

AGIA Training I-Team
August 8, 2007
Minutes

Present:

Fred Esposito	Mike Shiffer	Brynn Keith
Tom Nelson	Guy Bell	

Absent:

Corine Geldhof

The meeting convened at 10:40 am. The group reviewed the minutes of the July 25 meeting. Fred indicated that the finalized minutes for all I-Team meetings will be posted on the internal AGIA planning site. A question was raised about the impact of the due date extension for proposals, but there was no definitive answer. The group reviewed the agenda and added a discussion of the Construction Workforce Plan.

Fred and Brynn reported on the August 1 AGIA Training Plan Steering Committee meeting. There are two new members: Bonnie Jo Savland from Alyeska Pipeline and John Hakala from the USDOL Office of Apprenticeship.

The main concerns from the Steering Committee were:

- Back fill jobs. Who will identify them and how?
- The current skills gap. How can AGIA training needs be addressed if the current demand is not being met?
- Alaska hire. What's the right target for the percentage of resident workers?
- Legacy jobs. How can we identify and target our training to long-term career opportunities rather than just pipeline construction jobs?
- Training capacity. What is the current capacity and where does capacity need to grow?
- Non-craft and support jobs. How can we identify these occupations and the added demand imposed by AGIA?

The I-Team had considerable discussion on how to get a handle on indirect and induced pipeline employment. It is difficult to derive staffing patterns—or ratios of indirect/induced to direct jobs—because Alaska has no history of a similar project. R & A is collecting and information in staffing patterns from other projects in the US and Canada which may shed light on this issue.

The group discussed several methods of getting better information on staffing patterns:

- Form an industry focus group
- Contract out
- Hire an estimator
- Contact US DOD
- Ask the Commissioner of ADOLWD

Although no decision was made, the group suggested that R & A start with the Commissioner and then have data reviewed by an estimator. Harold Hines at the Alaska Gas Pipeline Authority was suggested. Fred offered to help Brynn get information from similar projects. The idea of a focus group of outside experts also received considerable support.

The group then discussed apprenticeship programs, especially the need for better information on completers, placement and capacity. They also briefly addressed the difference in apprentice/journeyman ratios between the Bureau of Labor Standards and state public projects.

The main point of discussion for the remainder of the morning was the steering committee's desire to address the current skills gap as well as that which will be generated by AGIA. Questions were raised as to the function of the AWIB board in addressing gaps. For example, does AWIB prioritize industries on the basis of an identified gap or to direct funding? Should AWIB identify priority occupations rather than whole industries? Do we go back and check on the progress the state has made in addressing the needs identified by AWIB; for example with respect to the Construction Workforce Plan? Brynn remarked that changes in the skill gap may not be readily apparent because it is affected by both demand and a constant change in supply due to in and out-migration. For this reason, it is better to look at changes in non-resident ratios in various occupations.

The groups had other questions about the gap. Are we looking at a skills gap or a workforce gap? A training gap? A mismatch of skills? A gap in particular industries/occupations or economy wide? A social gap? Participants also raised the issue of experience. In order to be "qualified and ready" for employment, persons generally need some experience, not just training. A final issue was readiness of Alaskans—particularly recent high school graduates—to handle the academic demands of training programs and to exhibit basic workforce skills. There was some discussion that rural or regional vocational centers might address these academic and social gaps.

After further discussion about the need for and the difficulty of obtaining information about the current situation, the I-Team concurred with the steering committee that an analysis of the existing skills gap should be completed. The necessary information could come from several sources, but would require significant work effort on the part of R & A—work effort that is not currently planned. The I-Team therefore decided to take the issue to the DOLWD Commissioner for a decision as to whether or not resources should be (re)directed at identifying the current skills gap. If the Commissioner's decision is to move forward, the groups will prioritize the 3 or 4 questions most in need of answers.

The group broke at 12:40 pm for a lunch session with the Commissioner and reconvened at 2:05. As a result of the luncheon discussion, the Commissioner agreed that a current gap analysis should be conducted.

Mike Shiffer presented a draft format for the AGIA plan, which had been distributed to all participants. The basis of the draft is the Construction Workforce Plan, but Mike also looked at several other models and added several items to be more comprehensive.

In the draft, the vision is the training statement from AGIA and the goal is taken from Governor Palin's transmittal letter. The group decided that these should be switched, with the Act's language becoming the goal. Mike suggested that a set of guiding principles—perhaps taken from the Vocational Education Comprehensive Plan—be included. He is also suggesting that expected outcomes be determined for each objective.

As Mike worked through the draft, members of the group had the following suggestions:

- Combine Objective 5 (rural training centers) with Objective 2; leave out construction when addressing the need to “provide more students a path from school to work”.
- Limit Objective 6 to the role of higher ed in pipeline-related training.
- Beef up Objective 8 to address the need for qualified instructors.
- Objective 4 is too broad; limit or delete.
- Revisit Objective 7, Adult Basic Education.
- Objective 5 should refer to “regional” not “rural” training centers.
- Add an objective related to workforce readiness skills of young Alaskans.

The group discussed whether or not “Alaska Hire” should be an objective. The consensus appeared to be that it could be incorporated in the “guiding principles” or “background” section of the plan, but that all of the objectives spoke to local hire. However, the training plan is larger than Alaska hire. The group also asked whether or not the comprehensive, integrated vocational system (Objective 2) includes the university.

The group agreed that at the least, the following elements need to be in the plan:

- Vision
- Goal
- Objectives
- Strategies
- Timeline
- Outcomes
- Measures

Mike will revise the draft based on comments and will bicycle it around to I-Team members early next week. Fred will take the revised draft to the steering committee on August 15. The group also suggested that the ad hoc AGIA committee from AWIB review the draft format. The goal is to have a rough (“50,000 ft view”) outline finished by the end of August.

The I-Team then turned to the Construction Workforce Plan and indicated that they would like an update on progress made to date in meeting plan objectives and timelines. A weakness of the plan is that it does not contain measures and an accountability plan, so

there has not been good follow-up. Greg indicated that he will have his staff look into progress to date and report back to both the I-Team and AWIB.

The group was informed of the FY09 budget cycle. The Commissioner is meeting with OMB on September 7 to present information on requests for new resources. Two areas will probably be presented: AWIB training operational and capital needs and dollars to replace federal fund reductions. Any requests in these areas from programs and divisions needs to go through the Commissioner, so time is of the essence.

With respect to future efforts of the I-Team, Fred will work with regional training centers to schedule visits and will talk to the Commissioner about Canadian travel and how it fits into the training plan. There may also be a need to travel to some existing mine sits.

The next meeting is scheduled for August 22, 10:30 am to 3:00 pm. It will be via audio conference, rather than face-to-face. The agenda will include steering committee feedback on the draft plan format and consideration of the "Parking Lot" items left over from prior meetings. If possible, the group would like an update on implementation of the Construction Workforce plan. The group also wants to revisit the current twice-a-month meeting schedule and may revise the schedule and timeline.

Brynn returned to the need for further direction on the questions to be answered by a current skills gap analysis. Fred asked Brynn and Mary Lou to get with him to come up with a list of questions that can then be forwarded to the steering committee and the I-Team.

The meeting adjourned at 3:10 pm.