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Press Release

COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE

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2012 STEP Grant Information Available Online; Applications Due May 11

JUNEAU, Alaska—The State Training and Employment Program, which will competitively fund \$4 million in worker training and employment projects from July 1 through June 30, 2012, helps thousands of Alaskans upgrade their job skills and get them into higher paying jobs in critical demand occupations.

“STEP has trained almost 40,000 Alaska workers since 1989,” Labor Commissioner Click Bishop said. “The Alaska Legislature recognized that this program works by making the program permanent in 2009.”

According to the latest outcome data from the program's 2009 performance period, those who completed training earned almost \$73 million in the 12 months following training, increasing their earnings almost 8 percent. About 95 percent of STEP participants remained in Alaska.

STEP is administered on behalf of the Alaska Workforce Investment Board by the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development's Division of Business Partnerships. STEP targets training for individuals who contributed to the Unemployment Insurance Trust Fund and are drawing or have exhausted their unemployment insurance benefits, or are employed but likely to lose their job within six months due to a work force reduction or conditions requiring they learn substantially different job skills, or need training to improve their prospects for obtaining or retaining employment.

“Grant applications that prepare Alaskans with high-demand skills needed to obtain current and emerging jobs in the priority industries as identified by the AWIB are encouraged for this solicitation,” Business Partnerships Director Corine Geldhof said.

The program also targets training projects that will increase participant earning potential in areas of the state where there are documented employment opportunities due to either labor shortages or rapidly expanding job opportunities, in occupations that have a high number of non-residents; and, in geographic areas with high numbers or rates of unemployment or discouraged workers.

STEP grants, which are funded by a share of employees' unemployment insurance tax contributions, are awarded through a competitive process. Applications will be accepted through a web-based system known as EGrAMS. A tutorial showing a step-by-step process on how to use EGrAMS is available online at <http://labor.alaska.gov/bp/egrms>.

Applications are due at 5 p.m. AST on Wednesday, May 11. For more information, email dbp.grants@alaska.gov with “STEP” in the subject line.

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Business Partnerships

<http://Labor.Alaska.Gov/bp>

State Training and Employment Program

<http://Labor.Alaska.Gov/bp/step.htm>