



Alaska Workforce Investment Board
Alaska Department of Labor & Workforce Development
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Executive Director's Report

May 2004

Legislative Update

The three pieces of legislation below are of interest to AWIB members.

HB 413/SB 283 Reverse Sweep legislation: This legislation would take money that was "swept" from several sub accounts, including the STEP program, into the budget reserve account in late 2003 and return it to the sub accounts, including STEP. Both bills are in free conference committee and the outcome is not known at this time.

SCSHB 123 Allocation of TVEP Money: This bill was amended in Senate Finance Committee. Four percent was added for Yuut Elitnaurviat, Inc. People's Learning Center. The amount was taken from the University of Alaska's allocation. The bill is currently in Senate Rules awaiting a hearing then will be scheduled for floor action. By the time this report is given the bill may be on its way to the Governor.

HB 559 STEP Continuance: The bill was amended on the House floor to include a sunset date of June 30, 2008. The bill is currently awaiting a Senate Finance Committee hearing (5/6/04). This bill may be out of Senate Finance, through Senate Rules and on the Senate Floor by the time this report is given to the committee.

State Unified Plan

Staff is laying the groundwork for the next State Unified Plan document in anticipation of the federal DOL Employment & Training Administration's guidelines that may be issued at any time following the reauthorization of the Workforce Investment Act. Alaska's current plan is in effect through June of 2005. To ensure that the next planning cycle incorporates both public and private input as well as direction from the AWIB, we are planning for an extensive preparation and review process. We are meeting to review the current document and to recommend areas to look at for content and format of the next plan.

MOU with Native Organizations

The Workforce Investment Act requires that the board negotiate a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Partners of the One-Stop

system. Within the Act are mandatory and voluntary partner organizations. Among the list of partner agencies are recipients of WIA title I organizations that are operating Native American Employment Programs (sec.662.200). In Alaska the Alaska Native non-profit organizations are recipients of the funds used to operate Native American Employment Programs.

There are four main elements to an MOU. First, the MOU must describe how costs will be allocated and shared. This means that if an Alaska Native and American Indian Program are physically in a One-stop there must be agreement on how to cover the costs incurred by each partner agency including the Alaska Native and American Indian Program. Second, the MOU must describe how the partner agencies will refer individuals between the programs. This is intended to limit the confusion of an individual going from one program to the next. Third, the MOU must detail the duration of the agreement and procedures for amending the agreement. Fourth, the MOU must describe the services available. As an option the MOU may contain other provisions that are consistent with WIA. For example we included a provision about accessibility in the MOU we recently negotiated with the required state agencies.

I'll be meeting with Julie Kitka, President of the Alaska Federation of Natives, later in May to discuss several issues, including the MOU.

Federal Grant Request

Diedre Bailey, Youth Programs Manager/author and Karen Backlund, Program

Coordinator/editor have submitted a FBO/CBO grant request to the USDOL on behalf of the AWIB and Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development. We are requesting \$500,000 to engage Faith Based Organizations (FBOs) and Community Based Organizations (CBOs) as partners in the workforce development system. Seven census areas (Fairbanks, Nome, Bethel, Dillingham, Southeast Fairbanks, Mat-Su and portions of Anchorage) have been targeted as potential service areas based upon the federal priority of service to low-income, high unemployment participants. A majority of funding will be sub-contracted out to small social service provider FBOs/CBOs as stipulated in the RFP.

The federal project is in response to the President's High-Growth Job Training Initiative. "The foundation of this initiative is the creation of partnerships to work collaboratively in the development of solutions to the human resource challenges facing our growth industries while developing maximum access for American workers to gain the competencies they need to obtain good jobs." Alaska's project design includes a participant

driven case management model and use of resource mapping tools such as Community Youth mapping, outreach and use of intermediary organizations. It aim is to identify prospective partners as well as promote linkages between local One-Stops and these partners. Health care, construction and business services are the targeted industries.

Industry Forum

The AWIB has sponsored several industry forums, including forums on health, transportation and construction. The Executive Committee may want to consider planning another one and scheduling it for the fall. The draft-marketing plan calls for declaring September as Workforce Development Month and an industry-focused forum might nicely compliment that event. September is a busy month, so the committee may want to consider October or November as another option. Instead of choosing a particular industry, the committee may want to consider a forum focused on Industry Skills Standards and/or Youth Employability Skills in order to roll out a major strategy or jump-start the discussion and get business on board.

Regional Councils

The board has received four written proposals for regional councils from the North Slope, Interior, Southeast, and Southwest regions. The North Slope's proposal was incomplete, and we returned it with a request for additional information. The Interior's proposal was more developed, and the Board's Policy & Planning Committee gave it a conditional endorsement pending receipt of additional information. The Southeast proposal was received too late for the committee to properly review it, so a decision was postponed. Three committee members reviewed it on their own, and sent e-mails approving it. The Southwest region's proposal was received recently and staff is currently providing technical assistance. Anchorage and the Kenai Peninsula submitted letters of intent to submit proposals. The Northwest Arctic Workforce Development and Education Consortium submitted an unsigned resolution resolving to serve as the regional council for their region.

Committee Reports

Assessment & Evaluation

The committee last met on April 21. Substantial progress has been made with regard to the Clearinghouse. The Denali Commission has agreed to an arrangement whereby it will not only continue to host the database indefinitely, but contribute as a partner in the evolution of the Clearinghouse by funding the development of grants management functionality and other enhancements. The contractor for these

modifications expects to begin work by mid-May and deploy the improvements in August or September. The committee is developing internal and external assessment questions and evaluating the effectiveness of performance measures across the workforce system. Committee members are considering the use of surveys to better illustrate the status the various components of the system. The next regular meeting will be on Wednesday, May 19, at noon.

Employment & Placement

The Employment & Placement Committee has not met since the board meeting. The next meeting is scheduled for May 26. The primary agenda item is development of the MOU with Alaskan Native organizations and the pilot projects that will demonstrate integration of the native service providers with the One-Stop system.

Policy & Planning

The Policy & Planning Committee met on April 30 and received a progress report on Regional Council development. The committee agreed to add a section to the proposal template asking for their proposed operations plan. They discussed the issue of requesting that proposals include letters of endorsement from a majority of communities in the region. However, the committee decided that if the entity submitting a proposal can demonstrate they have buy-in (like representative membership), they don't need to include letters of support from those communities. The committee also asked that staff send letters to Anchorage and Kenai, thanking them for their letters of intent and offering them technical assistance as they develop their proposals. They recommended forming a task force on communications between the board, the One-Stops and the regional councils and drafting a protocol. Ms. Ward announced the Kenai group is meeting on Monday, and said she'd summarize information she's received with the group.

The committee also reviewed a marketing plan. They decided on several actions, including:

- Develop a team within the Alaska Department of Labor & Workforce Development to coordinate and collaborate on marketing efforts, particularly to build on the Employment Security Division's National Business Consortium efforts and the Job Center's Business Connection.
- Continue to develop the proposal to have September declared Alaska Workforce Development Month and design events and materials to promote it.

- Ask board members to make presentations to business and industry groups to educate them about AWIB strategies.
- Use the AWIB's *Calendar of Events* to determine what at which meetings the AWIB should have a presence.
- Research business publications in the state to find out what workforce-related editorial topics are planned so the AWIB can contribute articles to education business and industry about what the AWIB can do for them.

Workforce Readiness

The workforce readiness committee met on Tuesday, May 4 with Brynn Keith to review draft spreadsheets on occupational priorities. It then formed a subcommittee to delve further into the defining of occupational priorities and policy implications of same. It will report back to the full committee with recommendations.

The Benchmark Tool Task Force has developed a tool that is being field tested in both Mat-Su and the People's Learning Center. After receiving feedback from Kris Forrester and Janelle Vanasse the committee will make revisions and then pilot the instrument on a broader basis. The use as a self-evaluation tool is affirmed by all involved. We are still considering how it would be used in the evaluation of a competitive RFP process.

AWIB has a limited solicitation out to hire a contractor to help VTEP move through the next steps as discussed in the Juneau AWIB meeting. Sally Speiker has also issued an invitation to VTEP members to partner with her in the application of capacity building funds through the statewide TECH PREP grant that is on the street.

Nominations Committee

As most of you know, Andy Baker was elected Chair and David Stone was elected Vice Chair at our April 7 board meeting. Dr. Alice Galvin will now serve as Past Chair. The ad hoc nominations committee has completed its work.