

# Alaska's Program Year 2008

## WIA Annual Report



State of Alaska  
Governor Sean Parnell  
October 1, 2009



**ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF LABOR  
& WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT**

P.O. Box 111149, Juneau, AK 99811-1149

# STATE OF ALASKA

## Department of Labor and Workforce Development

OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER

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October 1, 2009

The Honorable Hilda L. Solis  
Secretary of Labor  
U.S. Department of Labor  
200 Constitution Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20210

Dear Madam Secretary:

On behalf of Governor Sean Parnell, I am pleased to submit Alaska's Workforce Investment Act Annual Performance Report for Federal Year (PY) 2008. In addition to the enclosed narrative, the report is supported with requisite performance data separately submitted under the Employment and Training Administration's Enterprise Information Management System.

This report highlights the success of Alaska's workforce development system, attributable to innovative training strategies, most notably those developed with business and industry to focus on high wage, high demand occupations for Alaska's gas line.

Alaska was able to meet or exceed all of the federal performance measures negotiated under the Workforce Investment Act Title 1-B programs, and most significantly, integrated workforce initiatives into the education and economic development delivery system. This partnership will increase Alaska's capacity to respond to a quickly changing economy.

Thank you for your continued consideration and support.

Sincerely,



Clark Bishop  
Commissioner

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# Workforce Investment Act

## Title 1-B Programs in Alaska



### Introduction and State Overview

Alaska's economic climate grew cooler over the past year with an end to the two-decade long period of employment growth. With rising unemployment rates and longer job search intervals, Alaska's labor force was in more need of assistance from the workforce investment system. In Program Year (PY) 2008, the system responded and was able to meet or exceed all of the federal performance measures negotiated under the Workforce Investment Act Title I-B programs. The success is attributable to innovative training strategies, most notably those identified in Alaska Gasline Inducement Act (AGIA) Training Strategic Plan, developed with business and industry to focus on high wage, high demand occupations for Alaska's gas line.

With the state legislature authorizing receipt of American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funding, new strategies ensured there were sufficient projects to keep Alaskans training and working. In other parts of the state, entrepreneurship became elemental to revitalizing local economies. Programs such as the Rural Outreach Program for Entrepreneurs, developed with resources set aside from Workforce Investment Act allocations, are fundamental support for this economic development strategy.

The state's registered apprenticeship, particularly school-to-apprenticeship, and Career and Technical Education programs continued as priorities in PY 2008. Despite the increase of registered apprenticeship as a workforce development tool, technical assistance and additional enhancements are needed to fully integrate it into the service delivery system overall.

With as many efforts enduring between program years, the dramatic changes often associated with new funding initiatives did not occur in Program Year 2008. However, the year was marked by continued commitment to resource and program alignment, and in some instances, such as with the State Training and Employment Program, support increased through projected revenue gains. Perhaps most significant, initiatives that originated in the state's workforce investment system were integrated into education and economic development service delivery approaches in PY 2008.

As the full impacts of the national recession catch up in Alaska, the state will continue to face new challenges. For Alaska to maximize economic growth and face the employment needs of its labor force, it needs to prepare current and future workers to meet the skill requirements of the ever-changing economy. The success of that effort will

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depend upon the state's capacity for creative solutions developed in partnership with business and industry.

This report provides a snapshot-in-time of the state's workforce development programs and investment systems, including those that have an impact beyond the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Title I-B programs. The Alaska Youth First Initiative, the Alaska Gasline Inducement Act training strategies, and the State Training and Employment Program represent significant investments and provide flexibility and innovation in meeting the state's workforce needs. The federally funded employment and training programs, however, remain foundational in encouraging the state's collective capacity and expertise to prepare and train a local workforce, and are proven strategies as the first line of defense in weathering economic downturns.

## SUCCESS STORIES

### Victoria Whitney

Victoria Whitney came to the Career Support and Training office in the midst of a long, legal separation with mounting bills creating many obstacles to finding self-sustaining employment. She was interested in health and safety and she held some certificates on her own. Victoria received assistance through the WIA Dislocated Worker Program as a displaced homemaker. She attended Northern Industrial Training's Construction Equipment Training program. She obtained her CDL/A, loader, dozer, and excavator certificates.

After training, Victoria was hired at an oil and gas contractor as their Health and Safety Supervisor earning \$25.00 per hour with full benefits.



## Adult and Dislocated Worker Programs

Managing programs effectively requires setting performance goals and measuring outcomes. Alaska's WIA annual performance outcomes for PY 2008 reflect a commitment to continuous improvement of a coordinated and comprehensive workforce development system, and the hard work and dedication of workforce development professionals at all levels. The resulting achievements reported herein reflect a successful partnership of federal, state, local and business community stakeholders collaborating to create a workforce environment conducive to innovation, economic growth and prosperity.

New systems of monitoring, participant file review, and in-person technical assistance launched in PY 2008 identified areas of program strength and those that need improvement. This led to timely individualized and specific staff training being provided. The reviews also provided an opportunity to fine tune processes and procedures. The state-wide review revealed that each of the five regions has unique best practices. These best practices include new service delivery strategies, marketing and outreach to

employers, coordinating with Alaska Native partners and more. Many of the best practices can be replicated and adopted by all regions.

During PY 2008 the department made changes to improve performance within its WIA Adult and Dislocated Worker programs. Career Support and Training Services (CSTS) delivery staff held statewide discussions about performance, use and design of forms, policy development and problem resolution. CSTS managers were also called upon to increase their respective case loads while continuing to provide quality customer service.

Changes in the service delivery system included realignment of program management in the One-Stops designed to place case managers in closer communications with subject matter experts and solve complex Individual Training Account (ITA) issues relating to blended services and dual enrollment. The department determined that alignment of services is both an opportunity and a tool to effectively organize staff and facilities in a manner that further streamlines customer service delivery and capitalizes on the strengths of staff, location and technology capabilities.

The state also transferred funds from the Dislocated Worker to the Adult program and increased the limit of funding per participant. The combination of all these successful initiatives increased the number of participants in both programs and had a positive impact in six of the eight WIA performance measures.

Alaska's WIA Adult program exceeded program performance goals on all four measurements during PY 2008 and year over year comparison shows an increase in three of the four measures. During PY 2008, WIA Adult program participation increased three percent to 949 at a cost of \$2,909,344 or \$3,065 per participant. Adult participants achieving employment earned an average of \$16,756.00 during the second and third quarters after program exit. After leaving the program 67.4 percent of the participants received a credential, 79.2 percent became employed and 85.2 percent retained their employment for at least six months.

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### WIA Adult Program Year 2008 July 1, 2008 – June 30, 2009

Program Performance Measure	Negotiated Performance	PY 2008 Actual Performance	80% of Negotiated Performance	PY 2007 Performance
Entered Employment Rate	74.5%	79.2%	59.2%	70.4%
Employment Retention Rate	85.0%	85.2%	68.0%	86.5%
Average Earnings	\$16,250	\$16,756	\$13,000	\$14,689
Employment and Credential Rate	64.0%	67.4%	51.2%	58.3%

SOURCE: Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Division of Business Partnerships

Alaska's WIA Dislocated Worker program exceeded program performance goals on one of the four measurements and successfully met the remaining three. US DOL considers the performance measurement met if the performance exceeds 80 percent of the annually negotiated goal. Better yet, year over year program comparison shows an increase in three of the four measures. With the downturn in the economy, a steady flow of dislocated workers streamed into the CSTS offices increasing program participation seven percent to 750 at a cost of \$3,709,865 or \$4,946 per participant. Dislocated Worker participants achieving employment earned an average of \$20,585.00 during the second and third quarters after program exit. After leaving the program 69.3 percent of the participants received a credential, 80.3 percent became employed and 88.3 percent retained their employment for at least six months.

## WIA Dislocated Worker Program Year 2008

July 1, 2008 –  
June 30, 2009

Program Performance Measure	Negotiated Performance	PY 2008 Actual Performance	80% of Negotiated Performance	PY 2007 Performance
Entered Employment Rate	81.0%	80.3%	64.8%	75.8%
Retention Rate	88.5%	88.3%	70.8%	88.8%
Average Earnings	\$20,200	\$20,585	\$16,160	\$19,972
Employment and Credential Rate	74.0%	69.3%	59.2%	63.6%

SOURCE: Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Division of Business Partnerships

This past year's success is due to the department's insistence that service delivery staff receive real time labor market information utilizing ALEXSystem so program participants can make informed career decisions based on up-to-date information on wages, the skills, and educational levels required for in-demand occupations. Additionally, WorkKeys® and KeyTrain® Career Ready 101 are tools provided to staff to assess a participant's career readiness skills and match them to jobs at their level of expertise and personal interest.

With the addition of these tools, staff can accurately identify training and skill areas needing improvement because the fit between skills and the demands of the job has a direct impact on a person's ability to gain and retain employment. The department remains committed to continuing the talent development of Alaska's workforce with an overarching commitment to ensure that the staff delivering these important services have the support and tools they need.

Besides across the board increases in WIA program participants this year, more employers used the workforce system's services and a greater number of job seekers sought services through internet-based points of access. Additional adults received services through other funding sources, including the WIA Dislocated Worker National Response Demonstration, the Grant Alaska Pipeline Worker Training Project, which served 693 participants, and the State Training and Employment Program (STEP), which served 2,202 participants.

To address the challenge of serving seasonal workers, Alaska was granted a waiver of the WIA performance measure pertaining to retention in unsubsidized employment six months after entry into employment for those communities in the state with high unemployment rates in the off-season. A three-month retention performance measure for seasonal workers in locations where unemployment is greater than seven percent at the beginning of a calendar year was approved. Application of this waiver increased both WIA Adult

## SUCCESS STORIES

### Sherron Collins

Sherron Collins came to CSTS for help with tuition for her final semester of the UAA nursing program. Supportive services were made available to help with the additional costs for meals, transportation, and lodging during her training program as well as the final semester of tuition and fees.

Sherron Collins graduated, passed the National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX), and accepted employment as a registered nurse at Alaska Psychiatric Institute in Anchorage where she was targeting employment. She is working full time with benefits at a starting wage of \$26.88. She thanked staff for the financial and moral support during the final stages of her training plan.



and Dislocated Worker programs' Employment Retention Rates by 5.4 and 8.0 percentage points respectively.

Alaska continues to focus on transitioning workers into high wage, high growth and demand-driven jobs. The department will continue to monitor and provide oversight and technical assistance activities to address deficiencies, strive for performance excellence and improvement, and make internal systematic improvements when program enhancement or evolution is required.

Proactive strategies to ensure continued improvement of the Dislocated Worker program Employment and Credential Rate include: strengthening the partnership with the program operator; increasing case manager training on the WIA definition of a credential; and ascertaining whether or not a credential is appropriately awarded post training and documented in the Management Information System.

Alaska has a relatively small list of eligible training providers, which restricts access to training. Going forward the department is seeking a WIA waiver designed to increase training capacity by extending the initial eligibility to two-years for training providers on the WIA Eligible Training Providers List (ETPL). Training programs are lost from the ETPL when they do not have enough participants and/or time to develop a proven track record of performance. Alaska has reciprocal agreements with other states and can send participants outside of Alaska. However, this increases cost and lessens chances for participants to successfully complete training. Through approval of this waiver, Alaska expects to have more time to provide technical assistance to training providers to meet performance standards.

The department continues to solidify its commitments to state, local and private-sector partners, refine strategies and increase the responsiveness of the system. A new waiver will increase employer reimbursement amounts for participants in on-the-job-training and decrease employer match for customized training based on a sliding scale for business size. Initiatives highlighted in this report will strengthen the performance of the adult workforce investment system.

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*This past year's success is due to the department's insistence that service delivery staff receive real time labor market information so program participants can make informed career decisions based on up-to-date information on wages and the skills and educational level required for in-demand occupations.*

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## SUCCESS STORIES

### Sheena Nelson

Sheena Nelson of Yakutat was one of the first four Alaska-trained Dental Health Aide Therapists to graduate on December 12, 2008.

Sheena completed a rigorous two-year medical training in Anchorage followed by training in Bethel as a Dental Health Aide Therapist (DHAT). She then took on a three-month "preceptorship" at the Juneau SEARHC clinic, and successfully went on to work as a DHAT in her village of 600, at the newly constructed Yakutat Community Health Center earning about \$47,000 her first year.

Dental Health Aide Therapists are qualified to do basic dentistry, such as filling cavities and applying fluoride treatments. The DHAT program was created because Alaska has a shortage of dentists in rural Alaska, and many communities may have a visiting dentist in town just a couple of times a year.

"I'm excited to be able to go back and serve my community," Sheena said during a phone interview before graduation. "More and more, I can't wait to start. I've grown a lot and matured a lot, and it's been a great learning experience."

Funding for Shenna's training was WIA Adult funds as well as many partner resources such as the Alaska Native Health Tribal Health Consortium (ANTHC), the University of Washington School of Dentistry, her tribal corporation and the medical clinic in her village.





## Youth Program

Alaska's Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Youth program was an integral component of the state's workforce investment system providing comprehensive services with a total of 1,124 eligible in- and out-of-school, at-risk youth in PY 2008. In addition to the WIA Youth program, a summer youth employment program was implemented serving 383 youth in PY 2008. The emphasis this year was to increase access and exposure of youth to high paying jobs designated priority industries by the Alaska Workforce Investment Board. In PY 2008, service to out-of-school youth increased from 54.7 percent to 67.9 percent for a total of 763 out-of-school youth. Youth are served in nearly every part of Alaska.

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The enrollment of younger youth ages 14-18 remained significant at 74.3 percent. The program focuses on keeping young people in school and provides options for youth who dropped out. The WIA Youth program is a parallel system that focuses on career and technical education. Youth seeking support from the WIA Youth program are interested in employment that provides a sustainable wage. Youth grantees focus on encouraging youth to

return to a formal education setting if at all possible, but also provide options for high school completion through diploma and GED programs. Connections to alternative schools and cyber-based programs increased this past year. Below is a synopsis of the performance of the youth program for PY 2008:

### WIA Youth Program Year 2008 July 1, 2008– June 30, 2009

Program Performance Measure	Negotiated Performance	PY 2008 Actual Performance	80% of Negotiated Performance	PY 2007 Actual Performance
<b>Younger Youth (14-18)</b>				
Skill Attainment	85.5%	93.2%	68.4%	89.9%
Diploma/GED	65.5%	69.1%	52.4%	62.8%
Retention and Placement	64.0%	60.2%	51.2%	59.2%
<b>Older Youth (19-21)</b>				
Entered Employment Rate	74.0%	72.1%	59.2%	74.5%
Credential Rate	53.5%	52.5%	42.8%	61.8%
Employment Retention	72.0%	83.6%	57.6%	73.1%
Earnings Change in Six Months	\$4,100	\$7,424	\$3,280	\$4,261
<b>Common Measures</b>				
Placement in Employment or Education	N/A	60.3%	N/A	69.0%
Attainment of Degree or Certificate	N/A	51.2%	N/A	60.0%
Literacy/ Numeracy Gains	N/A	35.4%	N/A	21.7%

SOURCE: Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Division of Business Partnerships

## Younger Youth Measures

All of the Youth Performance measures were met by exceeding 80 percent of the negotiated performance measures. The Skill Attainment measure exceeded at 93.1 percent. The graduation rate for youth with a diploma or GED for the WIA Youth program was at 69.1 percent, which is higher than the graduation rate for the State of Alaska Secondary Education program at 63 percent. This was an increase from last year. Services to “neediest” youth have increased significantly; over 80 percent of the youth served qualified as “neediest.” Two specific youth populations are now receiving services in residential programs for Juvenile Justice in Nome and Juneau. Youth were served in the residential program at McLaughlin Youth Center for a number of years, and similar programs expanded to two other residential facilities. A program for youth in foster care and foster youth alumni developed. Both of these populations are the most at-risk for becoming a part of adult corrections. Several grantees specialized in providing a sense of community and developing protective factors with these populations. Alaska Native youth participation increased significantly with an in-house One-Stop providing comprehensive service to youth.

Likewise, there is a high participation rate of pregnant or parenting teens. Forty percent of the participants served by one semi-urban grantee are pregnant or parenting. A number of these participants have more than one child. The goal with these participants is to develop a career ladder leading to self-sufficiency.

The significant number of homeless and runaway youth in the program has had an effect on the Younger Youth Retention Rate. This measure was met at 60.2 percent. The strategy this year is to stabilize living arrangements so participants can function more effectively in the workplace. It is determined that housing is a major barrier to job retention.

*Kenny Schroeder*

**SUCCESS  
STORIES**

Kenny Schroeder, a Kachemak Bay Campus (UAA Rural Satellite) WIA out-of-school youth participant, was funded with an Individual Training Account (ITA) and graduated from AVTEC's

Information Technology program in May of this year.

He went back to Homer and immediately found a job. In July Kachemak

Bay Campus' IT position opened and Kenny applied, interviewed and was offered the position starting at \$20+/hr. with health care, vacation and sick leave plus a retirement plan.



**SUCCESS  
STORIES**

*Sarah Foshe*

Sarah Foshe is a young woman with determination. Sarah is firm about being able to provide for her and her son. She is unwavering about building a solid work history, and her goal is to further her education in the medical field by earning credentials in coding and billing.

As a WIA youth participant, Sarah completed a phlebotomy course through Alaska Vocational Medical Training. She is currently working full time for Southeast Alaska Pathology at Mat-Su Regional Medical Center.



Sigourney Walker is a young Alaska Native woman who survived a traumatic brain injury in 2006 and was hospitalized for an extended period at Providence Hospital. This shaped her decision to pursue a career in health care. Last summer she completed three job shadows at Providence Medical Center in Anchorage in Pediatric Intensive Care, Neuro-Rehab and Harp Therapy. She successfully completed her second year at the University of Alaska Fairbanks with a GPA of 3.95. She received an award as Outstanding Freshman Chemistry Student in Spring Semester 2008.

This year, she continued to work as a tutor-mentor with participants from ACCESS Alaska and during the Summer Youth Employment Program at Calypso Farms in addition to pursuing her own academic goals. She worked with other WIA participants as a mentor and tutor at ACCESS Alaska serving youth experiencing disabilities. She is a wonderful role model and example to those experiencing major barriers.

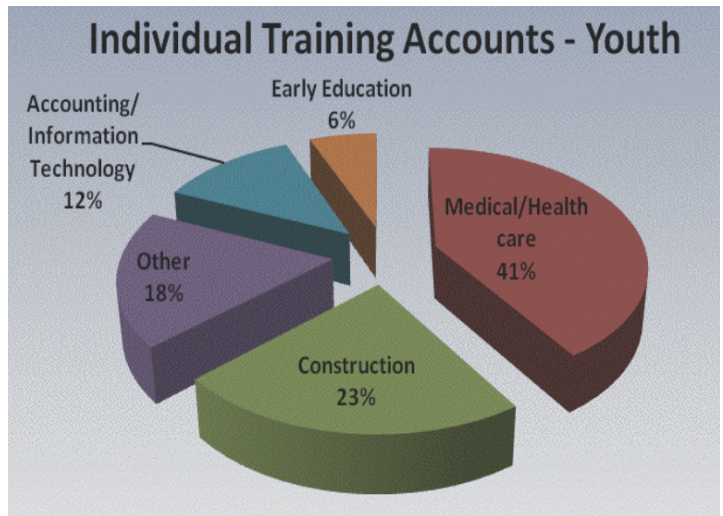


## Older Youth Measures

The Older Youth Entered Employment measure was met at 72.1 percent. The department's emphasis is on apprenticeship programs and enhanced career planning and development with assistance from the Career Guides funded under the Alaska Youth First initiative. The Credential and Employment measure was met at 52.5 percent. A waiver from the Employment and Training Administration allowing the use of Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) for youth continues to promote a high quality employment training program in priority industries in Alaska. This has also been a factor influencing the Older Youth Retention measure. Alaska exceeded this measure by nearly ten points at 83.6 percent. The Earning Change measure nearly doubled at \$7,424. This is 181.07 percent of the negotiated performance measure of \$4,100.

## Individual Training Accounts Alaska Workforce Investment Board Priorities

The waiver for youth to receive ITAs increased the self-sufficiency of young people through preparation in high demand, high wage jobs. Health care was the number one category for ITAs funded, with construction being ranked second. Nearly all of the ITAs were in priority industries as defined by the Alaska Workforce Investment Board. Below is a chart depicting the percentage of youth completing and ITA in each category.



SOURCE: Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Division of Business Partnerships

## American Recovery & Reinvestment Act (ARRA) Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP)

The Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) was a windfall benefit program for the grantees located in communities across Alaska. Three-hundred and eighty-three participants were served in PY 2008. A waiver was approved by the Employment and Training Administration to allow PY 2008 grantees to receive ARRA companion grants to serve youth.

Eight companion grantees were established to serve eligible youth ages 14-24 through the ARRA-SYEP program. Special populations included youth with significant mental health issues and youth experiencing disabilities throughout the state. A number of “green” projects were operated to include a bird refuge, a botanical garden and environmental program with a number of tribal villages in the Copper River region.

Some youth also worked on a General Education Diploma (GED) in addition to employment placements. Youth were placed in internships with the Alaska Department of Natural Resources, Division of Forestry, and with the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities.

### Summary

The focus for youth programs is to assist youth in accessing resources, developing written plans and setting career goals. All youth need a diploma or a General Education Diploma (GED) to pursue apprenticeship programs, the military or higher education. This is a major focus of the WIA Youth program and collaboration is increasing between the Adult Basic Education programs that provide the GED tutoring and testing. This increased the diploma/GED rate to over 69 percent, exceeding the federal measure. One youth provider has a database of over 200 employers that are used on a regular basis for internships, job shadowing, mentoring and work experience. There is a statewide effort to develop a menu of certificate programs that are relevant to Alaska.

Some creative approaches that are part of the system in Alaska to serve youth include the development of career academies. There has been participation by WIA youth in academies that are intensive explorations in a particular field in health care, construction, tourism, and entrepreneurship.

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## SUCCESS STORIES

*Jade Hartley*

Nine Star Enterprises, Inc.

Jade Hartley was a WIA participant at Nine Star Enterprises, Inc. She was placed in a subsidized work experience in the accounting firm, Carter and Associates.

Jade has not only maintained her job with the firm, but is now the office manager for Carter and Associates, one of the foremost accounting, tax, and economic development firms in the Anchorage area. Jade is a true success story.



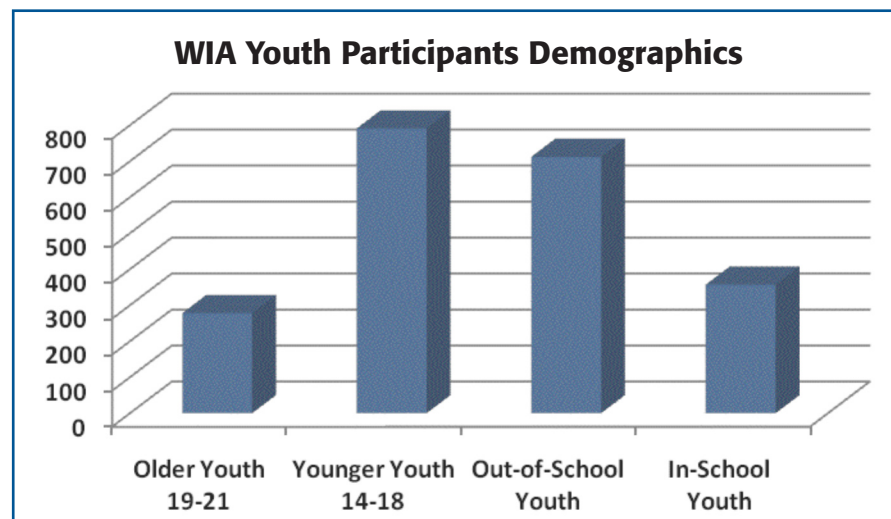
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*Some creative approaches that are part of the system in Alaska to serve youth include the career academies.*

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Sharing and supporting among grantees both informally and formally increased the quality of services to youth. Monthly teleconferences also provide a venue for providers to share success stories and challenges, as tools for training and conveying information, and as a roundtable to gather best practices.

Participants in the WIA Youth program are primarily younger (ages 14-18), out-of-school youth. This is attributable to the large number of drop-outs in the secondary school system. Young people start recognizing that without a diploma or GED, options are limited. The diploma or equivalent is required for apprenticeship programs, entrance into many technical schools, regional training centers, the military, and most institutions of higher learning. Reading, mathematics, and writing are essential to successful outcomes in any field of employment. The WIA Youth program offers support toward successfully completing a traditional diploma in addition to alternative diplomas such as the GED and the High School Completion program offered at Nine Star Enterprises, Inc.



SOURCE: Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Division of Business Partnerships

In summary, the Title I-B Youth program is the foundation of Alaska's workforce development program for youth. Youth programs are highly valued and supported from the governor to the state legislature.

## Statewide Activities

WIA Statewide Activities grants, programs and expenditures during PY 2008 are consistent with the AWIB's priority industries and Alaska's WIA state plan. The focus this past year continued to be on funding required activities as described in federal regulations. Expenditures for required activities include: assessing the extent to which activities funded under subtitle B of Title I of WIA formula grants and carried out through the AJCN One-Stop delivery system are used to provide high-quality, outcome-focused workforce development services in a demand-driven and fully integrated service environment, consistent with the State's WIA Plan; disseminating the Eligible Training Provider List; providing Labor Market Information (LMI); AWIB oversight; and assisting in the operation of the One-Stop delivery systems.

Expenditures for allowable activities during PY 2008 included: development and implementation of activities designed to measure and improve the delivery, effectiveness and results of the Alaska Job Center Network (AJCN) workforce development activities; staff training, capacity building and technical assistance activities within the AJCN; supporting the state's annual apprenticeship conference; youth services; and state administration costs.

The Cook Inlet Tribal Council (CITC), a Cook Inlet Region, Inc. (CIRI) affiliated nonprofit corporation, received a \$50,000 WIA Statewide Activities grant from the department to coordinate a jobs program designed to leverage \$200,000 in partners' resources and further the collective goals of increasing minority hire, creating good jobs for Alaskans, reducing unemployment, aligning regional economic development activities and supporting Alaska's employers through the provision of a trained local workforce at the *Tikahtnu Commons*. *Tikahtnu Commons* is a new regional retail and entertainment center on a 95-acre parcel of CIRI land in northeast Anchorage. When completed, the \$100-million-plus mall is expected to include 12 to 15 major retail stores and a total of 60 to 75 businesses. The first building constructed was the 171,000-square-foot Target store that opened on October 12, 2008. CITC placed 14 participants into apprenticeship or journeyman positions during PY 2008 and another 16 into pre-apprenticeship construction training. Additionally, 21 more project participants received training and were hired into retail or management positions.

## Statewide Activities Categories PY 2008 Expenditures

One-Stop Delivery, Capacity Building, Staff Development and Technical Assistance	\$ 347,108.81
Research and Development	\$ 245,191.21
Evaluation	\$ 159,390.55
Eligible Training Provider List and Management Information System	\$ 135,956.02
Youth Services	\$200,499.73
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$1,088,146.32</b>

SOURCE: Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Division of Business Partnerships

*The diploma or equivalent is required for apprenticeship programs, entrance into many technical schools, regional training centers, the military, and most institutions of higher learning. Reading, mathematics, and writing are essential to successful outcomes in any field of employment.*

## Alaska's WIA Annual Expenditures Report June 30, 2009

WIA Title 1-B Funding Breakouts	Available	Expended/Obligated	Percent Expended	Remaining Balance
Adult Program Funds	\$2,484,608.00	\$2,483,785.00	99.97%	\$823.00
Adult Carry In Funds	546,082.00	421,465.00	77.18%	124,617.00
Dislocated Worker Program Funds	3,973,451.00	3,012,937.00	75.83%	960,514.00
Dislocated Worker Carry In Funds	953,963.00	693,652.15	72.71%	260,310.85
Youth Program Funds	2,484,608.00	2,382,898.18	95.91%	101,709.82
Youth Carry In Funds	615,162.00	407,918.00	66.31%	207,244.00
Local Administration Funds	1,006,711.00	935,452.17	92.92%	71,258.83
Local Administration Carry In Funds	312,756.00	18,418.24	5.89%	294,337.76
Rapid Response Funds	908,038.00	620,685.01	68.35%	287,352.99
Rapid Response Carry In Funds	91,607.00	3,568.62	3.90%	88,038.38
Statewide Activities Funds	1,936,791.00	1,161,139.00	59.95%	775,652.00
Statewide Activities Carry In Funds	1,766,317.00	339,602.00	19.23%	1,426,715.00
<b>Total All Fund Sources</b>	<b>\$17,080,094.00</b>	<b>\$12,481,520.37</b>	<b>73.08%</b>	<b>\$4,598,573.63</b>

SOURCE: Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Division of Business Partnerships

## American Recovery and Reinvestment Act Expenditures Report

June 30, 2009

Funding Breakouts	Available	Expended/Obligated	Percent Expended	Remaining Balance
ARRA Adult Program Funds	\$1,284,784.00	\$4,094.00	0.32%	\$1,280,690.00
ARRA Dislocated Worker Program Funds	2,713,030.00	3,276.00	0.12%	2,709,754.00
ARRA Youth Program Funds	3,011,054.00	67,857.10	2.25%	2,943,196.90
ARRA Local Administration Funds	778,763.00	0.00	0.00%	778,763.00
ARRA Rapid Response Funds	0.00	0.00	0.00%	0.00
ARRA Statewide Activities Funds	1,374,287.00	0.00	0.00%	1,374,287.00
<b>Total All Fund Sources</b>	<b>\$9,161,918.00</b>	<b>\$75,227.10</b>	<b>0.82%</b>	<b>\$9,086,690.90</b>

SOURCE: Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Division of Business Partnerships

## PY 2008 Cost Analysis—WIA Title 1-B Registered Participants

	Participants	Costs	Cost Per Participants
Adult	949	\$ 2,909,344	\$ 3,065
Dislocated Worker	750	\$ 3,709,865	\$ 4,946
Youth	1,124	\$ 2,858,673	\$ 2,543

SOURCE: Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Division of Business Partnerships

Alaska increased participants in each of its three WIA job training programs during PY 2008 as well as those co-enrolled in state and other federal programs. During PY 2008, the department continued its efforts to prepare WIA participants for employment in high growth industry opportunities in mining, construction, energy, and transportation. These jobs require a higher degree of skill and training, aggressive planning, and investment. They also require more intensive participant preparation and cost more reflecting the state's slightly higher cost per participant ratio than in preceding years.

Alaska invested in its youth through intensive counseling about career opportunities in the state and through a vastly expanded summer youth employment program. The state's investment in quality training tied to employment outcomes yielded improved year over year program performance and impressive average earning rates that exceed negotiated measures. Alaska expects to maintain the high earnings rate as workers are trained through apprenticeship for employment on the Alaska gas line and related industry occupations. The department is committed to continuing efforts to increase accountability and the efficient and effective use of training funds. In the upcoming year, the department will begin earnest use of American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funding and leverage other state resources in training programs. As a result, the department will realize improved cost ratios relative to participant services and provide a greater range of services to a broader spectrum of the state's population.

## Rapid Response

In PY 2008, the Rapid Response team worked with 76 different companies experiencing layoffs. Layoffs were statewide and hit many industries: airline, mining, retail, and

service sectors. Alaska and Northwest Airlines downsized. Kensington Mine in Juneau was temporarily shut down and the Nova Gold Mine in Nome was shut down. Gottchalks, a national retail chain, closed all five of their Alaska stores, eliminating over 200 jobs. Starbucks, a national coffee shop, closed ten stores.

Support for the large Agrium layoff continued through PY 2008. Agrium laid off 46 employees, the most senior workers, increasing the number laid off by 37 percent. This occurred at a time when the economic downturn resulted in the highest nationwide unemployment rates in 26 years. Despite the poor economy, the Agrium Transition Center (ATC) increased job placement rates from 73 percent as of July 2008 to 75 percent as of June 2009.

ATC remained the main hub for the dislocated workers from Agrium. Workers receive assistance with job searching, training and relocation planning, resumé writing, interviewing and a networking club at the ATC. Regular newsletters are sent to all the former workers and hundreds of hot job alerts are emailed to those employed and are still looking for a job that pays them a comparable wage. The ATC is winding down with a planned closure date of November 30, 2009.

The Rural Outreach Programs for Entrepreneur (ROPE) ([www.alaskarope.org](http://www.alaskarope.org)) was in full swing in 12 small communities in Southeast Alaska. ROPE is a partnership between the Rapid Response program and the Small Business Development Center in the second year of a three-year project. ROPE combines economic and workforce development.

The second year of the ROPE saw targeted outreach and counseling with needs based workshops from ROPE counselors and specialists targeted at both business owners and nascent entrepreneurs. This work augmented ROPE's efforts in the first year of the project where the focus was to build relationships and engage community and business leaders while assessing each community's capabilities to assist in ROPE's outreach to strengthen local businesses.

In PY 2008, ROPE continued to develop an unprecedented array of resource partners who share a vision of small but vibrant communities throughout Southeast Alaska sustained by small businesses and business leaders. The relationships include tribal councils, chambers, economic development groups and government officials. Quantifiable metrics were also defined during PY 2008 and indicate that targeted outreach and technical assistance yield tangible outcomes. PY 2009 will focus on ROPE's sustainability that comes from its ability to further leverage the relationships established and developed through PY 2007 and PY 2008, and into PY 2009.

Due to the success of ROPE in Southeast Alaska, in PY 2009 Western Alaska, specifically the villages located around the hub of Bethel, will be the focus of the next program called ROPE W.

*Robert Greenberg*



## SUCCESS STORIES

Robert Greenberg was employed at the Agrium Kenai Nitrogen Operations (KNO) as an instrumentation technician until he was laid off when KNO facility closed. Robert was applying, on his own, for every instrumentation job that he could find with no success. He received no calls for interviews despite sending a large number of resúmes.

In April 2008, Robert got a call from a Rapid Response peer worker to come into the Agrium Transition Center. Robert explained his struggles looking for suitable employment. He received assistance with his resumé and mock interview practice.

Soon after, a job as an instrumentation technician was posted by Enstar Natural Gas Company. Robert used his new resumé to apply. In a few days, Robert received his first job interview. The interviewer said that Robert had, "nailed the interview!" and Robert was offered a job.

The new job meant that Robert would have to move from the Kenai area to Anchorage. Robert used the TAA and WIA programs to relocate.



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*The fluctuating price once again proves how unstable the commercial fishing industry is and why fishermen continue to seek alternate careers and training benefits from the Alaska Job Center Network. Some fishermen are exploring training plans that are outside the box.*

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## Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA)

In PY 2008, 35 individuals were in training under TAA and three relocated for good jobs. The majority of workers that are currently in training are from the commercial fishing industry that was hit hard in 2003–2005 by lower fish prices. Fishermen realized they had to learn another trade to sustain themselves and their families. Although many continue to fish during the season, they have worked their careers around the season; taking time off in order to fish during certain openings. Last year the fish prices were higher than in previous years due to a higher demand for fresh fish in the market place. This year with a sinking economy, the demand for fresh fish is down and the prices are much lower. The fluctuating price once again proves how unstable the commercial fishing industry is and why fishermen continue to seek alternate careers and training benefits from the Alaska Job Center Network. Some fishermen are exploring training plans that are outside the box. A TAA participant from Wrangell is pursuing an occupation in major sporting facilities management. Another is earning a degree in emergency and disaster management. These innovative training plans are outside the norm, but labor market information shows a niche for these specialized occupations.

The balance of TAA dislocated workers in training come from oil industry companies including Agrium, Alyeska Pipeline Service Company, and Peak Oilfield services. The dislocated workers from Agrium on the Kenai Peninsula continue to experience a depressed economy. Of the original 180 that were laid off in 2007, 24 workers are still trying to find another job. Most of these individuals are older workers who do not have a desire to go to training and have very specialized skills. While work exists in their fields, there are few openings.

Currently Alaska has one petition pending. Alyeska Pipeline Service Company (APSC) filed a petition in January 2009 that was denied. APSC appealed the decision and was denied again in April 2009. APSC has since refiled under the new Trade and Globalization Act.

Alaska recently had its first Service Sector approval. The Northwest Company International, aka, Alaska Commercial Company, suffered layoffs when their sales and marketing department jobs were transferred to the company headquarters in Canada.

## Wagner-Peyser

One of the highlights in PY 2008 was the enhancement made to the Alaska Labor Exchange System (ALEXsys), which provides the ability to track professional licenses, certifications, degree types and trade level distinctions (master, journey, apprentice.) The System also tracks individuals that have earned an Alaska Career Ready Certificate (ACRC). This new feature allows the matching of job seekers certifications with an employer's job requirements. The advantage to search by degree types, certificates and trades is essential to the department's pledge to prepare Alaskans for the Alaska gas line and to connect job seekers with employers.

KeyTrain® is one of the ready-assessments tools available to job seekers. Career Ready 101 is an expanded version of KeyTrain®, designed to target the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 Summer Youth programs. Career Ready 101 provides self-paced and instructor-led lessons, automated course calendar-ing methodology and combines all WorkKeys® skills, comprehensive soft skills and life-literacy skills in one self-contained system. This self-assessment tool is vital as the resource room usage continues to increase.

In PY 2008, the traffic in Alaska Job Center resource rooms increased by 23.7 percent. In PY 2007, the state served 44,599 customers versus 57,201 served in PY 2008. The increase is attributed to workers migrating to Alaska and looking for employment due to current economic conditions and loss of jobs in the lower forty-eight states. The United States is weathering a 9.4 percent unemployment rate, (a 26-year high and a loss of six million jobs.) Alaska experienced a decrease in available job postings with 8,227 fewer jobs posted on ALEXsys in PY 2008 as compared to PY 2007.

Alaska continues its commitment to re-employ unemployed workers. The department hired eight Employment Security Specialists II's to provide re-employment services in eight of the state's largest job centers. A new re-employment service orientation describes all of the services offered through the AJCN and provides job seekers an opportunity to use a self-assessment tool and explore five different career paths. The career paths, called 'Career Tracks', are: New Job, Training, Adult Basic Education/General Education Diploma (ABE/GED), Apprenticeship/On the Job Training (OJT) and self-employment. The department plans to enhance services by providing one-on-one guidance and group workshops to prepare job seekers for their next career.

Mike Williams

SUCCESS  
STORIES

Mike Williams of Wasilla, Alaska received a gold level National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC) at the Mat-Su Job Center in June 2009. He studied using the KeyTrain® courseware to achieve top scores on his WorkKeys® assessments earning the gold certificate.

Mike was a local business owner who was dislocated when his remodeling and handyman business closed in late 2007.

Mike came into the Mat-Su Job Center seeking assistance with job search and the possibility of funding for training through the Career

Support & Training Services program. He is currently attending training to lead him into a successful career and his wife is working to help with the expenses.



Craig Hyder, a veteran of the Air Force was a priority customer who was eligible for the WIA Adult Program. Though he was employed, he was not earning enough for his family to make ends meet. The Workforce Investment Act began assisting Craig in September 2008 with meals and transportation, and in December 2008 helped him obtain his certification as an Environmental Health and Safety Management Specialist. Due to that certification, Craig found work with a local oilfield company as a Health and Safety Environmental specialist. His new wage was \$30.00 per hour with a rotational two-week on, two-week off schedule. With overtime, his new wage is estimated to be over \$100,000 per year with full benefits.



## Veterans' Services

Alaska's Jobs for Veterans' program places an emphasis on service to veterans at Alaska Job Centers. Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) specialists and Local Veterans' Employment Representatives (LVER) are located at eight of Alaska Job Centers where the veterans' population is highest. There are 75,000 veterans living in Alaska, and according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, there are 44,000 veterans employed in the state, and over 2,000 unemployed.

During PY 2008, the US Department of Labor's Veterans' Employment and Training Service (VETS) published a final rule on priority of service for veterans and eligible spouses. Alaska made veterans a priority for years and have policies in place that require veterans and other covered persons under Public Law 107-288 be given priority of service under all WIA Title-I funded programs, including adult and dislocated workers, governor's discretionary funded projects and National Emergency Grant, and dictate how this priority will be applied. Veterans' Priority of Service (VPS) was further emphasized to all managers, DVOP specialists and LVERS via technical alerts, emails and staff meetings. A VPS flyer, poster, and reference material was provided to all job centers.

Veterans' preference is built into the Alaska Labor Exchange System (ALEXsys). When a job order is in 'Vet Rep Check' and the job meets the veterans' search criteria, the Veterans—Virtual Recruiter will notify them of the job via e-mail or the message center. Employers are reminded that Alaska provides "Priority of Service to Veterans" and all job orders are reviewed by job center staff to alert veterans prior to releasing job orders to the public.

The Veteran representatives work as a team to connect with the military populations of the Army and Air Force bases in Anchorage and Fairbanks. Services are also provided to the Kenai Peninsula and Southeast Alaska. The team approach is evident in the collaboration of the Veteran representatives, Veterans Affairs—the Vocational Rehabilitation & Employment (VR&E) counselors and Career Support and Training Services staff. This is particularly important for disabled veterans who are not aware of available services. Outreach extends to the state's Division of Vocational Rehabilitation staff members who share many Chapter 31 clients. Relationships have also been fostered with the Alaska Apprenticeship program, which places veterans into job training apprenticeships or opportunities with Helmets to Hardhats (H2H) or union or non-union organizations.

Current economic conditions and loss of jobs in the contiguous states contribute to the veterans' interest in Alaska employment possibilities. The Alaska veterans' website

receives a significant number of requests for information. All requests are forwarded to the Veteran representatives, as appropriate by location, and out-of-state requests are responded to by the program coordinator.

Transition Assistance Program (TAP) workshops are held regularly on the military bases. They are facilitated by Veteran representatives who work cooperatively with the Army Career Alumni Program (ACAP) staff and employers to provide the best military-to-civilian transition information possible. The Veteran representatives also travel regularly to the US Coast Guard bases in Kodiak, Sitka, and Valdez to provide TAP workshops.

The annual Veterans' Job Fair was held in Anchorage in November coinciding with Veterans' Day. Over 70 employers and over 1,000 veterans and active-duty service members attended the event.

Veterans' outreach activities work well from the job center locations. Outreach is conducted via telephone, email and face-to-face contacts. The goal is to promote veteran hire and establish various partnerships. The LVER, based in the Business Connection at the Anchorage Midtown Job Center, provides daily hot job notifications to Vet/ESGR Reps, Vocational Rehabilitation, Veteran Industries, Soldiers Family Assistance and Veterans Administration. This notification is expanded to include veteran job seekers.

Veteran service organization visits are regular activities of all statewide Veteran representatives. Anchorage and Fairbanks Veteran representatives continue to partner with the Department of Veterans Affairs to provide services to the homeless veterans' population. They participate regularly in "Stand Down" activities, which usually are one-to-three day events for homeless veterans.

Outreach activities resulted in placing veterans in employment on a consistent basis. The outreach activity workshop at the VA Dom helps prepare veterans for life after finishing the rehabilitation program, the goal of which is to obtain sustainable employment.

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