects include family housing, runway repairs, barracks, module preparation and assembly, utility upgrades, an information technology center and a helicopter pad.

The 2007 season includes the replacement and new construction of 238 family housing units on Fort Wainwright, plus building a library and education center on the post. So far, the estimated building costs for all the military's 2007 planned projects in the Fairbanks area run between \$85 million and \$175 million.

The Fairbanks North Star Borough has 136 construction projects worth more than \$40 million lined up for this year and 2007. Currently, the borough's largest single project is the roughly \$3 million upgrade of the Big Dipper Ice Arena. The City of Fairbanks is also garnering funding to move forward on the \$26 million Morris Thompson Cultural and Visitor Center.

State projects will also help heat up the local construction scene. Among the largest projects are upgrades at the Fairbanks International Airport and North Pole's Richardson Highway and Dawson Road interchange. A new airport cargo apron should provide additional work. Next year the state will focus on remodeling the airport terminal and building a virology lab at the University of Alaska Fairbanks campus. A fish hatchery is also planned.

## More Growth for Fairbanks Fairbanks forecast for 2006 and 2007 **6**

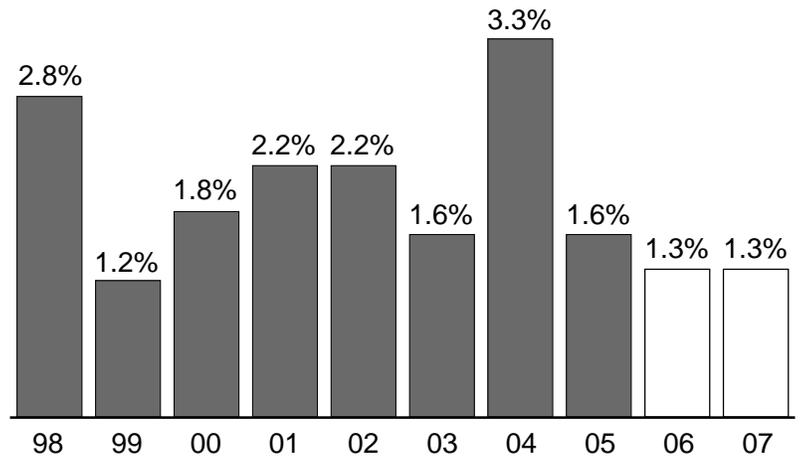
After the big push of 2005, commercial construction may abate some during the 2006 season. But activity could pick up again in 2007 if retailers rumored to be considering entering the Fairbanks market decide to invest. Among the 2006 season's largest new projects is the Fairbanks Memorial Hospital emergency room expansion and remodel. Other construction includes the North Pole power plant, a financial center, an Iridium communication satellite ground station, plus various warehouses and restaurants. The nearby trans-Alaska oil pipeline reconfiguration project, which will automate operating functions at several pump stations along the pipeline, should also help to speed up the pace.

Among construction work load projections, residential building remains the wild card. Developers have created several large subdivisions in the Fairbanks area. One builder estimates that 60 new residences will be constructed this year on a subdivision near the Bentley Trust property.

But whether a residential construction "boomlet" is about to start remains a question, because the military's future housing needs have not yet been quantified. It is clear, though, that the incoming military population will push up demand for residential housing. As privatization of military support services continues, off-post housing will become more popular and both rental and homeowner real estate should benefit.

### Retail employment will advance

Last year's retail store expansion will continue to help employment growth. Although several stores opened in 2005, their employment gains will register in 2006 because their businesses started late in the year. Additional stores will augment these gains. A new bookstore recently opened its doors, and that pushes up retail's employment by 70. Other stores may join the expansion and Fairbanks' marketplace will continue to diversify in 2007. When Wal-Mart completes an expansion of its existing store and builds an additional store, retail employment growth will be even more impressive.



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

### The leisure and hospitality industry will expand

Population growth will support continued investment in the leisure and hospitality industry this year and in 2007. A variety of new restaurants will increase the choices for Fairbanks' residents as well as visitors. Steady growth in the tourism sector has become the norm and this trend should continue. Demographic changes in the U.S. population suggest that the group of retirees who like to travel is becoming larger. And Fairbanks is becoming an increasingly popular tourist destination, particularly among Japanese and German tourists. Japan Airlines flies direct from Tokyo for winter, late summer and fall charters; Condor Thomas Cook Airlines has scheduled summer flights from Frankfurt.

### Health care will add jobs; social services will remain flat

Health care has become a steady contributor to employment growth in Fairbanks and it will continue to add jobs through 2007. Expanding medical services in any community, adding breath and depth, increases local jobs. The Fairbanks medical community has become larger and is offering more specialized services,

# 7 Fairbanks Wage and Salary Employment Forecast for 2006 and 2007

					Forecast					
	2004 Monthly Average	2005 Monthly Average	Change 2004 to 2005	Percent Change 2004 to 2005	2006 Monthly Average	Change 2005 to 2006	Percent Change 2005 to 2006	2007 Monthly Average	Change 2006 to 2007	Percent Change 2006 to 2007
Total Nonfarm Wage and Salary	37,200	37,800	600	1.6%	38,300	500	1.3%	38,800	500	1.3%
Goods-Producing <sup>1</sup>	4,300	4,500	200	4.7%	4,450	-50	-1.1%	4,500	50	1.1%
Service-Providing <sup>2</sup>	32,900	33,300	400	1.2%	33,850	550	1.7%	34,300	450	1.3%
Natural Resources and Mining	900	1,000	100	11.1%	950	-50	-5.0%	850	-100	-10.5%
Construction	2,800	2,900	100	3.6%	2,900	0	0.0%	3,000	100	3.4%
Manufacturing	600	600	0	0.0%	600	0	0.0%	650	50	8.3%
Trade, Transportation and Utilities	7,400	7,600	200	2.7%	7,750	150	2.0%	7,850	100	1.3%
Wholesale Trade	600	600	0	0.0%	600	0	0.0%	650	50	8.3%
Retail Trade	4,400	4,700	300	6.8%	4,850	150	3.2%	4,950	100	2.1%
Transportation, Warehousing and Utilities	2,400	2,300	-100	-4.2%	2,300	0	0.0%	2,250	-50	-2.2%
Information	600	600	0	0.0%	600	0	0.0%	600	0	0.0%
Financial Activities	1,400	1,500	100	7.1%	1,550	50	3.3%	1,600	50	3.2%
Professional and Business Services	2,200	2,200	0	0.0%	2,250	50	2.3%	2,300	50	2.2%
Educational <sup>3</sup> and Health Services	4,100	4,200	100	2.4%	4,250	50	1.2%	4,300	50	1.2%
Leisure and Hospitality	4,200	4,200	0	0.0%	4,400	200	4.8%	4,500	100	2.3%
Other Services	1,400	1,300	-100	-7.1%	1,300	0	0.0%	1,300	0	0.0%
Government <sup>4</sup>	11,600	11,700	100	0.9%	11,750	50	0.4%	11,850	100	0.9%
Federal Government <sup>5</sup>	3,400	3,400	0	0.0%	3,350	-50	-1.5%	3,300	-50	-1.5%
State Government	5,200	5,200	0	0.0%	5,250	50	1.0%	5,300	50	1.0%
Local Government	3,000	3,100	100	3.3%	3,150	50	1.6%	3,250	100	3.2%

<sup>1</sup> Goods-producing sectors include natural resources and mining, construction and manufacturing.

<sup>2</sup> Service-providing sectors include all those not listed as goods-producing sectors.

<sup>3</sup> Private education only

<sup>4</sup> Includes employees of public school systems and the University of Alaska

<sup>5</sup> Excludes uniformed military

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

so many patients no longer have to go elsewhere for treatment. On the other hand, there should be little change in social services; employment is expected to remain at current levels.

## Professional and business services employment will gain ground

It is difficult to gauge trends in the professional and business services sector because they involve a wide variety of unrelated industries. The professional services side includes services in various fields: legal, accounting, engineering, computer and design, among others. Employment growth in these disciplines should continue because they often support construction – which is growing – as well as serve individuals and a large variety of businesses.

Another part of the professional and business services sector consists of administrative and other support services that include employment services, call centers and facility or other types of business support services. Employment gains should materialize in companies that contract with other companies or with public agencies or organizations.

Outsourcing has become a persistent trend, as private companies and governmental agencies concentrate more on their core functions. For instance, a few years ago, a company or agency might have had an in-house computer or public relations person. Now, as more companies and agencies outsource, that same company may decide to contract with a specialized computer company or public relations company for that work.

The outsourcing trend promotes alliances between companies, as well as between government agencies and companies. In Fairbanks, the military has become increasingly reliant on support services performed by contractors. Increased station strength at Fort Wainwright will contribute to employment gains in support businesses.

### **Financial services could muster gains**

New credit unions and bank buildings and expanding rental businesses have accounted for some of last year's employment gains. The opening of another credit union, a new bank, and solid business in real estate offices could push up employment even more. Brisk construction activity supported by a healthy housing market should bode well for the financial services industry.

### **Transportation employment should stabilize**

After three years of job losses in the transportation industries, employment should remain at last year's level for the rest of the year. Airline-related jobs should become more stable than in previous years, when changes in federal regulations for transporting mail eliminated some carriers. With the upsurge of tourism, future employment growth in airline-related and ground transportation industries is possible, but the downsizing of the trans-Alaska oil pipeline work force could result in job losses to the transportation industry in 2007.

### **Natural resource employment could decline some**

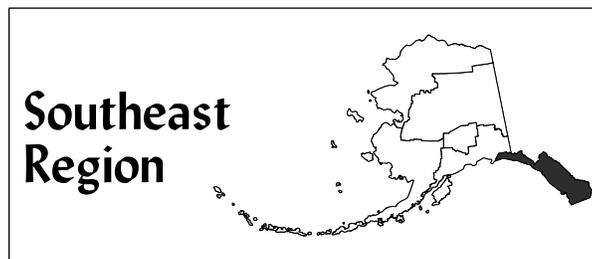
Since the trans-Alaska oil pipeline reconfiguration project will automate operating functions on some pump stations, fewer workers will be needed than in the past. Job losses among Fairbanks' contract workers who specialize in oil field services are expected to occur in 2007 after the reconfiguration project is completed.

### **Government employment growth will be small**

Government employment will change little this year or in 2007. Federal employment

could lose ground due to the continued privatization of military support services, as well as federal agency downsizing due to tight budgets. State and local government will offset the federal job losses, but their gains will be modest. The University of Alaska has been state government's most dynamic job engine in past years, but lately the university's growth has diminished, likely at least partly due to falling enrollment.

The Fairbanks North Star Borough School District has also experienced drops in enrollment, a trend that will likely reverse when incoming military personnel and their families arrive in Fairbanks. Therefore, a small gain in local government employment should materialize in 2006 and a bigger increase could follow in 2007.



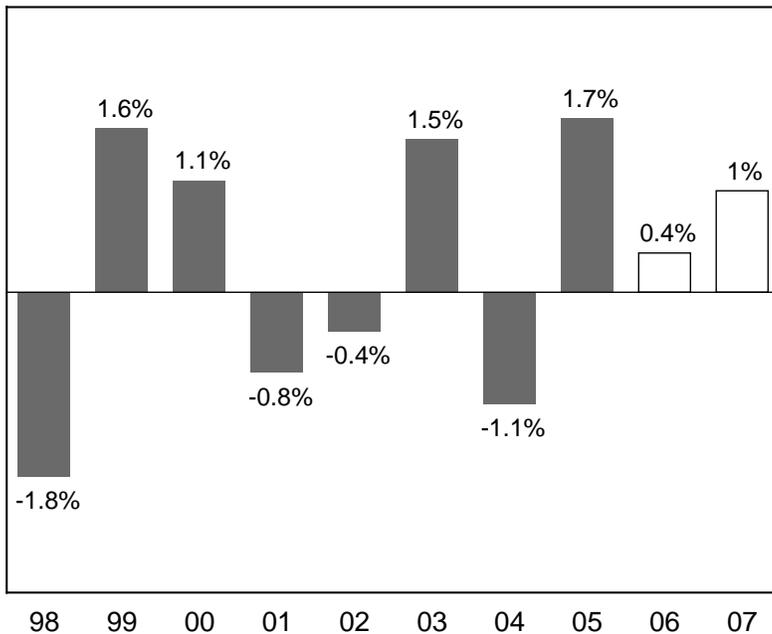
## **Slow growth to continue**

**By Neal Gilbertsen, Economist**

Economic forecasts are educated guesses based on anticipated events and historical performance. The question is always, "Will the predicted economic changes be great enough to alter the underlying dynamic?" In the case of the 2006-2007 Southeast forecast, the answer would seem to be "No."

The annual fluctuations in Southeast employment have tended to offset one another over recent years, with one year of job growth followed by another of economic retreat. From 2000 to 2005, total employment increased by only 300 jobs. This very slow eight-tenths of 1 percent growth in a five-year period seems to represent the long-term employment trend. (See Exhibit 8.)

## 8 Slow Growth to Continue Southeast forecast for 2006 and 2007



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

Over this extended time frame, employment in goods-producing industries such as seafood processing and logging has either stabilized or declined, while service-providing industries such as retail trade and health care have accounted for most of the regional gains. Although there are some encouraging signs, there is little reason to believe that this long-term trend will change dramatically by the end of 2007. Southeast will instead experience slow to moderate job growth in both 2006 and 2007. (See Exhibit 9.) This growth will not, however, be shared evenly across industries or communities.

### Timber still shaky but mining seems golden

In light of Sealaska's announcement of its need to reduce timber harvests by at least 25 percent in 2006 and perhaps by 50 percent in future years, it is doubtful that the small 2005 gains in logging employment can be sustained. These reductions will impact the Southeast Native regional corporation's logging employment and its contractors, and will register most heavily in the Prince of Wales-Outer Ketchikan Census Area.

It is possible that such things as the proposed 600-acre Emerald Bay Timber Sale, which could provide up to 90 jobs, might result in temporary increases. However, the U.S. Forest Service recently published a report entitled, "Timber Products Output and Timber Harvest in Alaska, Projects for 2005-2025," that finds it most likely that the area's timber harvests will remain at recent historical low levels over the 20-year period.

The industry faces formidable challenges. Inexpensive softwood lumber from Canada and the American South continues to dominate domestic markets, while raw logs from Siberia, New Zealand and elsewhere provide stiff competition in Asian export markets.

It is almost certain that employment at the Kensington gold mine north of Juneau will lead to increased mining totals both this year and in 2007. When the mine is fully operational, it is expected to employ 225 full-time workers. Permits for the Slate Lake water discharge plan have been reinstated, allowing construction to move forward, and the lawsuit concerning the tailings disposal issue will probably be resolved in the coming months. Because the mine will take some time to reach full operation, jobs will be added gradually over 2006, but should register more strongly in 2007.

If precious metals continue to command high prices, Southeast could see additional developments. Explorations for platinum are ongoing at Union Bay northwest of Ketchikan and for gold, silver and zinc on Woewodski Island west of Wrangell, but those explorations will not result in expanded employment in 2006 or 2007. The possible reopening of the Admiral Calder calcium carbonate mine on Prince of Wales Island, however, might add some jobs to the mining total.

### Construction employment may build

Construction employment has been stable in recent years, driven by home-building, several port facility projects, roads and work associated with the Kensington mine. It is likely that the level of activity will continue or slightly increase

# Wage and Salary Employment Southeast forecast for 2006 and 2007



## Forecast

	2004	2005	Change	Percent	Forecast					
	Monthly Average	Monthly Average	2004 to 2005	Change 2004 to 2005	2006 Monthly Average	Change 2005 to 2006	Percent Change 2005 to 2006	2007 Monthly Average	Change 2006 to 2007	Percent Change 2006 to 2007
Total Nonfarm Wage and Salary	35,950	36,550	600	1.7%	36,700	150	0.4%	37,050	350	1.0%
Goods-Producing <sup>1</sup>	3,950	4,100	150	3.8%	4,200	100	2.4%	4,350	150	3.6%
Service-Providing <sup>2</sup>	32,000	32,450	450	1.4%	32,500	50	0.2%	32,700	200	0.6%
Natural Resources and Mining	600	650	50	8.3%	750	100	15.4%	850	100	13.3%
Construction	1,500	1,600	100	6.7%	1,600	0	0.0%	1,650	50	3.1%
Manufacturing	1,850	1,850	0	0.0%	1,850	0	0.0%	1,850	0	0.0%
Trade, Transportation and Utilities	1,450	1,450	0	0.0%	1,450	0	0.0%	1,450	0	0.0%
Wholesale Trade	7,200	7,400	200	2.8%	7,450	50	0.7%	7,600	150	2.0%
Retail Trade	4,550	4,650	100	2.2%	4,700	50	1.1%	4,800	100	2.1%
Transportation, Warehousing and Utilities	2,300	2,400	100	4.3%	2,400	0	0.0%	2,400	0	0.0%
Information	550	600	50	9.1%	600	0	0.0%	600	0	0.0%
Financial Activities	1,250	1,300	50	4.0%	1,300	0	0.0%	1,300	0	0.0%
Professional and Business Services	1,350	1,300	-50	-3.7%	1,300	0	0.0%	1,300	0	0.0%
Educational <sup>3</sup> and Health Services	3,450	3,550	100	2.9%	3,600	50	1.4%	3,650	50	1.4%
Leisure and Hospitality	3,450	3,650	200	5.8%	3,700	50	1.4%	3,750	50	1.4%
Other Services	1,200	1,200	0	0.0%	1,200	0	0.0%	1,200	0	0.0%
Government <sup>4</sup>	13,550	13,450	-100	-0.7%	13,350	-100	-0.7%	13,300	-50	-0.4%
Federal Government <sup>5</sup>	2,050	2,000	-50	-2.4%	1,950	-50	-2.5%	1,900	-50	-2.6%
State Government	5,450	5,500	50	0.9%	5,500	0	0.0%	5,550	50	0.9%
Local Government	6,050	5,950	-100	-1.7%	5,900	-50	-0.8%	5,850	-50	-0.8%

<sup>1</sup> Goods-producing sectors include natural resources and mining, construction and manufacturing.

<sup>2</sup> Service-providing sectors include all those not listed as goods-producing sectors.

<sup>3</sup> Private education only

<sup>4</sup> Includes employees of public school systems and the University of Alaska

<sup>5</sup> Excludes uniformed military

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

in the foreseeable future. Juneau projects include highway improvements, the construction of a new high school as well as the Home Depot store in 2006, and two fisheries and ocean sciences research labs both located at Lena Point. The \$51 million National Marine Fisheries Service's Ted Stevens Marine Institute should be completed by the end of this year; construction on the \$20 million University of Alaska lab is set to begin this year.

The governor's 2007 budget proposes spending for several smaller projects. Those include \$1 million for Wrangell street improvements; \$10 million for deferred harbor maintenance in Haines, Kake, Hydaburg and Angoon; \$1

million for Sitka's Sawmill Cove Industrial Park water line; and \$500,000 to build a health clinic in Skagway. Ketchikan will see highway improvements in 2006, and will use an \$18.5 million federal grant to begin expanding the airport runway. The total cost of the project is now estimated at \$40 million.

It is more difficult to forecast the fate of two major projects that remain entangled in politics. If the Juneau Access road project<sup>10</sup> and Ketchikan's Gravina Island bridge project were to gain full legislative support, the former could contribute

<sup>10</sup> The Juneau Access road project has evolved into a proposed road from Juneau to the Katzein River south of Haines, then ferry service to Haines and Skagway.

some jobs as early as 2006, but the jobs would not fully register on the annualized job count until 2007. The latter could contribute 50 to 100 jobs by 2007. As always with such projects, there remains a possibility that political decisions or legal challenges could affect when and if they will be undertaken.

In the private sector, it is likely that rising interest rates will slow construction activities by 2007. This will partially offset the employment gains created by government-funded projects.

### **Fishing and manufacturing stable**

Nearly 80 percent of the manufacturing employment in Southeast is attributable to seafood processing. The Alaska Department of Fish and Game expects another good salmon year with the 2006 Southeast production approaching 68 million fish, down only slightly from 2005's 70 million harvest. Catches of more valuable king, sockeye and coho are expected to increase slightly, as are those of chums. Only the pink salmon harvest is expected to be somewhat lower. Halibut and sablefish landings, based as they are on individual quotas, will also resemble those of 2005.

Although Fish and Game does not forecast harvests two years in advance, the record of the last decade would indicate that relatively high levels of production should continue through 2007. Moreover, the 2007 pink salmon return will be the offspring of an extremely large 2005 parental run. As a result, both seafood processing and fish harvesting employment should remain at last year's levels through 2007.

### **Retail growth will continue and health care will thrive**

Retail trade is expected to expand only modestly in 2006, but more rapidly in 2007, when Home Depot will open its Juneau store. While employment at the large outlet should give the industry a boost, gains could be partially offset by job losses at local competitors. Still, retail trade has manifested consistent growth over the years as it has added 50 to 100 jobs every year since 2001. There is no reason to believe 2006 and 2007 will be exceptions.

Educational and health services will also add jobs, although the rate of increase is expected to slow somewhat this year and in 2007. This industry, largely due to the expansion of medical and related social services, has added 350 jobs since 2001, which amounts to a 2.5 percent average annual increase. The regional population is aging, and that should logically lead to an increased demand for services, but since the population is also declining, the rate of growth in the industry will slow. The industry will add about 50 jobs a year over the forecast period.

### **Tourism impacts will be uneven**

Juneau hosted 948,226 cruise ship passengers in 2005. The number of cruise ship visitors to Southeast is expected to remain about the same in 2006 and increase slightly in 2007. Holland America has announced it will nearly double its 2006 round-trip sailings from Seattle to Alaska by adding a third ship, but Norwegian Cruise Lines has eliminated one ship from its fleet of four and Crystal Cruise Lines is leaving the Alaska market.

For a variety of reasons, several cruise lines have altered the arrangement of their 2006 port calls. As a result, some communities will see more summer visitors while others will experience reductions. For example, according to Cruise Line Agencies of Alaska, 100,000 fewer tourists are expected to visit Ketchikan this year. In light of these scheduling changes, it seems likely that any local employment gains in tourist-related industries in Juneau or elsewhere will be partially offset by reductions in other communities.

### **Government**

The U.S. Treasury Department announced in March that the federal government had reached its statutory debt limit. In order to avoid default, Congress once again raised the ceiling. Since it is unlikely that the tax cuts of recent years will be reversed, budget shortfalls, in part attributable to Katrina and Iraq, will likely lead to reductions in the federal work force. This will affect federal employment in all states, including Alaska.

State revenues, on the other hand, have benefited greatly from high oil prices. But these

budget surpluses are more likely to fund capital projects than expanded state services. As a result, state employment will likely remain at current levels through 2006 but may increase slightly in 2007.

Local government will continue to shrink. In large part this is explained by an ongoing decline in the region's school-age population. From 2000 to 2004, the number of Southeast residents younger than 16 fell by nearly 2,100. While 2005 data are not yet available, there is no reason to believe that this trend has reversed itself. These continuing declines in student populations will likely lead to cutbacks in regional teaching staffs.

### **An overview**

For the last half century, the Southeast economy has been based on timber, fisheries, tourism and government. It seems likely that mining will soon regain a place on the list. Still, lacking major expansions or additions to the Southeast economy, the underlying trend of slow to moderate growth will persist.

The gains and losses will not be shared evenly among the region's communities. Overall, it seems likely that northern Southeast and especially Juneau will reap a disproportionate share of the economic rewards, while southern Southeast and more rural areas will continue to struggle. In other words, it seems likely that 2006 and 2007 will closely resemble the recent past, with its underlying trend of sporadic and uneven growth.

### **Oracles and Such**

Before placing too much reliance on economic gurus presumptuous enough to issue forecasts, it is wise to examine the predictive records of these so-called "experts."

Over the last decade and a half, the statewide one-year forecasting record has been generally quite accurate, although there have been some misses. Last year, for example, the statewide forecast called for a growth rate of only 1.5 percent, which was significantly lower than the actual rate of 1.9 percent. However, this was only the second time since 2000 that the actual employment had deviated from the forecast by more than one-tenth of one percent.

Since 1993, statewide forecasts have usually fallen within three-tenths of a percentage point of actual growth rates. Regional forecasts are somewhat less accurate than statewide forecasts because they deal with smaller populations that naturally tend to amplify percentage variations.

As might be expected, the second-year forecasts of both statewide and regional economies are considerably less accurate than one-year projections. At best they should be viewed with caution. The future is notoriously difficult to predict, and the longer the term the less reliable the prediction. While the oracles at *Trends* are not blind, they are relatively nearsighted. — Neal Gilbertsen

## Job count continues seasonal climb

**T**otal nonfarm employment rose by 3,000 in March to 301,400. (See Exhibit 1.) The gains were scattered across a variety of industries as the state's seasonal employers continued their gradual build toward the peak months of summer. Construction added 400 jobs, for example, and the leisure and hospitality sector added 500.

Also contributing to the monthly gains were industries such as oil and gas and health care, both of which have been growing at a healthy rate unrelated to seasonal trends. Oil and gas employment increased by 200 in March and health care employment by 300.

The March job count was 5,300 higher than in March 2005, an over-the-year growth rate of 1.8 percent. Growth in that range continues the trend from 2005, which saw a modest acceleration in job growth from the two previous years. In 2005 the state added jobs at an average rate of 1.9 percent compared to 1.6 percent in 2004 and 1.4 percent in 2003.

Four of the state's six economic regions have added jobs since March 2005, the exceptions being the Gulf Coast and Southwest regions, both of which were affected by lower seafood processing employment this March. Growth has been particularly strong in the Northern Region, where the oil industry has stepped up exploration and development activities.

### Unemployment rate lower in March

The state's unemployment rate fell five-tenths of a percentage point in March to 7.7 percent. Looking at the longer term trend, the rate has consistently inched downward over the last two years, but that trend may be changing. March's rate was slightly higher than in March 2005, although several more months of data will be required before anything can be confirmed. The statistics are in large part based on a survey of only about 1,000 Alaska households and are prone to considerable month-to-month variability.

Anchorage's unemployment rate fell three-tenths of a percentage point in March to 5.9 percent. Fairbanks' rate saw a similar decline, falling four-tenths of a percentage point to 6.8 percent. In Juneau, the rate fell seven-tenths of a percentage point to 5.7 percent. The Aleutians West Census Area recorded the state's lowest rate in March at 3.9 percent, while the Wade Hampton Census Area had the highest at 22.2 percent.

### Labor force participation rates

The unemployment rate is calculated by dividing the number of unemployed people by the total labor force, which is the sum of all employed and unemployed people. To be counted as unemployed, however, a person must have actively sought work during the month. As a result, students, retirees, stay-at-home parents and people

# 1 Nonfarm Wage and Salary Employment

Alaska	Preliminary	Revised	Revised	Changes from:	
	03/06	02/06	03/05	02/06	03/05
<b>Total Nonfarm Wage and Salary</b> <sup>1</sup>	301,400	298,400	296,100	3,000	5,300
Goods-Producing <sup>2</sup>	38,600	37,800	37,600	800	1,000
Service-Providing <sup>3</sup>	262,800	260,600	258,500	2,200	4,300
<b>Natural Resources and Mining</b>	11,400	11,000	10,500	400	900
Logging	300	300	500	0	-200
Mining	10,900	10,800	10,000	100	900
Oil and Gas	9,200	9,000	8,500	200	700
<b>Construction</b>	15,700	15,300	15,300	400	400
<b>Manufacturing</b>	11,500	11,500	11,800	0	-300
Wood Product Manufacturing	300	300	300	0	0
Seafood Processing	8,000	7,900	8,200	100	-200
<b>Trade, Transportation, Utilities</b>	59,900	59,400	58,900	500	1,000
Wholesale Trade	6,100	6,000	6,000	100	100
Retail Trade	34,500	34,400	33,900	100	600
Food and Beverage Stores	6,100	6,100	6,100	0	0
General Merchandise Stores	9,200	9,200	8,800	0	400
Transportation, Warehousing, Utilities	19,300	19,000	19,000	300	300
Air Transportation	5,900	5,800	5,800	100	100
Truck Transportation	2,900	2,900	2,900	0	0
<b>Information</b>	6,800	6,800	6,900	0	-100
Telecommunications	4,100	4,100	4,100	0	0
<b>Financial Activities</b>	14,600	14,600	14,200	0	400
<b>Professional and Business Services</b>	22,900	22,800	22,300	100	600
<b>Educational<sup>4</sup> and Health Services</b>	36,600	36,100	35,900	500	700
Health Care	26,400	26,100	25,800	300	600
<b>Leisure and Hospitality</b>	27,500	27,000	26,700	500	800
Accommodations	6,200	6,100	6,100	100	100
Food Services and Drinking Places	17,500	17,200	17,000	300	500
<b>Other Services</b>	11,300	11,200	11,100	100	200
<b>Government</b> <sup>5</sup>	83,200	82,700	82,500	500	700
Federal Government <sup>6</sup>	16,500	16,400	16,600	100	-100
State Government	25,000	24,800	24,600	200	400
State Government Education	8,000	8,000	8,100	0	-100
Local Government	41,700	41,500	41,300	200	400
Local Government Education	24,200	24,100	24,000	100	200
Tribal Government	4,000	4,000	3,900	0	100

Notes for all exhibits on this page:

<sup>1</sup> Excludes self-employed workers, fishermen, domestic workers, unpaid family workers and nonprofit volunteers

<sup>2</sup> Goods-producing sectors include natural resources and mining, construction and manufacturing.

<sup>3</sup> Service-providing sectors include all others not listed as goods-producing sectors.

<sup>4</sup> Private education only

<sup>5</sup> Includes employees of public school systems and the University of Alaska

<sup>6</sup> Excludes uniformed military

<sup>7</sup> Metropolitan Statistical Area

Sources for all exhibits on this page: Alaska Department of Labor & Workforce Development, Research and Analysis Section; and the U.S Bureau of Labor Statistics

# 3 Nonfarm Wage and Salary Employment By Region

	Preliminary	Revised	Revised	Changes from:		Percent Change:	
	03/06	02/06	03/05	02/06	03/05	02/06	03/05
Anch/Mat-Su (MSA) <sup>7</sup>	162,500	161,500	158,700	1,000	3,800	0.6%	2.4%
Anchorage	145,700	144,600	142,600	1,100	3,100	0.8%	2.2%
Gulf Coast	26,050	25,750	26,400	300	-350	1.2%	-1.3%
Interior	42,400	42,000	41,900	400	500	1.0%	1.2%
Fairbanks	36,700	36,300	36,200	400	500	1.1%	1.4%
Northern	16,600	16,400	15,700	200	900	1.2%	5.7%
Southeast	33,650	32,500	33,300	1,150	350	3.5%	1.1%
Southwest	19,650	20,000	20,000	-350	-350	-1.8%	-1.8%

# 2 Unemployment Rates By borough and census area

	Prelim.	Revised	Revised
	03/06	02/06	03/05
<b>NOT SEASONALLY ADJUSTED</b>			
<b>United States</b>	4.7	4.8	5.1
<b>Alaska Statewide</b>	7.7	8.2	7.5
<b>Anchorage/Mat-Su (MSA)<sup>7</sup></b>	6.5	6.8	6.2
Municipality of Anchorage	5.9	6.2	5.7
Mat-Su Borough	9.4	9.5	8.3
<b>Gulf Coast Region</b>	10.0	11.1	10.1
Kenai Peninsula Borough	10.4	11.6	10.3
Kodiak Island Borough	7.0	7.4	7.1
Valdez-Cordova	12.0	13.3	12.5
<b>Interior Region</b>	7.7	8.1	7.6
Denali Borough	13.2	16.6	15.6
Fairbanks North Star Borough (MSA) <sup>7</sup>	6.8	7.2	6.6
Southeast Fairbanks	11.6	12.4	14.3
Yukon-Koyukuk	15.0	15.5	13.1
<b>Northern Region</b>	10.9	11.4	11.3
Nome	13.7	14.1	11.9
North Slope Borough	8.5	9.3	9.5
Northwest Arctic Borough	10.3	10.6	12.7
<b>Southeast Region</b>	8.5	9.4	8.6
Haines Borough	14.4	15.4	15.0
Juneau Borough	5.7	6.4	6.0
Ketchikan Gateway Borough	8.5	9.3	8.6
Prince of Wales-Outer Ketchikan	18.5	19.6	15.1
Sitka Borough	6.1	7.3	6.4
Skagway-Hoonah-Angoon	21.6	22.1	21.7
Wrangell-Petersburg	11.8	13.9	12.7
Yakutat Borough	16.7	21.7	18.6
<b>Southwest Region</b>	12.1	12.2	11.3
Aleutians East Borough	7.7	8.7	8.1
Aleutians West	3.9	3.7	3.8
Bethel	13.8	14.2	12.6
Bristol Bay Borough	16.7	18.9	15.1
Dillingham	11.2	11.0	11.4
Lake and Peninsula Borough	11.2	12.4	9.6
Wade Hampton	22.2	22.1	21.0
<b>SEASONALLY ADJUSTED</b>			
United States	4.8	5.1	5.4
Alaska Statewide	7.0	7.0	6.8

For more current state and regional employment and unemployment data, visit our Web site.

[almis.labor.state.ak.us](http://almis.labor.state.ak.us)

who are willing to work but have not been actively looking for a job – often referred to as “discouraged workers” – are not represented in unemployment statistics. They’re considered to be out of the labor force.

This is particularly relevant for rural Alaska where there are a limited number of employers and a reduced number of ways to actively look for a job. Unlike a person from a small town in central Washington, for example, who can always look for work in the neighboring towns or cities to which he or she is willing to commute,

a job seeker in an Alaska community such as Tanana is limited to that community’s handful of employers.

Consequently, a higher percentage of people in rural Alaska get excluded from the official unemployment statistics since they’re not actively looking for a job. One method of trying to account for this problem is to look at the percentage of the population that is participating in the labor force, either by having a job or actively seeking a job, compared to other communities.<sup>1</sup>

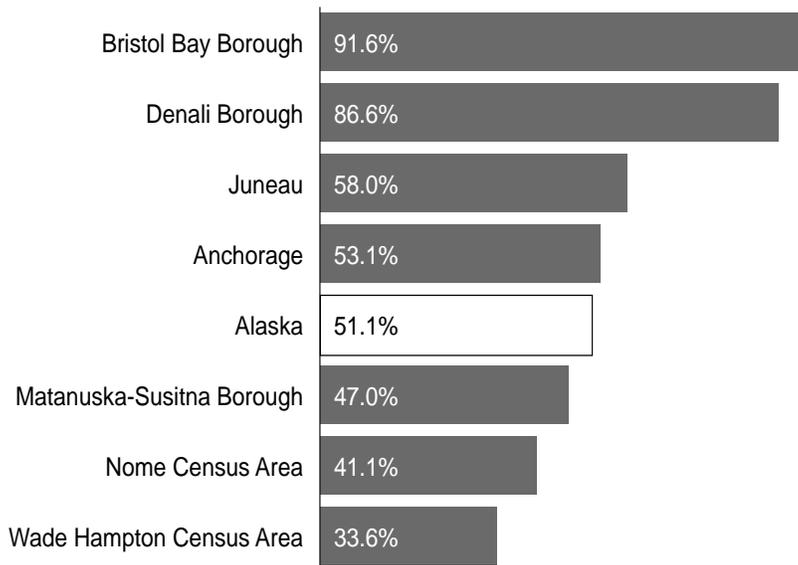
The Wade Hampton Census Area, which often has the state’s highest unemployment rate,<sup>2</sup> also has the state’s lowest labor force participation rate. (See Exhibit 4.) Generally, a low labor force participation rate signals a struggling economy.

Statewide, the participation rate was 51.1 percent. Unfortunately, the very high participation rates for the Bristol Bay and Denali boroughs reveal more about the difficulty of calculating labor force statistics for small, very seasonal areas than they do about the actual labor force. The more seasonal variation there is in an area’s employment and population numbers, the less reliable the labor force statistics are for that area; and both Bristol Bay and Denali are extremely seasonal.

<sup>1</sup> The labor force participation rates discussed here are calculated using the entire population; they are frequently published elsewhere using only the 16 and older population since to be counted as employed or unemployed a person must be at least 16. As long as the same definition of population is used for all areas, as it is here, the comparisons are valid under either approach.

<sup>2</sup> In March 2006, Wade Hampton’s unemployment rate was 22.2 percent; it has been around 20 percent for the last two years and at least 15 percent for the last five.

## 4 2005 Labor Force Participation Rates For select boroughs and census areas



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

“It’s amazing. You’d think these guys have been here forever...”

**D**ennis Steffy said he’s never seen anything like it in the 38 years he’s been overseeing the state’s mine training programs. He’s never seen people assemble a mine training program so fast: deciding what needed to be taught, recruiting the students, arranging for the instructors, the classrooms, the funding – and a mine site so the students could experience the real thing, actually working 300 feet below ground.

He said it happened because a group of people from different agencies and Coeur Alaska Inc., the owner of the Kensington gold mine north of Juneau, got together with one thing in mind: to train people for the mine. Fast.

Steffy is the director of the University of Alaska’s Mining and Petroleum Training Service based at Kenai Peninsula College. He approached Ted Burke, then the head of the Juneau Job Center, last spring to see about putting a training planning team together. They got the team together and had the first mine training class in September – in record time.

It was so fast, and so efficient, that Steffy wants to use what the group accomplished in Juneau as a model not only for setting up mining programs in the rest of the state – at the Rock Creek mine in Nome and the possible Pebble mine near Lake Iliamna – but for potential future development in the oil and gas industry as well.

“It was as good as it could ever work right there,” he said.

Here’s how it unfolded: Steffy and Burke joined with Marquam George – a University of Alaska Southeast assistant professor who had been discussing mine training with Coeur for about a year – and others from the university, plus the Central Council Tlingit & Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska, the Alaska Department of Labor & Workforce Development’s Division of Business Partnerships and the Berners Bay Consortium,

**Rod Willard, Coeur Alaska’s geology manager at the Kensington mine, examines a high-grade gold and quartz vein in the mine in April 2005.**

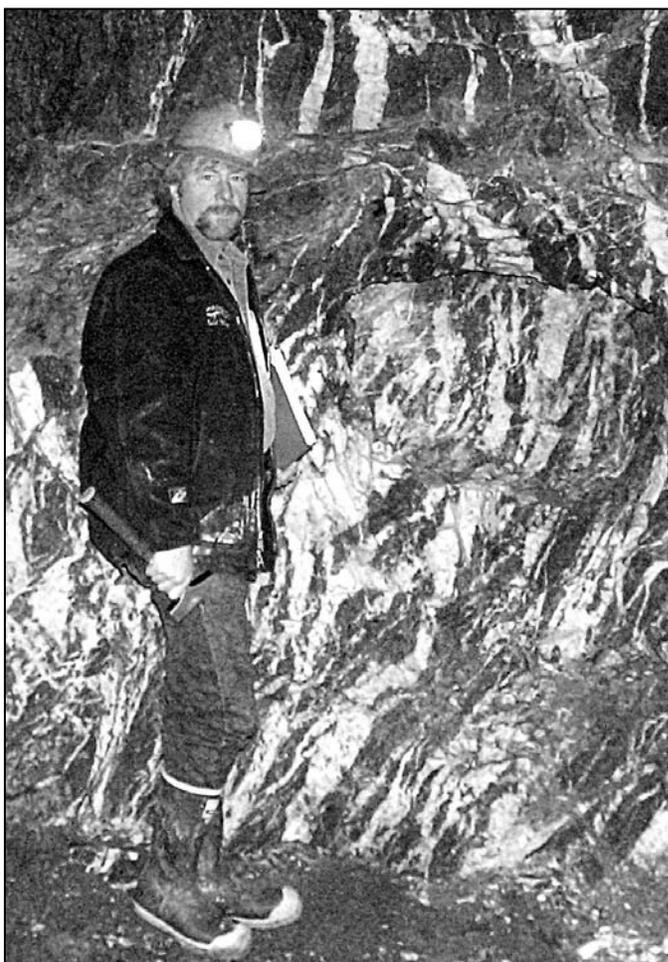


Photo by Jan Trigg, Coeur Alaska Inc.



Mine construction class students (above, left to right) Derek Antrim, Ryan Hamley, John Corazza and Caleb Hillyer install rafters and ridges to their “small buildings” last November at the UAS Technical Education Center in Juneau. Instructor Marquam George said the small buildings have the same components of regular-sized buildings; they’re just scaled-down versions.

“Nipper” class graduates – nippers are basically entry-level miners – and others (above right) watch the Feb. 24 nipper class graduation ceremony in a classroom converted from a gift shop at the Maggie Kathleen mine near Juneau, where the students worked in the mine as part of their training. Others pictured include people from the Juneau Job Center, Coeur Alaska, plus friends and relatives of the miners.

a group made up of the chief executive officers from Coeur and Native corporations Goldbelt, Kake Tribal and Klukwan.

Coeur already had an agreement with the Department of Labor to work together to recruit workers for the mine, which is in the construction phase now, and – if the process goes according to plan – will start processing ore in 2007. Coeur also had an agreement with the

other Berners Bay Consortium members that Coeur would strive for 13.5 percent of its construction work force to be members of the three Native corporations or their descendents and 25 percent of the production work force. The three corporations are big mine supporters.

“Dennis had heard about me, about the Department of Labor’s agreement with Coeur,” said Burke, now the assistant director of the department’s Employment Security Division. “We just hit it off when we met. He’s a mover and a shaker. He’s a miner, rough and tough. He just eats the stuff.

“I think we took the university by surprise. [The group] just didn’t fool around. We just all jelled. We each did our part and our fair share of making it happen,” Burke said, adding what seems to be his favorite motto: “Don’t be bureaucrats!”

“It was incredible,” said George, the UAS instructor. “All the players came together. It was a great meeting of needs.”



Photo by Jason Bluhm, Governor's Office

They got together eight instructors to teach three courses: an introduction to mining construction class, a U.S. Department of Labor Mine Safety and Health Administration safety certification class (miners pronounce the acronym as “M-sha”) and another class entitled, “Entry Level Underground Miner,” or “nipper” for short. (A nipper is someone in the first stage of becoming an underground production miner, one who moves and operates equipment to help hard-rock miners.<sup>1</sup>)

All the students – there were 78 altogether and seven of those were Coeur employees – took one of three 40-hour MSHA safety/first aid classes. Of those 78, 11 also took the six-week construction class and another 24 took the nipper class.

The 11 construction students graduated from their class in December. They learned everything from reading blueprints to rigging and welding, including nearly 10 days studying concrete and foundations. The classes were held at UAS’ Technical Education Center in downtown Juneau.

But the three-week nipper class was held either outside the Maggie Kathleen mine in Thane, a

few miles south of Juneau, or up to 780 feet into the mine, 300 feet underground, Steffy said.

The idea for using the Maggie Kathleen to train didn’t come about until the training planning group encountered Jerry Harmon, a miner for 32 years who’s now a surface foreman at Kensington on the Lynn Canal side. He leases the Maggie Kathleen and runs summer tours there.

Harmon was the lead instructor for the nipper class and taught some MSHA classes. He’s lived in Alaska for as long as he’s been a miner, but during that time he’s worked in mines in Brazil, Africa, the British West Indies, Canada and Alaska.

Steffy said the nipper class encountered nearly everything they would as a miner, except blasting, because the Maggie Kathleen is too close to Juneau.

“There was no simulation to this at all,” he said. “It was the real thing. It’s nothing like Greens Creek or Kensington,” he added, but it was enough to tell “who was going to make it, who was going to be a miner.

“We were actually doing the work,” Steffy said. “We put in bolts. We built walkways and scaffolding. We timbered up the entrance to the mine. We put in doors and a gate, 20-feet high and 16-feet wide, for security. We laid the rail and the track.”

<sup>1</sup> But that wasn’t always the case. The U.S. Department of Labor’s MSHA, in its “A Pictorial Walk Through the 20th Century: Honoring the U.S. Miner,” says that nippers in the coal mines in the 1800s and early 1900s were the youngest of boys, usually ages 8 to 13, who worked underground and opened heavy doors for approaching coal cars, then quickly closed the doors after the cars went through. The nippers sat for hours in the dark in between cars with their carbide cap lamp as their only light.



**An unidentified drill operator (above) runs a diamond drill underground at the Kensington mine north of Juneau. Drills like this one have a diamond tip that'll drill 1,000 feet into the rock to collect core samples for geologists to analyze.**

Sometimes it'd be two students underground at a time with an instructor; other times it'd be five or six, he said. The others would either be working outside the mine getting equipment working or in a nearby classroom, converted from a gift shop.

Harmon said that of the 24 students who started the nipper class, three dropped out for medical reasons and 21 graduated in February. Steffy said that's a tremendous outcome, considering that with nipper training, you usually start with 20 and lose half.

So far, Kensington has hired eight of the nipper graduates and one instructor from the mine training, all for full-time jobs. Three others were recently offered temporary jobs in the mine's geology department. Harmon said another four to six have accepted jobs at other companies – a Pogo mine contractor, near Delta, and a Canadian company working in Fairbanks – and he bets Kensington will eventually hire the rest.

"Those 21 guys are just absolutely excellent," said Harmon, who has been supervising the eight at Kensington. "They'll be months ahead of everyone else."

"It's amazing. You'd think these guys have been here forever," he said. "They're just well trained. They were well-prepared before they got here."

"When you talk to them [the students], they're the happiest bunch of people you'll ever see. They cheer the whole place up," Harmon said about Kensington. "They're the 'new miner.'"

"It's [probably] the first time they've been trained before the job started. They're confident. They went into the workplace without stumbling along. One guy is just fascinated that he's making the money he's making and he's doing well."

"Now they'll be able to kick it up a notch," and work up the ladder as a miner. "They know that, and they say that over and over again. They're stepping up in their life cycle. They have a good job, a good-paying job and they're wanted and they're accepted. There's

no bickering. They just come out here and go to work.”

Harmon said a top miner at Kensington makes \$28 to \$29 an hour; people starting out make \$15 to \$16 an hour, plus overtime and medical insurance. The mine is running 24 hours a day, every day, so people at the mine work 12-hour shifts, seven days a week, with some variation of two weeks on and one week off.

Including overtime, people working in Alaska’s mining industry<sup>2</sup> made an average \$72,176 in 2005, according to data from unemployment insurance quarterly contribution reports.

The Kensington mine has 230 workers now (65 of them are Coeur employees) and will employ 230 to 300 when it’s in production, Coeur officials said.

Steffy said the high caliber of the 78 students in the MSHA, construction and nipper classes was because the Department of Labor and Tlingit and Haida did such a thorough job pre-screening the students, to ensure the training was a good route for them and they had a strong commitment to do well in the field. The students’ ages ranged from 18 to 60-plus, Harmon said.

Steffy said he met with all the students and discussed their backgrounds.

“Virtually all of them brought substantial skill sets,” to the program, he said, adding the caveat that the construction class students might have had fewer skills, but only because they tended to be younger.

Regardless, Steffy said that if Kensington’s U.S. Forest Service permit hadn’t hit a snag – the permit process was held up when the permit was contested – he thinks the mine would have hired nearly everyone in the program, particularly if the construction of the mine’s docks, mill and underground expansion were in full force.

“There’s no question that those people had job skills that would be needed in those jobs,” he said.

<sup>2</sup> This includes everyone employed in the mining industry – miners as well as managers, secretaries, cooks and others.

UAS provided instructors, classroom space and, with the Department of Labor and Coeur, subsidized much of the training costs. Steffy said Coeur supplied “an unbelievable amount” of equipment and supplies – even flying equipment in by helicopter the day after they requested it – plus their employees’ time in planning and as instructors.

All the planning team members did heavy recruiting, particularly the Berners Bay Consortium, Tlingit and Haida and the Department of Labor. Burke said that for students with low incomes, Tlingit and Haida and the Department of Labor bought raingear and boots – anything they needed for the training – and paid hotel, food and travel costs for out-of-towners.

Tuition for the nipper and construction classes was roughly \$900 and the MSHA class was free. Tlingit and Haida, the Department of Labor, Coeur, Klukwan and Kake Tribal provided scholarships to those who couldn’t afford the tuition, Burke said.

The UAS’ George said, “They really went out of their way on a daily basis to make sure the success rate was high.”

Asked why he thinks the training planning group had such exceptional results, Steffy pointed to several things.

The proximity of the people in the group was a big thing, plus the fact that they could make decisions for their agencies. Steffy said that meant they could accomplish things fast. He could fly to Juneau and meet with various people in the group – or have the whole group meet – relatively easily.

“The proximity made the communication super simple,” he said. “It was, ‘Bang! It’s done.’ Otherwise, it’s the email game and telephone messages. You’re sitting here, and next week, you’re still waiting to talk to everyone.” He said it was also good that the group was made up of local people – people tapped into the community where the training is taking place, so they know about available resources and have contacts.

It's important, too, to work closely with the mine employer, Steffy said. Before Coeur – its parent company is based in Idaho – had human relations people living in Juneau, the company flew their staff up from Idaho eight or 10 times to meet with the training planning group, he said.

Steffy also said it was good that the planning group was made up of people from such diverse entities, governmental and private. That way a whole range of interests were represented and ideas came from people with different backgrounds.

"Very seldom do I get to work that way," he said.

Timing is crucial, as Steffy, Burke and Harmon mentioned separately what appears to be a cardinal rule with work force training: you only train people when there are immediate job openings. That makes it a delicate balancing act. You have to plan in advance for the training at one pace – before the jobs are open and sometimes when the mining project faces delays – and then really gun it as those job openings get closer.

Steffy said from last spring to November, parts of the planning group met roughly once a week and the group met about once a month. Then toward the end of November – six weeks or so before the nipper training took place – the group "rolled it into high gear."

"We met with two or three elements of the group at least once a day, often twice a day," he said. "That's what's so wonderful."

Later, Steffy said, "If we would have waited until [Kensington] got their permit back," to start getting the training together, "then we would have been too far behind the power curve to catch up."

What comes next? In Juneau, the group is planning a nipper class for October, plus MSHA classes before that, Steffy said.

Nome is the spot for the next big training push, he said. The Department of Labor is surveying the Nome work force now to pin down what type of training is needed. Nome's Rock Creek mine is a surface gold mine, so training for that is a lot simpler, Steffy said.

After that, it might be on to Pebble, if that project materializes, and oil and gas, he said.

□ □ □

Martin "Sonny" Goenett, who grew up in Juneau, is one of the nipper class students that Kensington hired. The 45-year-old father of four has worked as a Bering Sea crabber for four years and maintenance man for 12. He said the mine training and his new job have had big impact on him.

"It's changed my life for the better," he said. "Now I have something to look forward to. I want to buy my own house and save for my kids for their education. This is it. This is the job for me."

*For more information about mine training programs in the state, contact Mary Rodman-Lopez, an employment service manager, at (907) 465-5546 or Danny Lakip, a community development specialist, at (907) 465-5547. Both are in the Juneau Job Center. They can also be reached through the job center's toll-free number, (888) 465-5872, or via email: [Mary\\_Rodman-Lopez@labor.state.ak.us](mailto:Mary_Rodman-Lopez@labor.state.ak.us) and [Danny\\_Lakip@labor.state.ak.us](mailto:Danny_Lakip@labor.state.ak.us).*

## Trends Authors



Dan Robinson is an Alaska Department of Labor & Workforce Development economist in Juneau. He specializes in statewide employment, earnings and the cost of living. To reach him, call (907) 465-6036 or email him at [Dan\\_Robinson@labor.state.ak.us](mailto:Dan_Robinson@labor.state.ak.us).



Neal Fried, a Department of Labor economist in Anchorage, specializes in the Anchorage/Mat-Su region's employment, earnings and the cost of living. To reach him, call (907) 269-4861 or email him at [Neal\\_Fried@labor.state.ak.us](mailto:Neal_Fried@labor.state.ak.us).



Neal Gilbertsen is a Department of Labor economist in Juneau who specializes in Southeast's economy and fisheries. To contact him, call (907) 465-6037 or email him at [Neal\\_Gilbertsen@labor.state.ak.us](mailto:Neal_Gilbertsen@labor.state.ak.us).



Brigitta Windisch-Cole, a Department of Labor economist in Anchorage, specializes in the employment and earnings of the Interior, Gulf Coast, Northern and Southwest economic regions. To reach her, call (907) 269-4863 or email her at [Brigitta\\_Windisch-Cole@labor.state.ak.us](mailto:Brigitta_Windisch-Cole@labor.state.ak.us).



Susan Erben, a Department of Labor publications specialist in Juneau, is editor of *Alaska Economic Trends*. To contact her, call (907) 465-6561 or email her at [Susan\\_Erben@labor.state.ak.us](mailto:Susan_Erben@labor.state.ak.us).

# Employer Resources

## Tax Credits for Employers

Employer tax credits are an important part of the diverse strategies designed to help people gain on-the-job experience and acquire better employment. The federal Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) and Welfare-to-Work (WtWTC) programs offer federal tax credits to employers that help defray payroll expenses as an incentive to hire people in several specific target groups who traditionally have difficulty finding work.

Job seekers who qualify as a member of a specific target group can gain an advantage in the job market. WOTC and WtWTC is based upon a minimum of hours worked and earnings in the first and/or second year of employment. Congressional reauthorization is pending and employers are encouraged to continue to apply. The Employment Security Division administers WOTC and WtWTC. For more information, go to <http://www.jobs.state.ak.us/wotc.htm>

**Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development  
Employer Tax Credit Programs**

**Work Opportunity and Welfare-to-Work Tax Credits**

**What are the WOTC and WtW Programs?**  
[Who is Helped by WOTC and WtW?](#)  
[How Much is the Tax Credit?](#)  
[Who are the Targeted Groups?](#)  
[Who Doesn't Qualify?](#)  
[Instructions for Employers in Alaska](#)  
[How to Get Forms](#)  
[Contacts for Additional Information](#)  
[How to Find Tax Credit Qualified Applicants](#)  
[WOTC Information Sheet](#)  
[Employer Information \(PowerPoint\)](#)

**Notice to Employers:**  
 The Tax Credit Program is still active. We are awaiting Congressional reauthorization. We are accepting applications and processing as authorized.

## Construction Plan Status Report

	Assigned to	Status Date	Status Report
<b>Objective #1 - Apprenticeship Training</b>			
<b><i>Double the number of Alaskan trade apprentices employed over five years.</i></b>			
Create an information system that tracks apprentice hire by trade to get an accurate count of apprentices employed in Alaska and for evaluating the performance of apprenticeship sponsors.	LS&S	Aug-06	Funding obtained from Alaska Legislature to enable on-line reporting by contractors. System will be operational in FY 07.
Research apprentice data for benchmarks to gauge strategy progress and assist programs to improve enrollment and retention rates.			
Market the benefits of hiring apprentices to industry employers and create employer and sponsor incentives for apprentice hire.			
Develop mentors for apprentices off the job who guide them in work and life decisions.			
Hold an annual apprenticeship conference to improve state efforts.			

## Construction Plan Status Report

	Assigned to	Status Date	Status Report
Invest in building apprenticeship training capacity as determined by occupational demand, apprentice sponsor results and experience, capability, and leverage resources.			
Develop policies that require employers to hire apprentices on state funded construction work valued over \$2 million or where construction is performed to extract natural resources.			Governor Murkowski's Administrative Order
Work with the apprenticeship programs to develop a competency-based program for new entrants.			
<b>Objective #2 - Vocational Education</b>			
<b><i>Provide more students a path from school to work in construction.</i></b>			
Perform a gap analysis study to determine barriers within public education for aligning with industry standards and increasing construction vocational education in schools.			
Develop a construction career guidance and management program for school counselors and Alaska Job Center Network vocational counselors to help advise in- and out-of-school youth.			HGTI?

## Construction Plan Status Report

	Assigned to	Status Date	Status Report
Fund a media campaign to reach out to Alaska students to attract them to the exciting, high paying work construction and engineering offers.			Underway.
Support career activities such as the Vocational Student Professional Opportunities, Career Fairs, School-to-Apprenticeship and Tech Prep.			HGTI and Youth First
Offer incentives for employers to hire youth in cooperative learning positions.			
Assist teachers in understanding and using industry standards in classroom curricula.			
Connect academic and vocational courses through articulated agreements that build a path for students leading to industry careers.			
Establish standards for entry-level academic and basic skill requirements and a common assessment tool.			
Provide summer enrichment opportunities for middle and high school students on university and training center campuses to introduce engineering and construction management programs and career opportunities.			Ongoing

### Construction Plan Status Report

	Assigned to	Status Date	Status Report
Use school facilities more effectively, such as providing students with vocational training during evenings, weekends and summer breaks.			King Career Center Initiative
Provide resources for construction vocational education courses that serve high school students, older youth, students in alterative education or those who have left school.			King Career Center Initiative
Develop an inventory of best practices through the school system.			
Develop on-the-job training (OJT) programs as an element of education internships			
<b>Objective #3 - Post-Secondary Vocational Technical Education</b>			
<b><i>Increase capacity of post-secondary institutions to supply construction workers.</i></b>			
Provide scholarships and support for youth who attend post-secondary construction.			
Include post secondary instructors in professional development opportunities.			

## Construction Plan Status Report

	Assigned to	Status Date	Status Report
Align existing programs with academic and industry standards for connections with secondary and college programs via such means as articulation agreements.			
Assess institution capacity and costs for program expansion.			
Provide more funding to support remedial education of incoming students.			
Assess ability to expand post-secondary training through links with regional training centers and industry.			
Develop articulation agreements with secondary and post-secondary schools that will allow students to move easily throughout the system.			
Develop programs that require on-the-job training (OJT) as part of the basic educational experience.			
<b>Objective #4 - Job Training</b>			
<b><i>Increase public funding for construction job training to upgrade incumbent workers skills and help new workers get work experience.</i></b>			

## Construction Plan Status Report

	Assigned to	Status Date	Status Report
Use competitive grants to increase the number of Alaskans who receive services and job training to enter or remain employed in the construction workforce.			WIA, Denali Training Fund, STEP grants.
Support the Denali Training Fund (DTF) and the State Training Employment Program (STEP) to continue providing resources for resident training.			
Increase STEP funding to provide additional job training for construction and further developing distance training, instructors, and instruction technology for mobile training.			Work in progress.
Base grant decisions on labor market analysis of demand and supply by occupations, the performance of training providers, and matching resources.			
Develop an industry-centered approach with the Alaska Job Centers Network to assist job seekers and employers in a streamlined process that expedites training and employment.			

## Construction Plan Status Report

	Assigned to	Status Date	Status Report
Assist youth and adult job seekers eligible for Individual Training Accounts to access training resources at Alaska Job Centers for industry training.			
Refer students in job training who require education enrichment to an adult education provider.			
<b>Objective #5 - Rural Training Centers</b>			
<b><i>Increase capacity of rural training centers to host construction training.</i></b>			
Assess centers for meeting common training standards, student performance, connectivity with regional education and capacity to provide construction training, anticipated job growth in the area and connectivity with other secondary, post-secondary and apprenticeship programs.			
Develop common standards, assessment instruments and written agreements between the AKDOLWD and Rural Training Centers for developing industry training programs that serve rural residents.			
Issue competitive grants to rural training centers to help support operations and training.			

## Construction Plan Status Report

	Assigned to	Status Date	Status Report
Evaluate center performance for improvements.			
<b>Objective #6 - Higher Education</b>			
<b><i>Students entering college select and complete engineering and construction management degree and non-degree programs to meet the needs of construction and resource development employers.</i></b>			
Provide financial scholarships and incentives for students who select engineering and construction management programs at the University.			
Prepare special publication of existing financial aid available for engineering and construction management students.			
Work with industry and private donors to develop new scholarship opportunities.			
Work with the state to develop needs-based financial aid opportunities for students.			

### Construction Plan Status Report

	Assigned to	Status Date	Status Report
Work with high schools to develop appropriate curricula in math and science to enable students to successfully enter post-secondary engineering and construction management programs.			
Develop mentoring and tutoring programs within the University of Alaska system to increase student success and retention.			
Seek industry-sponsored externships that provide teachers and students exposure to the work in the industry and provide opportunities for industry experts to teach in schools.			
Resource support programs that assist students in overcoming barriers to completing demanding courses of study such as higher math and science courses.			
<b>Objective #7 - Adult Basic Education (ABE)</b>			
<b><i>Increase the number of adult basic education students who receive construction job training in a defined path from initial skill acquisition to employment.</i></b>			

### Construction Plan Status Report

	Assigned to	Status Date	Status Report
Provide ABE students with career information and guidance for construction.			
Develop mentors to assist students on the job and when they are off work.			
Have students complete a standard assessment before applying to a job-training program.			
Resource training that helps adults increase English reading comprehension and math skills joined with work based job training for construction jobs.			
Improve assessment of participant needs and design adult learning programs that are adjusted for cultural differences and learning styles.			
Assess ABE providers for ability to link with construction job training.			
Increase partnership grants for ABE and job training providers for construction job training that result in ABE clients being employed.			
Inventory community ABE programs, assess ABE instructor availability and determine best practices for optimal and innovative approaches to service delivery.			

### Construction Plan Status Report

	Assigned to	Status Date	Status Report
Develop appropriate ABE training materials to meet construction skill training requirements.			
<b>Objective #8 - Instructor Development</b>			
<b><i>Increase the number of qualified vocational education teachers and industry trainers in Alaska.</i></b>			
Provide grants for train-the-trainer initiatives that help vocational teachers and industry trainers meet industry, academic, and government standards.			HGTI.
Develop industry employer and educator externship opportunities for teachers to experience real work settings and for employers that want to assist teachers in schools.			HGTI.
Provide matching grants for industry to assist with instructor development costs.			
Develop a network among basic education teachers, vocational teachers and industry instructors for improving training delivery.			
Provide instructor courses to meet requirements for training and be more effective trainers.			