



**Alaska**

**Workforce Innovation**

and

**Opportunity Act (WIOA)**

**Combined Plan**

for

**Program Years 2020 – 2023**

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Throughout this document, [blue text indicates language provided by the US Department of Labor](#). Black text indicates Alaska’s responses.

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# WIOA State Combined Plan for the State of Alaska

## Overview

Under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), the Governor of each State must submit a Unified or Combined State Plan to the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Labor that outlines a four-year strategy for the State’s workforce development system. The publicly-funded workforce development system is a national network of Federal, State, regional, and local agencies and organizations that provide a range of employment, education, training, and related services and supports to help all job-seekers secure good jobs while providing businesses with the skilled workers they need to compete in the global economy. States must have approved Unified or Combined State Plans in place to receive funding for core programs. WIOA reforms planning requirements, previously governed by the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA), to foster better alignment of Federal investments in job training, to integrate service delivery across programs and improve efficiency in service delivery, and to ensure that the workforce system is job-driven and matches employers with skilled individuals. One of WIOA’s principal areas of reform is to require States to plan across core programs and include this planning process in the Unified or Combined State Plans. This reform promotes a shared understanding of the workforce needs within each State and fosters development of more comprehensive and integrated approaches, such as career pathways and sector strategies, for addressing the needs of businesses and workers. Successful implementation of many of these approaches called for within WIOA requires robust relationships across programs. WIOA requires States and local areas to enhance coordination and partnerships with local entities and supportive service agencies for strengthened service delivery, including through Unified or Combined State Plans.

## Options for Submitting a State Plan

A State has two options for submitting a State Plan— a Unified State Plan or a Combined State Plan. At a minimum, a State must submit a Unified State Plan that meets the requirements described in this document and outlines a four-year strategy for the core programs. The six core programs are—

- the Adult program (Title I of WIOA),
- the Dislocated Worker program (Title I),
- the Youth program (Title I),
- the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act program (Title II), and
- the Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service program (authorized under the Wagner-Peyser Act, as amended by title III),
- the Vocational Rehabilitation program (authorized under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by Title IV).

Alternatively, a State may submit a Combined State Plan that meets the requirements described in this document and outlines a four-year strategy for WIOA’s core programs plus one or more of the Combined State Plan partner programs. When a State includes a Combined State Plan partner program in its Combined State Plan, it need not submit a separate plan or application for that particular program. If included, Combined State Plan partner programs are subject to the “common planning elements” (Sections II-IV of this document) where specified, as well as the

program-specific requirements for that program where such planning requirements exist separately for the program. The Combined State Plan partner programs are—

- Career and technical education programs authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006, as amended by the Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act (Perkins V) (20 U.S.C. 2301 et seq.)
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program (42 U.S.C. 601 et seq.)
- Employment and Training programs under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (programs authorized under section 6(d)(4) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2015(d)(4)))
- Work programs authorized under section 6(o) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2015(o))
- Trade Adjustment Assistance for Workers programs (Activities authorized under chapter 2 of title II of the Trade Act of 1974 (19 U.S.C. 2271 et seq.))
- Jobs for Veterans State Grants Program (programs authorized under 38, U.S.C. 4100 et. seq.)
- Unemployment Insurance programs (programs authorized under State unemployment compensation laws in accordance with applicable Federal law)
- Senior Community Service Employment program (programs authorized under title V of the Older Americans Act of 1965 (42 U.S.C. 3056 et seq.))
- Employment and training activities carried out by the Department of Housing and Urban Development
- Community Services Block Grant (Employment and training activities carried out under the Community Services Block Grant Act (42 U.S.C. 9901 et seq.))<sup>1</sup>
- Reintegration of Ex-Offenders program (programs authorized under section 212 of the Second Chance Act of 2007 (42 U.S.C. 17532))

### How State Plan Requirements Are Organized

The major content areas of the Unified or Combined State Plan include strategic and operational planning elements. WIOA separates the strategic and operational elements to facilitate cross-program strategic planning.

- The **Strategic Planning Elements** section includes analyses of the State's economic conditions, workforce characteristics, and workforce development activities. These analyses drive the required vision and goals for the State's workforce development

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<sup>1</sup> States that elect to include employment and training activities carried out under the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) Act (42 U.S.C. 9901 et seq.) under a Combined State Plan would submit all other required elements of a complete CSBG State Plan directly to the Federal agency that administers the program. Similarly, States that elect to include employment and training activities carried out by the Department of Housing and Urban Development that are included would submit all other required elements of a complete State Plan for those programs directly to the Federal agency that administers the program.

system and alignment strategies for workforce development programs to support economic growth.

- The **Operational Planning Elements** section identifies the State’s efforts to support the State’s strategic vision and goals as identified in the Strategic Planning Elements section. This section ensures that the State has the necessary infrastructure, policies, and activities to meet its strategic goals, implement its alignment strategy, and support ongoing program development and coordination. Operational planning elements include:
  - State Strategy Implementation,
  - State Operating Systems and Policies,
  - Assurances,
  - Program-Specific Requirements for the Core Programs, and
  - Program-Specific Requirements for the Combined State Plan partner programs.(These requirements are available in a separate supplemental document, Supplement to the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Unified and Combined State Plan Requirements. The Departments are not seeking comments on these particular requirements).

When responding to Unified or Combined State Plan requirements, States must identify specific strategies for coordinating programs and services for target populations.<sup>2</sup> States must develop strategies that look beyond strategies for the general population and develop approaches that also address the needs of target populations.

**Paperwork Reduction Act:** The Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (PRA) provides that an agency may not conduct, and no person is required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number. Public reporting burden for this information collection is estimated to be 86 hours per state; including time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Responding to this collection is required to obtain or retain the Federal grant benefit. In addition, responses to this information collection are public, and the agencies offer no assurances of confidentiality. Send comments regarding the burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to the U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Workforce Investment, and reference OMB control number 1205-0522. Note: Please do not return the completed plan to this address.

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<sup>2</sup> Target populations include individuals with barriers to employment, as defined in WIOA Sec. 3, as well as veterans, unemployed workers, and youth.

## I. WIOA State Plan Type and Introduction

### a. WIOA State Plan Type

Unified or Combined State Plan. Select whether the State is submitting a Unified or Combined State Plan. At a minimum, a State must submit a Unified State Plan that covers the six core programs. Unified or Combined State Plan. Select whether the State is submitting a Unified or Combined State Plan. At a minimum, a State must submit a Unified State Plan that covers the six core programs.

Unified State Plan. This plan includes the Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth, Wagner-Peyser Act, Adult Education and Family Literacy Act, and Vocational Rehabilitation programs.

Combined State Plan. This plan includes the Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth, Wagner-Peyser Act, Adult Education and Family Literacy Act, and Vocational Rehabilitation programs, as well as one or more of the optional Combined State Plan partner programs.

Alaska's WIOA Plan is a Combined State Plan and it includes the Senior Community Service Employment program (programs authorized under title V of the Older Americans Act of 1965 (42 U.S.C. 3056 et seq.)).

### b. Plan Introduction

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) is the federal program that funds state and local workforce initiatives and provides a variety of job training services for adults and youth. WIOA modernizes and streamlines the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 and was created to allow states more flexibility in collaborating across systems to better address the employment and skills needs of employees, jobseekers, and employers. WIOA stresses the importance of education, training, credentials, and skills; helping people with barriers to employment; meeting the needs of employers; increasing the success and economic self-sufficiency of workers; and aligning workforce development with education and economic development. In Alaska, the Department of Labor and Workforce Development (DOLWD) is the state agency designated to receive WIOA funds and implement its provisions. The hallmarks of the WIOA legislation are:

- The needs of businesses and workers drive workforce solutions, and local boards are accountable to the communities in which they are located;
- Job Centers provide excellent customer service to jobseekers and employers by focusing on continuous improvement; and
- The workforce system supports strong regional economies and plays an active role in community and workforce development.

### Alaska's Four-year Plan

WIOA requires states to submit a four-year workforce plan to the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL). This document is the four-year workforce plan for 2020 – 2023 as required by WIOA.

The writing of this new strategic workforce development plan is a major opportunity for the Alaska DOLWD to develop new strategies while emphasizing sector partnerships, career pathways, cross-program data and measurement, and job-driven investments. The Alaska

WIOA Combined Plan describes the workforce development system that Alaskans want and explains how Alaska is using WIOA and other state and federal programs to achieve its vision of providing multiple pathways to high skill, high wage jobs and careers, and access to the education, training, and support services needed to prepare for and participate in high-demand occupations that pay family-sustaining wages.

### **Public comment period**

The plan was presented for public comment from January 24, 2020 to February 24, 2020. Announcement of the public comment period was made through the state's online public notices system (<https://aws.state.ak.us/OnlinePublicNotices/Notices/View.aspx?id=196843>), with links on the department's main website (<https://labor.alaska.gov/>), its WIOA website (<http://labor.alaska.gov/wioa/>), and the Alaska Workforce Investment Board Website (<https://labor.alaska.gov/awib/>). Public comments were collected via a dedicated email address. The plan was sent electronically to stakeholder groups that provided public comment, including Alaska Native organizations, chief elected officials, businesses, labor organizations, economic development entities, community-based organizations, adult and youth education and workforce development providers, institutions of higher education, disability service entities, youth-serving programs, veterans' service organizations, juvenile justice specialists, senior employment programs, individuals with disabilities, and the public. The Alaska Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Combined Plan represents the culmination of this public input process.

### **Combined Plan**

The plan's Strategic Elements section provides the current and projected workforce picture, as well as the state's workforce vision and goals. The Operational Planning Elements section clarifies implementation of the strategic elements in day-to-day operations, followed by sections specific to each core and partner program. The WIOA plan follows the question and answer format provided by the U.S. Departments of Labor and Education.

At the end of the entire narrative portion of the plan, Appendix 1 shows the Performance Goals for the Core Programs and the Partner Program (Senior Community Service Employment Program). Appendix 2.1 contains a list of acronyms used in the plan; and Appendix 2.2 lists Alaska's One-Stop partners.

## II. Strategic Elements

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include a Strategic Planning Elements section that analyzes the State's current economic environment and identifies the State's overall vision for its workforce development system. The required elements in this section allow the State to develop data-driven goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce and to identify successful strategies for aligning workforce development programs to support economic growth. Unless otherwise noted, all Strategic Planning Elements apply to Combined State Plan partner programs included in the plan as well as to core programs.

### a. Economic, Workforce, and Workforce Development Activities Analysis

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include an analysis of the economic conditions, economic development strategies, and labor market in which the State's workforce system and programs will operate.

#### 1. Economic and Workforce Analysis

##### A. Economic Analysis

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include an analysis of the economic conditions and trends in the State, including sub-State regions and any specific economic areas identified by the State. This must include—

##### i. Existing Demand Industry Sectors and Occupations

Provide an analysis of the industries and occupations for which there is existing demand.

##### ii. Emerging Demand Industry Sectors and Occupations

Provide an analysis of the industries and occupations for which demand is emerging.

##### iii. Employers' Employment Needs

With regard to the industry sectors and occupations identified in (A)(i) and (ii), provide an assessment of the employment needs of employers, including a description of the knowledge, skills, and abilities required, including credentials and licenses.

#### 1. Economic and Workforce Analysis

##### Alaska's Overall Economic Conditions and Trends

With a 2018 population of 736,289, Alaska is the third least populated state — only Wyoming and Vermont have fewer — but it is easily the largest geographically. The state accounts for 16 percent of the total land mass of the United States with an area of 570,641 square miles. The U.S. has population density of 93 people per square mile; in Alaska, there are 1.3 people per square mile.

Most Alaskans live in towns, villages, and clustered settlements scattered throughout the huge state. Most of the land is owned by the federal government, the state government, or Alaska Native corporations, all of which exclude or restrict settlement to some degree. Only one percent of the state's land is in other private ownership. Overall, the state has population settlements of low to moderate density surrounded by large tracts of uninhabited land.

In 2018, Alaska's gross domestic product (GDP) in chained 2012 dollars (inflation adjusted to 2012) was \$53.1 billion, up from \$52.7 billion in 2017, but still well below the \$57.7 billion high in 2012. The state is heavily dependent on the oil and gas industry, but less so than it used to be, and non-oil GDP has risen enough in recent years to compensate for most of the decline in oil-related GDP.

After a three-year period of job loss from late 2015 through late 2018, the state has been adding jobs at a very modest rate (below one percent) through 2019. State economists forecast continued growth in 2020, but at a slower rate of just 0.3 percent.

Since statehood, Alaska's economy has relied heavily on resource extraction industries. Economically, oil provides the most value followed by the state's abundant fisheries and mineral wealth. Timber was once a major economic driver in the Southeast region of the state but has faded to bare bones levels since its two large pulp mills closed in the 1990s. Tourism is another important economic contributor to the state.

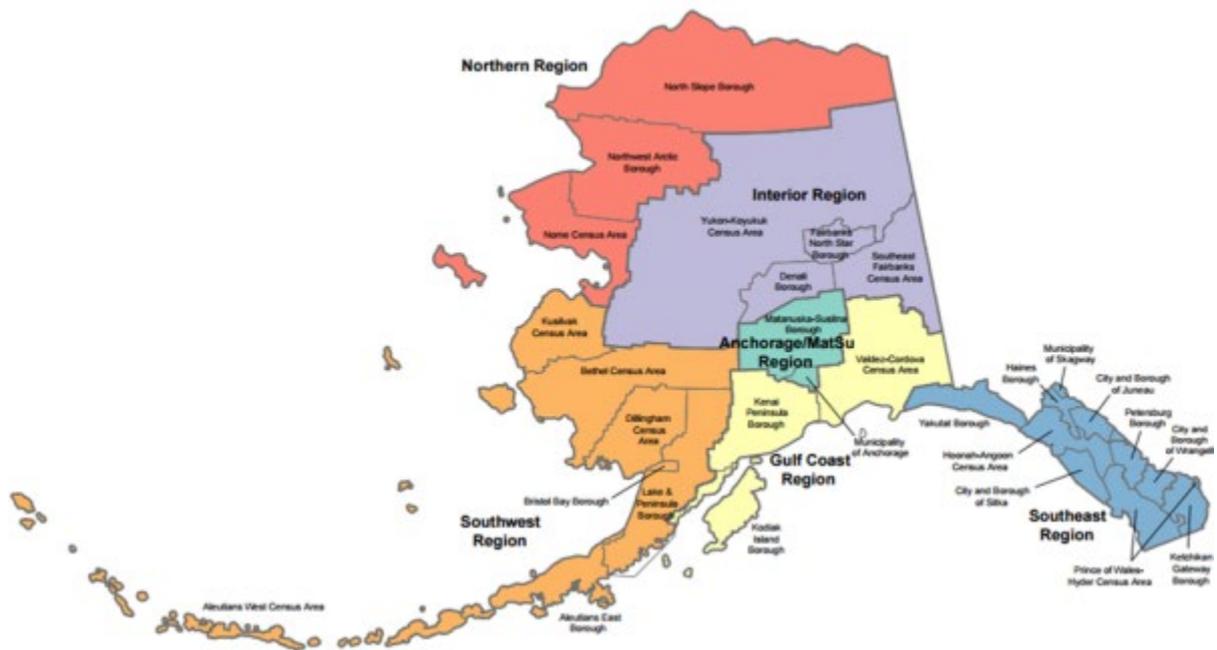
Alaska receives significantly more federal spending than most other states – a critical piece of the state's economy. This is due in part to the massive scale of federal resource management across the state. Additionally, Alaska has a substantial Army, Air Force, and Coast Guard presence scattered from Fairbanks to the north to Sitka, Juneau, and Kodiak to the south. Alaska has more veterans per capita than any state in the nation.

The biggest difference between Alaska's labor market and the nation's is in the concentration of employment and wages in natural resources and mining (a category that includes oil and gas). Those jobs are more than three times as concentrated in Alaska and are typically high wage jobs. This concentration of wages is nearly eight times as high as for the rest of the nation.

When compared to the rest of the nation, Alaska has a relatively small manufacturing sector. Most manufacturing jobs in Alaska are in seafood processing, and the state has almost no durable goods manufacturing. Alaska also has proportionately fewer financial activities and professional and business services jobs. Otherwise, it has a similar percentage of construction, retail trade, health care, and leisure and hospitality jobs.

### **WIOA Area, Planning Region, and Alaska's Six Economic Regions**

Alaska has a single local WIOA area, encompassing the entire state. Operationally, however, Alaska includes six state-defined economic regions, which the state uses to collect and analyze labor market information and to inform planning. These economic regions are: Anchorage/Mat-Su, Gulf Coast, Interior, Northern, Southeast, and Southwest, as shown in Figure 1.



**Figure 1. Alaska Economic Regions Map**

Alaska does not produce regional long-term occupational projections, but the following broad conclusions can be drawn based on regional data, including current and historical job numbers by industries.

### **Anchorage/Mat-Su Region**

The Anchorage/Mat-Su Region is the population center of the state and one of the only parts of the state where workers commute from one borough to another daily. The mix of employment and industries in the region is generally reflective of those across the state, largely because half of the state’s population lives in the region.

The two parts of this region — the Municipality of Anchorage and the Matanuska-Susitna Borough — have followed noticeably different paths during and in the aftermath of the state’s recent 2015-2018 recession. Too much should not be made of that, however, given that the bulk of the region’s jobs are in Anchorage, whether held by Anchorage or Mat-Su residents.

Anchorage has been noticeably slower than other parts of the state to emerge from the state’s approximately three-year period of job loss. Unlike the state, which grew at a rate of 0.5 percent in 2019, Anchorage had a fourth consecutive year of job losses and is forecast to grow at only a small rate of 0.1 percent in 2020. Mat-Su continued to benefit from relatively low housing costs and lifestyle preferences that have made it the fastest growing part of the state for more than a decade.

High-wage oil industry losses in Anchorage, where the white-collar workers in the industry are generally employed, as opposed to the operations employees who are mostly on the North Slope, were substantial from 2015 to 2018 and have rebounded only slightly. Deep cuts to the University of Alaska system, whose largest campus is in Anchorage, have been another slowing factor, and a handful of high-profile retail closures were the result (though retail jobs have fallen for other reasons, too, including a strong increase in online shopping).

Longer term, the region's status is very much tied to the same drivers as the state, including oil and gas, federal government (including the military), and tourism. The region depends less directly on the state's world-class fisheries than other parts of Alaska and more on an air cargo sector that benefits from Anchorage's proximity to Asian markets and good airport facilities and support services.

With few exceptions, Anchorage, and the broader metropolitan area of Anchorage/Mat-Su, employs the same basic mix of workers as other small to medium sized U.S. cities.

### **Gulf Coast and Southeast Regions**

Although parts of the Gulf Coast and Southeast Regions are isolated and rural, they contain a mix of jobs that are not dramatically different from statewide trends. Coastal areas have more jobs connected to fishing and fishing-support sectors, maritime transportation, and boat building, for example, but strong health care growth has occurred wherever there are stable or growing populations. Similarly, the mix of government and private sector support jobs in retail, hospitality, construction, and transportation do not differ markedly among areas with population centers of 10,000 or more.

### **Interior Region**

The Interior Region has a mix of resource industries – large coal and gold mines, for example – and is home to Denali National Park, which generates a substantial number of seasonal jobs and a much smaller number of year-round jobs. Fairbanks, with a borough population of nearly 96,000 in 2019, depends heavily on the military and the University of Alaska Fairbanks. Preparation for the 2020-2021 arrival of two new squadrons of F-35s has been one of the bright spots in Alaska's economy in recent years, and preparing for the planes' arrival is estimated to have injected more than \$500 million into the economy, most of it construction-related spending.

Fort Wainwright, an Army post, and Eielson Air Force Base are home to more than 8,400 active duty military personnel and an additional 10,000 dependents. The University of Alaska Fairbanks also plays an important economic role in the interior region with a recent enrollment figure of more than 9,000 students.

### **Northern Region**

The Northern Region is home to most of the state's large oil and gas industry and includes the Red Dog Mine, one of the world's largest zinc mines. As a result, this region benefits from oil, gas, and mining industry jobs, as well as the significant portion of construction and transportation jobs that support these industries. North Slope workers typically work schedules of two weeks on-two weeks off, or some variation that includes an extended period of living and working in or near the oil fields and then an extended periods of not working, while living elsewhere in the state or country. A substantial number of food services, health care, and custodial jobs are generated when oil and gas activity increases. Corresponding reductions occur in times of decreased activity.

Oil and gas jobs in the region fell from a high of nearly 10,000 in 2015 to as low as 5,900 in 2018 before rebounding to current levels of about 6,500. Losses in the oil and gas industry have a broad impact across the state because such a high percentage of the oil and gas workers commute from other parts of Alaska and because average wages are so high (\$112,000 in 2018).

Due to the itinerant nature of North Slope work schedules, there is little in the way of permanent population centers near the oil and gas fields. The Northern Region's largest city is Utqiagvik (formerly Barrow) with a population of about 4,500. Utqiagvik is about 200 miles away from the center of oil field activity, and not connected by road.

### **Southwest Region**

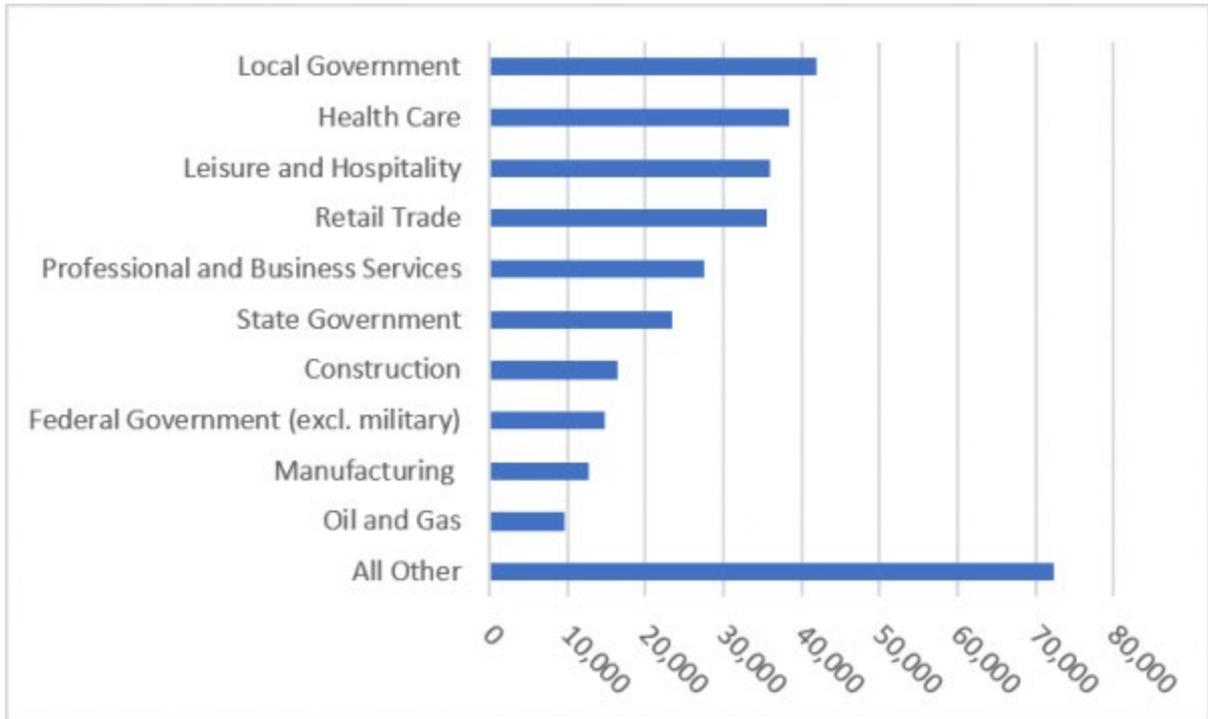
The Southwest Region of the state is heavily dependent on the fishing industry and related maritime activity. The region supplies a large percentage of the nation's total commercial fish harvest by both poundage and value. Bristol Bay sockeye salmon, Bering Sea crab, and pollock caught in the region represent some of the largest salmon, crab, and whitefish fisheries in the world. Much of the maritime activity is not captured in wage and hourly employment data because both permit holders and their crews are considered self-employed and therefore not generally subject to state unemployment insurance coverage and the mandatory reporting from which the most reliable employment data are collected.

The employment data do show many seafood processing jobs and a typical mix of government, health care, retail, construction, and hospitality employment that result from economic base industries associated with the area's fisheries.

The northern two census areas in the Southwest region have had some of the state's and nation's highest unemployment rates among counties or county equivalents. The Bethel Census Area's average monthly unemployment rate was 12.8 percent in 2018 and did not drop below 12 percent at any time that year. Rates were even higher in the Kusilvak Census Area (formerly the Wade Hampton Census Area) at 19.9 percent in 2018. Jobs in these areas are primarily connected to local government and to the general support sector jobs that exist wherever populations cluster, including health care, retail, construction, and transportation jobs. Unlike the southern parts of the region, the northern boundaries of the Southwest Region do not profit substantially from commercial fishing harvests.

### **Employment by Industry**

See Figure 2 for a snapshot of statewide employment by industry. Maritime and mining are two important sectors of Alaska's economy that do not show up on a chart like this that uses standard government categories for employment. Though the numbers are not strictly comparable, Alaska's maritime sector has an estimated workforce of more than 70,000. Mining employment in Alaska, dominated by the state's six major producing mines, has been estimated at 4,600 direct jobs, which support thousands of additional indirect jobs.



**Figure 2. Alaska Employment by Industry (2019)**

## **A. Economic Analysis**

### **(i) Existing Demand Industry Sectors and Occupations**

#### **Overall Growth**

Alaska is projected to gain 17,000 jobs between 2016 and 2026 for a total growth rate over that period of 5.1 percent. The health care and social assistance sector is projected to grow the most at 21 percent, followed by leisure and hospitality at 9 percent.

Mining employment, which includes oil and gas, is expected to add just 100 jobs over the 2016-26 period and construction is expected to grow by 4.5 percent (700 additional jobs).

#### **Oil and Gas**

Oil and gas job counts fell dramatically over the 2015-2018 period before bouncing back very slightly over the last year. There's reason to believe that at least slow growth will continue if a large increase in exploration and development activity moves into production. Because of the state's dependence on the oil and gas industry for state revenue, oil will continue to play an outsized role in the state's economy.

#### **Health Care**

Somewhat surprisingly, given Alaska's aging population, health care growth has slowed noticeably in recent years. In 2019, the state added 400 health care jobs (1.1 percent growth) and the forecast for 2020 is for an additional 400, which is well below average for the last few decades. Still, this large and important industry will have significant openings from turnover, and filling positions continues to be a challenge for Alaska health care employers who must rely on traveling nurses, for example, to meet demand.

## **Metal Ore Mining**

Metal ore mining jobs recorded strong growth from 2004 to 2015, and job numbers have been mostly stable in recent years. Mining employment (excluding oil and gas) is expected to grow by 17 percent from 2016 to 2026. Mining jobs pay well above average and are often in parts of the state where there are few other jobs, so they tend to have a disproportionate impact on an area's economy.

## **Construction**

Construction is forecast to grow at about the same rate as the state's total job count. Big declines in state capital budget spending have hurt the industry, but construction activity related to an increase in military investment (F-35 fighter squadrons and missile defense, in particular) has boosted the industry in the last few years. Like with many industries, even without strong growth, an aging workforce means there will be plenty of replacement openings in the decade ahead.

## **Other Industries**

Other key industries, such as maritime, encompass a range of occupations and sectors, making a single estimate for projected growth difficult to interpret. According to one study, the maritime sector represents Alaska's largest private employer and is a significant economic force in the state, including more than 500 firms statewide. Alaska harvests more than 60 percent of the nation's seafood. Goods, services, and passengers are dependent on water transport.

## **In-demand Sectors and Occupations**

The state's most comprehensive discussion of occupational demand is in the 10-year industry and occupations forecast shown here for the 2016-2026 period. These forecasts are updated every two years and a forecast for the 2018-2028 period will be available later in 2020:

Source: <https://labor.alaska.gov/trends/oct18.pdf>

## **Health Care**

The 2010 Alaska Health Workforce Plan identifies occupational priorities in 15 groupings. In 2013, labor market research showed that of the top fifty occupations in demand in Alaska, 47 were in the health care industry. The Alaska Health Workforce Coalition and the Department of Labor and Workforce Development (DOLWD) Research and Analysis Section created the Alaska Hot Health Jobs report that identified the high growth, high-demand jobs in the industry. Some in-demand health care occupations are behavioral health workers; dentists and dental assistants; human services workers; case managers; clinical services and care coordinators; medical assistants; social workers; pharmacists and pharmacy technicians; registered nurses; critical care nurses; certified nurse assistants; administrative services and coding/billing specialists; health information technicians; community health aides; psychiatrists and psychiatric nurse assistants; physical therapists; physician assistants; occupational therapists; family physicians; health educators; medical laboratory technicians; and radiographic technologists.

Sources: [http://labor.state.ak.us/awib/forms/Healthcare\\_Workforce\\_Plan.pdf](http://labor.state.ak.us/awib/forms/Healthcare_Workforce_Plan.pdf) and

<http://jobs.alaska.gov/hotjobs/healthcare.pdf>

The Alaska Health Workforce Coalition 2017-2021 Action Agenda highlights new and continuing occupational priorities as well as systems change and capacity building initiatives. The Coalition recognizes that unprecedented change is occurring across Alaska's entire health field and the intent of this plan is to be a bridge and provide guidance during this time. This plan will remain fluid and change as healthcare redesign implementation warrants new focus and direction. The DOLWD is a partner with the Coalition to address the health care workforce needs.

Source: [https://www.alaska.edu/research/wp/plans/health/AHWC-2017-2021-Action-Agenda-September-2017-Final-With-Cover-\(2\).pdf](https://www.alaska.edu/research/wp/plans/health/AHWC-2017-2021-Action-Agenda-September-2017-Final-With-Cover-(2).pdf)

## **Mining**

The 2014 Alaska Mining Workforce Development Plan identifies priority occupations and in-demand jobs through an industry workforce assessment survey. Priority occupations include underground miners; mill operators; drillers and blasters; haul truck drivers; mining engineers; maintenance technicians; geologists; millwrights; metallurgists; diesel and heavy mechanics; chemical, geological, and environmental technicians; occupational health and environmental safety technicians; electricians; and instrumentation technicians.

Source: <http://www.alaska.edu/research/wp/plans/mining/AMiningWP-2014-Final.pdf>

## **Oil and Gas**

The 2014 Alaska Oil and Gas Workforce Development Plan identifies 68 in-demand occupations. Among these are operating engineers; construction equipment operators; civil, mechanical, petroleum, and electronic engineers; environmental scientists and specialists; geological and petroleum technicians; machinists; industrial engineers; remote sensing technicians; oil, gas, construction, transportation, health and environmental compliance and safety specialists; construction and building inspectors; welders, both structural and pipeline; environmental engineering technicians; truck drivers; laborers and material handlers; electricians and utility operators; crane operators; facility operation technicians; and cooks and support staff for housing the workforce.

Source: <http://www.alaska.edu/research/wp/plans/oil-and-gas/OilGasPlan.pdf>

## **Maritime**

The 2014 Alaska Maritime Workforce Development Plan identifies 23 priority occupations to increase the number of Alaskans employed in the maritime sector. The in-demand occupations for this sector include trades and crafts for ship building, maintenance, and repair; crane operators; heavy equipment operators; fisheries scientists and technicians; hatchery managers; machinists; laborers and plant managers; seafood harvesters; biometricians; fish and wildlife technicians; shellfish farmers; fishery biologists; seafood plant and floating processor managers and engineers; fish and game coordinators; refrigeration engineers and technicians; fisheries economists; seafood production managers; electricians; hatchery managers; can machinists; quality control and assurance managers and technicians; Baader technicians; and vessel operators, deckhands, engineers, and captains.

Source: [http://www.alaska.edu/files/fsmi/AK-Maritime-Workforce-Dev-Plan\\_Low-Res\\_5-22-14.pdf](http://www.alaska.edu/files/fsmi/AK-Maritime-Workforce-Dev-Plan_Low-Res_5-22-14.pdf)

## **Alternative and Renewable Energy Sector**

According to Renewable Energy Alaska Project (REAP), this sector provides high paying and long-term jobs today and will likely be even more important in the future, especially in rural Alaska. Clean energy, a \$250 billion industry, is one of the fastest growing in the world. Energy efficiency in Alaska is predicted to create 2,600 permanent jobs annually for the next 30 years. Wind-diesel hybrid micro-grids in remote villages require middle-skill employees that can work well within a rural or subsistence lifestyle. Since 2008, the State of Alaska has invested over \$850 million in clean energy programs, including \$259 million in the Renewable Energy Fund (REF). Local workers are needed to operate and maintain the projects that have been built through the REF. As new and more efficient ways to store and control energy are developed, there will be continued need to train the state's workforce for those jobs.

REAP is currently working on a project called "Clean Energy Vocational Training for Alaska's Future," which will bring together a network of energy education stakeholders to build a workforce development plan with strategies that will connect K-12 education with secondary and postsecondary career and technical education. In development of the plan, the status of energy-related education programs in the state will be examined, gaps will be identified, and career pathway curricula and training will be developed and implemented, including industry-recognized certifications where possible. The project is focused on the clean energy workforce and training needs of employers and residents of rural Alaska, especially the unemployed and underemployed who may live in remote Alaskan villages. For more information: Renewable Energy Alaska Project (REAP) website: <http://alaskarenewableenergy.org/>.

### **(ii) Emerging Demand Industry Sectors and Occupations**

Emerging industry sectors and occupations in Alaska are generally connected to the state's primary economic bases and share common sets of skills and technology. State economists and analysts conduct dozens of presentations a year, many of them to industry groups with whom they discuss developing patterns and industry needs. DOLWD maintains close contact with industry sector employers to identify emerging occupations and assess possible related training needs.

Based on the in-demand occupations and the industries in which they are concentrated, the following industries indicate continuing strong or emerging demand:

#### **Sectors**

*Health Care* - Health care is Alaska's largest and fastest growing sector, which is expected to account for 33 percent of the state's total projected employment growth by 2020. Medicaid expansion, an aging demographic, and continued growth in health care will translate into new jobs and occupational needs across the state. Medicaid expansion, for example, contributed to health care's strong 5.1 percent growth in 2017, a year when the state's overall job count fell by 1.1 percent. Emerging demands within the health care sector are likely and will be tracked in coordination with industry representatives.

*Mining* - Jobs in the mining industry more than doubled between 2001 and 2013 due to increases in gold mining. Between 2002 and 2011, wages grew 22 percent compared with an 8 percent growth during the same period for all private sector wages. Presently, there are 8 advanced exploration projects across Alaska. It is difficult to predict emerging demand in terms of jobs

due to the timeline from exploration to production, volatility in commodity pricing and financing, and environmental regulations.

*Alternative and Renewable Energy* - Alaska has access to renewable energy resources including biomass, hydropower, geothermal, wind, ocean, and solar power, plus unique energy needs because of its geography and climate. This industry may create as many as 2,600 permanent jobs annually for the next 30 years.

### **(iii) Employers' Employment Needs**

#### **Employability Skills**

Employers primarily need workers with a strong work ethic, the discipline to be drug-free, and employability (soft) skills including communications and problem solving, as well as interpersonal skills and adaptability. To bolster employability skills, employers and the state must update and revise the skill sets and standards now applied in secondary and postsecondary education. The Cross Industry Common Priority Occupations Initiative led by the Alaska Safety Alliance (ASA), has identified cross-industry skills as part of a multi-industry workforce development effort. As a result, ASA, with the support of DOLWD, has updated the 1999 "YES" Employability Skills program, including lesson plans targeted to various career pathways and new classroom resources for teachers. These resources may be viewed and downloaded on ASA's website at: <https://www.alaskasafetyalliance.org/explore-careers/students-and-teachers/classroom-resources-yes/>. The Alaska Department of Education and Early Development (DEED) is considering an update to its employability skills standards as well.

#### **Health Care in High Demand**

The other pattern that emerges from long-term industry and occupational projections is that health care workers are going to be in especially high demand. Many of these workers will not need extensive formal education but will require technical training and skill development. Some health care occupations will require substantial training and advanced formal education, including psychiatrists, dentists, pediatricians, physicians, nurses, and speech-language pathologists. Without some of the professional schools that other states have to train these workers, Alaska will require interstate strategies to assist employers in meeting this demand.

#### **Common Skill Sets and High Priority Workforce Areas**

The 2016 report titled *Cross-Industry Workforce Development Priorities* by McDowell Group identified key skills, trainings, and concepts needed across Alaska's construction, oil and gas, mining, health care, and maritime industries. Key career pathways in those industries include manufacturing production process development; engineering and technology; transportation operations; therapeutic services; construction; natural resources systems; and maintenance, installation, and repair. Common skills needed include critical thinking, active listening, reading comprehension, social perceptiveness, speaking, writing, complex problem solving, mathematics and science, time management, and active learning.

#### **Graying Workforce**

A graying workforce has been identified as challenging across most industries. Timely replacement of workers is required to ensure adequate knowledge transfer and to prevent interruption of services or industry growth.

## **B. Workforce Analysis**

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include an analysis of the current workforce, including individuals with barriers to employment, as defined in section 3 of WIOA<sup>3</sup>. This population must include individuals with disabilities among other groups<sup>4</sup> in the State and across regions identified by the State. This includes—

### **i. Employment and Unemployment**

Provide an analysis of current employment and unemployment data, including labor force participation rates, and trends in the State.

### **ii. Labor Market Trends**

Provide an analysis of key labor market trends, including across existing industries and occupations.

### **iii. Education and Skill Levels of the Workforce**

Provide an analysis of the educational and skill levels of the workforce.

### **iv. Skill Gaps**

Describe apparent ‘skill gaps’.

## **B. Workforce Analysis**

### **(i) Employment and Unemployment**

#### **Labor Force Participation and Unemployment**

At the state level, Alaska’s labor force participation rates tend to be at least two percentage points higher than national rates mainly because of the state’s younger population. Alaska has smaller percentages of older people, who are less likely to be either working or actively seeking work, resulting in the above average labor force participation rates. However, the state’s labor force participation rates are declining, as they are for the U.S., as a result primarily of the large Baby Boomer population cohort — those born from 1946 to 1964 — reaching retirement age and leaving the labor force.

Although the state’s overall labor force participation rates are above the national average, parts of the state have low rates because of limited and very seasonal job opportunities. The Kusilvak Census Area (formerly known as the Wade Hampton Census Area until a 2015 name change), for example, had a labor force participation rate of less than 60 percent over the most recent period (2012-2016, American Community Survey). Figure 3 presents Unemployment Rates, Alaska and the U.S. from January 2012 to November 2019.

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<sup>3</sup> Individuals with barriers to employment include displaced homemakers; low-income individuals; Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians; individuals with disabilities, including youth who are individuals with disabilities; older individuals; ex-offenders; homeless individuals, or homeless children and youths; youth who are in or have aged out of the foster care system; individuals who are English language learners, individuals who have low levels of literacy, and individuals facing substantial cultural barriers; farmworkers (as defined at section 167(i) of WIOA and Training and Employment Guidance Letter No. 35-14); individuals within 2 years of exhausting lifetime eligibility under the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program; single parents (including single pregnant women); and long-term unemployed individuals.

<sup>4</sup> Veterans, unemployed workers, and youth, and others that the State may identify.



Figure 3. Unemployment Rates, Alaska and U.S. January 2012-November 2019

### Job Growth

Alaska added 1,600 jobs in 2019 after losing more than 11,000 during the state-level recession — attributable primarily to a significant drop in oil prices — of the prior three years.

Despite preliminary unemployment rates in 2019 that were as low as ever recorded in Alaska (6.1 percent in November), the state’s unemployment rates have been the highest in the nation for much of the last three years, and job growth has been among the weakest over that same period.

Related to the drop in oil prices and a decades-long trend of oil production declines, Alaska has struggled over the last several years to navigate away from being able to depend almost entirely on oil-related revenue to fund its state government. The state has made progress by tapping into the investment earnings of its more than \$65 billion Permanent Fund to create a perpetual new source of revenue to fund government services, but it still does not have sufficient revenue to balance its budget without addressing some hard political questions: whether and how to adjust the state’s long-standing Permanent Fund Dividend, an annual check sent to Alaskans from Permanent Fund investment earnings; whether to continue to cut state government services and spending; and whether to implement new taxes or other revenue measures (Alaska is the only state in the country without either a general sales or income tax). Until these important issues are resolved, the state’s economy will continue to be hampered at least moderately by uncertainty.

## **(ii) Labor Market Trends**

After three years of job loss, the most relevant current trend is resumed job growth that has spread across most of the state's sectors. With just a few exceptions — state and local government being the most obvious — the state's economy is growing again at a moderate rate in terms of job growth.

Tourism growth has been impressive in recent years, one of the state's key economic pillars that was largely unaffected by state budget wrangling or the decline in oil prices. Cruise ship visitors to the state continue to set new records and strong additional growth is expected in the next several years.

An increase in military investment has been another positive. Eielson Air Force Base in Fairbanks will receive two new F-35 fighter jet squadrons, and preparing for them — each plane has a price tag of around \$80 million — has juiced the Fairbanks economy and other parts of the state to a lesser extent. Military spending connected to missile defense has also increased in the last year or so.

The trend in the state's all-important oil and gas industry is positive, though it is a volatile industry with a history of surprising ups and downs. The state's Arctic National Wildlife Refuge was recently opened to oil and gas exploration, and investment in the state's vast oil and gas resources has climbed over the last two years. Final investment decisions still lay ahead for the biggest projects and as a result of the sale of all British Petroleum assets in the state to Hilcorp Energy Company, a much smaller and younger company that industry watchers expect to be aggressive in its exploration and development activities.

## **(iii) Education and Skill Levels of the Workforce**

### **High School Graduation Rate**

Ninety-three percent of Alaskans age 25 and up have a high school diploma or higher, according to the American Community Survey, compared to 88 percent for the nation. That relationship switches for people with bachelor's degrees or higher, however, with 29 percent for Alaska and 32 percent for the U.S.

### **Alaska Natives**

Alaska Natives, a WIOA-identified targeted population, represent about 14 percent of the state's population. Of the state's more than 100,000 Alaska Natives, nearly half live in eight rural boroughs and census areas where Natives make up more than 50 percent of the population. Some of these areas have the highest unemployment rates in the state. Of Alaska Natives age 25 and up, 81 percent have a high school diploma or equivalent, compared to 92 percent for Alaska's total population age 25 and up; and only eight percent of Alaska Natives age 25 or more have a bachelor's degree or more, compared to 28 percent for Alaska's total population in that same age range. At 23 percent, the poverty rate among Alaska Natives is over twice the state average of 10 percent. Geographic, cultural, and economic barriers hinder access to training, education, and employment for many Alaska Natives.

### **Immigrants**

More than seven percent (over 50,000) of Alaska's population is foreign-born, coming to the state as immigrants, asylum seekers, or refugees looking for a new start. Fifty five percent of

immigrants were born in Asia, with the Philippines by far the largest country of birth for immigrants in Alaska. Over half (55 percent) of Alaska's foreign-born population lives in Anchorage, which is home to about 41 percent of the state's population.

Significant barriers to success for this population include learning English and receiving recognition for the education they may have received in their home country. Four out of five immigrants in Alaska have at least a high school diploma, in contrast to 69 percent nationwide, and slightly more than half of Alaskan immigrants attended college. Twenty four percent have college degrees compared to 28 percent nationally. In terms of English language proficiency, about four out of five immigrants over the age of five speak a language other than English at home, which represents more than 40,000 people statewide. Of this group, about 60 percent speak an Asian or Pacific Island language and around 18 percent speak Spanish.

### **High School and Postsecondary Degrees**

In 1970, 67 percent of Alaska's 25 or older population had a high school diploma (second among states) and 14 percent of the 25 or older population had a bachelor's degree (third among states). By 1980 those percentages had increased to 82 percent (first among states) and 21 percent (third among states). By 2015, despite the percentages continuing to increase (92 percent with a high school diploma and 28 percent with a bachelor's degree), Alaska's rankings had fallen to 5th and 27th respectively. See article "How Educated are Alaskans?" for more information: <http://laborstats.alaska.gov/trends/mar17art2.pdf>.

Of ongoing concern is that 15 percent of 18-to-24-year-old Alaskans have not completed high school. According to the 2010 Alaska Career and Technical Education Plan, every year approximately 8,000 Alaskan students graduate from high school. Several thousand more exit school without securing a high school diploma. Of the graduates, less than half transition into college and only 18.5 percent will still be in school by age 19. Alaska ranks fifth in the nation for teens not in school and not working.

### **(iv) Skill Gaps**

#### **Alaska's Data Sets**

Alaska has two unique data sets that assess where employers are having difficulty finding the workers they need for the state's labor market. First, Alaska can identify residents and nonresidents working in the state thanks to the Permanent Fund Dividend program, which distributes a share of oil-related investment earnings to Alaskans each year. Alaskans who have lived in the state for the previous full calendar year are eligible, and nearly all who are eligible apply.

Secondly, Alaska is the only state that has required employers to report the occupations of their workers as part of mandatory unemployment insurance reporting. The detailed, reported occupational data from employers and the information on the residency of individual workers allows Alaska to produce a report each year showing the industries and occupations with the highest percent of nonresident hires. The reliance on nonresident workers in priority industries and in-demand occupations can indicate a shortage of local workers with the necessary skills and aptitudes.

The most current version of the Nonresidents Working in Alaska report is available here:

<http://live.laborstats.alaska.gov/reshire/nonres.pdf>

## Nonresident Employment

The largest driver of nonresident employment in Alaska is seasonal work. In 2018, there were 406,547 total workers employed in Alaska at some point. Of these, 84,238 (20.9 percent) were “nonresident workers” based upon the criteria for eligibility to receive an Alaska Permanent Fund Dividend, illustrating Alaska’s historical dependence upon out-of-state workers to fill job openings. The largest number of these workers filled seafood processing and tourism positions that are difficult to fill with residents during the busy summer. For example, in 2018, seafood processing employed 17,385 nonresident workers and 5,984 residents.

Other industries with high percentages of nonresidents include oil and gas, construction, metal mining, and visitor-related industries. These industries have one or more of the following characteristics: high seasonal variation, a need for workers with specialized skills, or work sites in remote locations.

Looking at Alaska’s economic regions gives another view to understand the impact of resident and nonresident workers in terms of jobs and earnings and where seasonal employment is a large factor. Alaska’s Northern Region provides thousands of high paying jobs and good careers in Alaska’s vital industries such as oil, gas, and mining, where about one-third of the workforce is nonresident. In the less populated Interior and Southwestern Regions, there are fewer jobs; outside of Fairbanks and rural hub communities, resident employment trends higher. The Denali Borough – located in the Interior region – has higher rates of nonresident employment due to the tourism jobs associated with Denali National Park. The economies of the Southwest, Anchorage/Mat Su, and Southeast regions are based on maritime, seafood harvesting and processing, and tourism jobs, and are more reliant on a migrating workforce coming to Alaska to fill seasonal jobs.

Figure 4 shows the eleven-year trend of resident to nonresident workers employed in Alaska. Figure 5 shows the wages for residents and nonresidents during that same time.

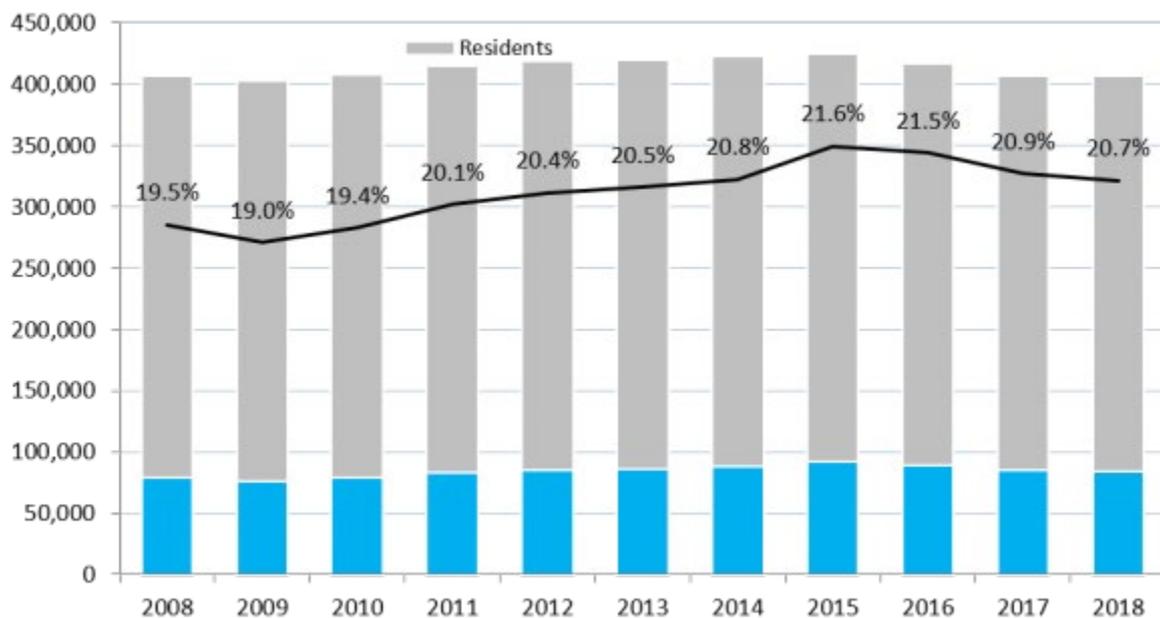
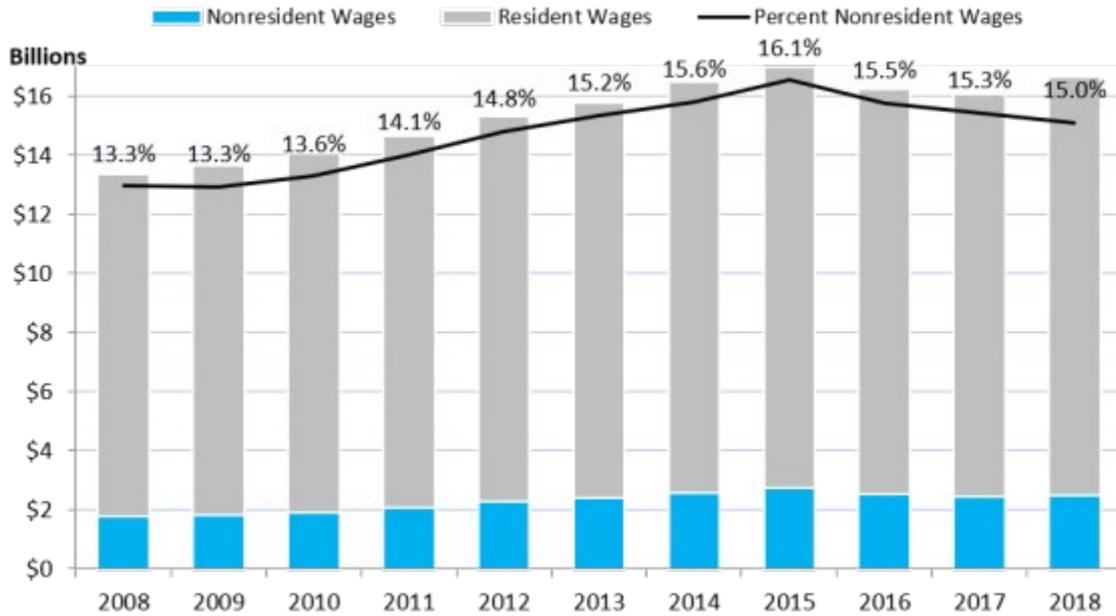


Figure 4. Resident and Nonresident Workers – Alaska 2008 to 2018

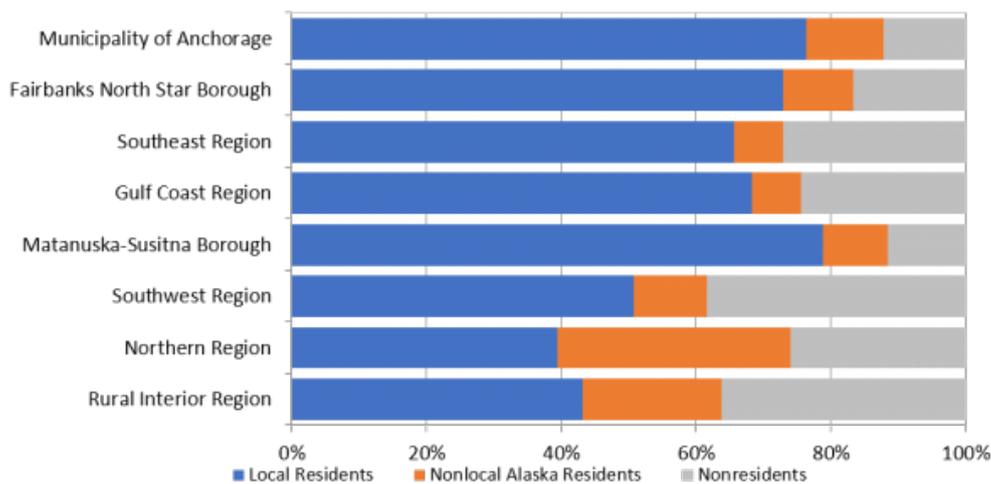


**Figure 5. Resident and Nonresident Wages – Alaska 2008 to 2018**

**Skills Gap - Industry-Based and Geographic**

The skills gap is evident in industries where there will be high labor demand and where there are high numbers of nonresidents employed. The skills gap is geographic as well. The in-demand occupation jobs in health care, mining, construction, transportation, and energy efficiency are distributed across the six economic and workforce regions. The rural skills gap is a critical challenge because much of Alaska’s commerce is based on the resources extracted from rural regions (oil, gas, seafood, minerals). Today a high percentage of those well-paying in-region career jobs are filled by nonresidents.

Figure 6 shows the percentage of workers that come from the region where they work, the percentage that come from elsewhere in Alaska (“Nonlocal Alaska Residents”) and the percentage that come from outside Alaska.



**Figure 6. Residency Status of Workers by Economic Region, 2018**

## 2. Workforce Development, Education and Training Activities Analysis

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include an analysis of the workforce development activities, including education and training in the State, to address the education and skill needs of the workforce, as identified in (a)(1)(B)(iii) above, and the employment needs of employers, as identified in (a)(1)(A)(iii) above. This must include an analysis of—

### A. The State's Workforce Development Activities

Provide an analysis of the State's workforce development activities, including education and training activities of the core programs, Combined State Plan partner programs included in this plan, and required<sup>5</sup> and optional one-stop delivery system partners.<sup>6</sup>

### B. The Strengths and Weaknesses of Workforce Development Activities

Provide an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the workforce development activities identified in (A), directly above.

### C. State Workforce Development Capacity

Provide an analysis of the capacity of State entities to provide the workforce development activities identified in (A), above.

### **(A) The State's Workforce Development Activities**

Provide an analysis of the State's workforce development activities, including education and training activities of the core programs, Combined State Plan partner programs included in this plan, and required and optional one-stop delivery system partners.

### **Core and Partner Programs**

All core and partner programs, including One-Stop partners (see Appendix 2.2), focus on the target populations under WIOA. These target populations include individuals with barriers to employment; displaced homemakers; low-income individuals; Alaska Natives, American Indians, and Native Hawaiians; youth and adults with disabilities; older individuals; ex-offenders; homeless individuals; youth who are in or who have aged out of the foster care system or are otherwise at risk; individuals who are English language learners or who have low levels of literacy; individuals facing substantial cultural barriers; farmworkers; individuals within two years of exhausting lifetime eligibility under the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program; single parents (including single pregnant women); and long-term unemployed individuals. Alaska's refugee, asylum seeker, and immigrant youth and adult population may be included in several of these categories. Additionally, Alaska targets veterans and transitioning military as key populations for services.

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<sup>5</sup> Required one-stop partners: In addition to the core programs, the following partner programs are required to provide access through the one-stops: Career and Technical Education (Perkins), Community Services Block Grant, Indian and Native American programs, HUD Employment and Training programs, Job Corps, Local Veterans' Employment Representatives and Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program, National Farmworker Jobs program, Senior Community Service Employment program, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) (unless the Governor determines TANF will not be a required partner), Trade Adjustment Assistance programs, Unemployment Compensation programs, and YouthBuild.

<sup>6</sup> Workforce development activities may include a wide variety of programs and partners, including educational institutions, faith- and community-based organizations, and human services.

## **Alaska Natives**

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) includes Alaska Natives as a specific targeted population. The Department of Labor and Workforce Development (DOLWD) will work with Alaska Native organizations to ensure adequate and appropriate attention to cultural and geographic barriers to workforce development in the Alaska Native population, including culturally appropriate services to the Alaska Native elderly population.

## **Alaska Workforce Investment Board**

Alaska's federal and state workforce programs are guided by the Alaska Workforce Investment Board (AWIB) in collaboration with the administration and the state legislature. That guidance is based upon input from the wide range of public and private entities engaged in educating and training the workforce, along with research from a variety of sources including DOLWD's Research and Analysis Section and the University of Alaska's Institute of Social and Economic Research (ISER). The AWIB has adopted priority industry sector workforce plans for maritime, health care, mining, renewable energy and energy efficiency, oil and gas, construction, and transportation. All industry sector plans are built with sector partners and updated to focus on strategies to meet future demand for priority occupations. Priority occupation analysis informs the public workforce system statewide and regionally to concentrate on in-demand occupations. Labor market information, economic information, and direct involvement of industry employers and sector associations help identify career pathways and employment needs and opportunities.

DOLWD is the state's lead workforce agency charged with implementing the WIOA State Plan. The AWIB, which is located in the Office of the Commissioner, works closely with leadership to implement the plan, and provides the oversight, guidance, assessment, and improvements to build and sustain workforce partnerships in each economic region. The AWIB ensures regional workforce planning is tied to each region's economic and labor market needs.

The AWIB manages the grants unit, which includes WIOA Youth, Apprenticeship, STEP, and TVEP, and receives and disburses most of Alaska's public workforce development resources.

## **Title I - Adult and Dislocated Worker and Youth Programs**

The Title I programs provide an array of career services, supportive services, and training needed to encourage self-sufficiency. WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker services are provided by Career Support and Training Services (CSTS) case managers located in Alaska Job Centers (AJCs). WIOA Youth services are provided by competitively awarded sub-recipients, who must each make available all 14 youth service elements. Both youth providers and CSTS case managers work with participants and employment service partners to develop training plans for WIOA-eligible individuals and provide Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) for Adults and Dislocated Workers or Individual Service Strategies (ISS) for Youth to meet job training and skills development needs. Individuals who have been assessed and need supportive services while attending training are provided with allowed services under WIOA. Participants may be concurrently enrolled in other federal or state programs such as Alaska's Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) or vocational rehabilitation, for example. Post-training job placement and follow-up career pathway assistance is also provided for eligible participants through WIOA.

The Youth program is administered through a competitive award process and services are delivered by ten sub-recipients located throughout the state. Sub-recipients ensure the WIOA

Youth program's 14 basic elements are made available to participants, conduct comprehensive assessments, identify career pathways, coordinate work experience opportunities, and complete Individual Service Strategies (ISS) outlining the services, goals, and support service needs.

**Services include:**

*Career Services* - basic services such as labor market information, job listings, partner program listings, and individualized services such as comprehensive and specialized assessments, development of IEPs, ISSs, ITAs, counseling, career planning, and workforce preparation activities. These services are provided to assist individuals in obtaining or retaining employment.

*Training services* - occupational skills training, including training for nontraditional employment; on-the-job training; incumbent worker training; programs that combine workplace training with related instruction, which may include cooperative education programs; training programs operated by the private sector; skill upgrading and retraining; entrepreneurial training; transitional jobs; job readiness training; adult education and literacy activities including activities of English language acquisition and integrated education and training programs; and customized training conducted with a commitment by an employer or group of employers to employ an individual upon successful completion of the training.

*Support services* - may include, and are not limited to, transportation, childcare, dependent care, medical and dental care, housing, food, and utility payments that are necessary to enable an individual to participate in program services. Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth participants engaged in individualized career and training services may be eligible for support services. Youth program participants may also utilize support services during the follow-up period.

*Follow-up services* –for adults and dislocated workers who have completed their programs. These are non-monetary activities provided for up to 12 months after program completion, which help participants retain unsubsidized employment resulting from their program-related services. For exited WIOA Youth, follow-up services include activities that help ensure successful employment or postsecondary education or training, and may include monetary supportive services.

These Title IB programs focus on providing individuals the career guidance, employment skills, and technical training intended to lead rapidly to employment or re-employment, or for youth, entry into postsecondary education or training. This includes work-based learning programs where skills are learned through work experiences, career and technical education, On-the-Job Training (OJT), internships, pre-apprenticeship, and apprenticeship methods of training.

**Title II - Alaska Adult Education**

The Alaska Adult Education Program (AAE) is a statewide instructional program for adults seeking to enhance their postsecondary education skills to transition into employment. The goal of the AAE is to identify a student's educational level and facilitate a successful transition to postsecondary education, training, or employment. Adult education programs instruct students in basic skills, high school equivalency diploma attainment, English language acquisition, and workforce preparation courses. Alaska Adult Education includes 13 regional education programs, an integrated correctional system, and a grant for Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education (IELCE).

### **Title III - Wagner-Peyser/One-Stop**

The One-Stop delivery system collaborates with partners to create a seamless system of service delivery that enhances access to services and improves long-term employment outcomes for individuals receiving assistance. The employment and training services provided through the Alaska Job Centers (AJCs) are the foundation of the One-Stop delivery system in Alaska, providing universal access to labor exchange, career, and training services. The goal of universal access is that workers, job seekers, and employers may all obtain services under one roof from easy-to-find locations. The delivery points for the employment and training services are within the 14 AJC locations of the Alaska Job Center Network (AJCN) located throughout the state. As part of the One-Stop service delivery system, AJCs provide the full spectrum of employment-related labor exchange services including job search assistance, job referral, job placement assistance for job seekers, re-employment services to unemployment insurance claimants, and recruitment services for employers with job openings. Services are delivered in one of three modes, including self-service, facilitated self-help services, and staff-assisted services. Depending on the needs of the labor market, additional services may be available, such as job seeker assessment of skill levels and abilities, aptitude testing, career guidance, job seeking workshops, and referral for training and supportive services.

Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) specialists and Local Veterans' Employment Representatives (LVER) staff are essential parts in the AJCs and fully integrated into the One-Stop delivery system. The primary function of the DVOP specialists is to provide individualized career services to eligible veterans with significant barrier to employment (SBE). Once a veteran is determined by AJC staff to be "job ready," the veteran will be referred to a LVER, a business services representative from the Business Connection team, or other appropriate AJC staff to receive employment placement services.

Apprenticeship specialists in the AJCs provide information and assistance to employers to create Registered Apprenticeship programs tailored to their workforce needs. Registered Apprenticeships allow employers to establish the standards of proficiency while developing a local and loyal workforce, often solving key industry occupational shortages. Any business that requires skilled employees can benefit from this program.

DOLWD's efforts in providing prisoner re-entry services have proven successful for prisoners transitioning back into communities by partnering with the Department of Corrections (DOC) to coordinate and develop job placement assistance and services.

Services offered to employers, in addition to referral of job seekers to available job openings, include:

- Help in developing job order requirements;
- Matching job seeker experience with job requirements, skills, and other attributes;
- Assisting employers with special recruitment needs;
- Coordinating job fairs;
- Analyzing hard-to-fill job orders for employers;
- Helping employers minimize or avoid layoffs and business closures; and
- Establishing USDOL Registered Apprenticeship programs.

See Appendix 2.2. Mandatory and Optional One-Stop Delivery System Partners.

## **Title IV - Vocational Rehabilitation**

Vocational rehabilitation services are provided through the Alaska Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR). DVR provides vocational rehabilitation services to individuals with disabilities who, because of their disability/ies, have difficulty obtaining or maintaining employment. Disabilities that result in an impediment to employment could include psychiatric, physical, or orthopedic disabilities, as well as cognitive impairments, auditory disabilities, and visual impairments.

DVR provides the services necessary to achieve competitive, integrated employment, such as guidance and counseling, assessment, vocational and other training, transportation, diagnosis and treatment, on-the-job training, job-related services, customized employment, and supported employment. DVR also provides students who experience disabilities with pre-employment transition services. Through informed choice and comprehensive assessment, consumers, jointly with their Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors (VRCs), develop an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) to develop a vocational goal and determine necessary services to achieve employment. Services identified in the IPE are based on the individual's strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice.

DVR delivers services throughout the state through five regional offices located in high population, urban areas (two in Anchorage and one each in Fairbanks, Mat-Su Valley, and Juneau) and four satellite offices in smaller more rural areas (Eagle River, Kenai, Sitka, and Ketchikan). Additionally, DVR has identified six regional rural hubs to which assigned DVR counselors travel two to three times per year (Bethel, Nome, Kotzebue, Utqiagvik, Dillingham, and Kodiak). DVR partners with the local Tribal Vocational Rehabilitation (TVR) programs, as well as local Alaska Job Centers (AJCs) and schools located in these rural hubs.

### **Alaska Native Organizations and Alaska Native WIOA Grantees**

There are twelve Alaska Native Regional non-profit organizations recognized under WIOA as partners in the workforce system. Alaska Native Regional Employment and Training entities receive funding under WIOA to provide services, in tandem with state WIOA resources, to specifically serve Alaska's Native and American Indian people. These regional Alaska Native non-profits, formed under the federal Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act of 1971, are a vital component of Alaska's state and regional workforce development systems. Alaska Native organizations help ensure adequate representation in workforce development planning and in delivery of culturally and regionally responsive services to Alaska Natives and American Indians, particularly for Youth and Elders. They have unique relationships with Alaska's largest economic drivers, Alaska Native Corporations, and businesses offering good paying jobs and careers in Alaska and across the nation. The Regional Non-Profits operate American Indian Vocational Rehabilitation Services (AIVRS) programs funded by the federal Department of Education, Rehabilitation Services Administration. They fill a gap when state DVR service providers are unable to directly serve eligible clients in rural communities and villages.

### **Trade Adjustment Assistance**

The Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) program assists workers who lose their jobs due to foreign trade related competition or outsourcing. The program provides opportunities to the impacted individuals to obtain the skills, credentials, resources, and support needed to become reemployed as quickly as possible. Historically, Alaska's TAA certified dislocations have been in the petroleum, timber, and fishing industries. Services provided to TAA participants include

employment and case management services, career development, classroom training, on-the-job training, customized training, income support, job search allowance, relocation allowance, and Trade Readjustment Allowances - weekly income support much like unemployment insurance.

### **Senior Community Service Employment Program**

The Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) is administered by DOLWD and serves unemployed, low-income persons who are at least 55 years of age, are not work ready, and have a family income of no more than 125 percent of the federal poverty level. Enrollment priority is given to veterans and qualified spouses, then to individuals who are over 65, have a disability, low literacy skills or limited English proficiency, and who reside in a rural area, are homeless or at risk of homelessness, have low employment prospects, or have failed to find employment after using services through the Alaska Job Centers (AJCs). The program assists them in developing skills and experience to facilitate their transition to unsubsidized employment. SCSEP is known in Alaska as Mature Alaskans Seeking Skills Training (MASST) and is a component of the Division of Employment and Training Services. Its long-term strategy is to ensure that Alaska's job opportunities are available to older workers and that the program continues to engage workforce development partners, the business community, and senior service partners to provide successful outcomes for seniors and Alaskan businesses alike. SCSEP fosters individual economic self-sufficiency and promotes useful part-time opportunities in community service assignments.

SCSEP is a required One-Stop partner under WIOA and, as such, it is part of the Alaska Job Center Network. When acting in their WIOA partner capacity, SCSEP staff and sub-recipients are required to follow all applicable rules under WIOA and its regulations. The WIOA operational requirements do not apply to SCSEP operations but, as required partners under WIOA, grantees are obligated to be familiar with WIOA requirements. These new regulations enable grantees and sub-recipients to better concentrate on the core missions of the SCSEP by providing community service assignments to hard-to-serve older individuals. The state intends that AJCs will provide services both to older individuals who are not eligible for the SCSEP and to those who are eligible but need the career services that the SCSEP is unable to provide.

SCSEP staff work directly with mandated partners to co-enroll participants in state training and employment programs; other needed social service programs supplement this. This ensures that SCSEP is an integrated, effective, job-driven workforce program. DOLWD continues to solidify its commitments to public/private partnerships to refine strategies and increase the responsiveness of SCSEP by providing oversight and technical assistance activities to improve program performance.

SCSEP service delivery is integrated into both the state's workforce investment system as well as the senior service system. Skilled AJC and project operator staff provide quality services to older workers, and employers have reported high satisfaction levels with SCSEP participants who have entered unsubsidized employment with them. Alaska's strategy is to continue to reach out to workforce development partners, the business community, and the senior service partners to ensure successful outcomes for older workers and Alaskan businesses.

## **State Funded Workforce Programs**

### **Alaska State Training and Employment Program (STEP)**

STEP is a job-training program funded by a diversion of 0.01 percent of employee payroll tax contributions for Unemployment Insurance, providing approximately \$8 million annually to enhance the quality of in-state training and employment services for Alaska residents. More than 3,000 residents are served by STEP each year. Services include job training and employment services to help individuals obtain work or new skills to remain employed, learn new technologies, and meet emerging job demand opportunities. In addition, individuals served by STEP may receive support services such as transportation, temporary housing, meals, tools, and other supplies while in training.

### **Alaska Technical Vocational Education Program (TVEP)**

TVEP is funded similarly to STEP through a diversion of the employee payroll tax contribution for Unemployment Insurance at a rate of 0.16 percent, which amounts to over \$10 million annually (FY 19 was \$10.95 million, and FY 20 is \$12.49 million). TVEP helps secondary and postsecondary institutions and training centers create and maintain education and training services that match the regional economic and workforce needs. TVEP is distributed through a legislative formula to the University of Alaska, the Alaska Vocational Technical Center (AVTEC), and several regional training centers (RTCs) in all regions of the state.

### **Alaska Construction Academy (ACA)**

The Alaska Construction Academy (ACA) was created by a partnership including representatives from the state, industry, tribal organizations, and school districts to address the demand for construction workers. The goals of ACA are to: develop a strong, flexible workforce able to continue with employment, registered apprenticeship, or postsecondary technical and education training in the construction industry; enable employers to employ trained Alaskans, which increases productivity and safety of the workforce; and place Alaskans in construction and construction-related occupations or additional training.

Serving the Anchorage, Fairbanks, Juneau, Kenai Peninsula, Ketchikan, Mat-Su, Nome (new), Bristol Bay, and Kotzebue (new) areas, ACA helps the industry by developing a cadre of Alaskans with the basic skills needed to enter a registered apprenticeship, postsecondary training, or entry-level construction employment.

## **USDOL Registered Apprenticeship Programs**

Since 1947, when the Carpenters JATC created the first trade apprenticeship program in Alaska, Alaskan employers have been training their employees through the registered apprenticeship process. Registered apprenticeship programs in Alaska have enjoyed steady growth since that time. In 2015, Alaska began an expansion of registered apprenticeship programs across the state and have helped employers to see how apprenticeship can benefit their businesses. This has led to increased opportunities in apprenticeship for health care, aviation, and construction. As of May 2019, Alaska had about 1,936 registered apprentices training in 69 occupations, with 273 program sponsors and more than 700 employers that hire and train apprentices on the job.

DOLWD has hired an Apprenticeship Coordinator and a Project Assistant to work with employers and the U.S. Office of Apprenticeship to expand the number of Registered Apprenticeship (RA) programs in the state. This expansion will target construction, health care,

and aviation as focus industries for RA; however, DOLWD will continue to work with employers in all industry sectors.

DOLWD has been awarded two USDOL apprenticeship grants that focus on health care. First is the American Apprenticeship Initiative grant of \$2.9 million. This five-year project has already added over 500 Registered Apprentices to the workforce as of February 2020. The project is increasing career awareness, strengthening existing career pathways, introducing new career pathways, and significantly helping employers fill entry-level positions in high-demand health care sector occupations. DOLWD also received a USDOL State Apprenticeship Expansion (SAE) grant. This approximately \$1.5 million award over three years is supporting implementation of health care apprenticeships in five occupations – electronic health records technician, community health worker, clinical medical assistant, medical administrative assistant, and medical biller/coder – under the sponsorship of the Alaska Primary Care Association (APCA). The APCA has member clinics across the state and as of February 2020, has sponsored approximately 178 registered apprentices with over 20 employers. DOLWD recently added more occupations to the SAE grant to enable APCA to add more occupations to their sponsorship. APCA will be transitioning to a fee for service structure, ensuring sustainability after the grant ends.

Under another part of the State Apprenticeship Expansion grant, DOLWD is implementing registered apprenticeships in aviation, which is a relatively new industry in using the apprenticeship model. With the help of the USDOL Office of Apprenticeship in Alaska, two aviation occupations were approved: Airframe & Powerplant Mechanic and Air Transport Pilot. Alaska's Apprenticeship Coordinator is working closely with the USDOL OA and individual air carriers across Alaska to develop and implement registered apprenticeships for these occupations.

The South Central Area Health Education Center (SCAHEC) and the Alaska Construction Academy provide quality pre-apprenticeship programs. The Construction Academies have been in existence for a decade and have become a model for high-quality pre-apprenticeship training at a variety of locations across the state. SCAHEC provides a three week-long health care pre-apprenticeship academy (PATH) in locations across the state. These have been well-received by employers, as participants graduate with appropriate certifications, background screening, and drug testing, and are ready to go to work. SCAHEC and DOLWD continue to work to connect PATH Academy graduates with employers interested in sponsorship for RA.

Information on apprenticeships is included in the regular ongoing training for all AJC staff, as well as training for new staff. AJCs each have an RA Specialist who can provide in-depth services to job seekers and employers. Apprenticeship Specialists from across the state received in-depth Apprenticeship Foundational Training in August 2019. Public and private sector health care providers are engaged and anxious to expand training through apprenticeship to fill many critical positions. Apprentices have been registered in seventeen health care occupations, such as medical assistant, veterinary technician, and medical coder-biller. Working with the Alaska Health Workforce Coalition, DOLWD has targeted several new occupations for RA, such as Direct Service Provider and Psychiatric Technician. These are critical entry-level and high turnover positions. SCAHEC and DOLWD will target these occupations as a focus of the PATH Academies, which will incentivize employers to become sponsors of RA.

The Project Assistant was hired to expand construction apprenticeship and will work in conjunction with local Apprenticeship Specialists across the state to promote RA. The focus will

be on construction occupations rather than construction businesses. For example, a grocery store may sponsor a Building Maintenance apprenticeship. However, DOLWD will continue to market to independent construction businesses that could benefit from RA.

Alaska is expanding the participation of colleges joining the Registered Apprenticeship College Consortium so that apprentices earn college credit toward degrees and may transfer the credits to other members of the Consortium. The Apprenticeship Coordinator has partnered with programs that are approved by the American Council on Education to provide distance-delivered Registered Apprenticeship Related Technical Instruction. Alaska colleges are awarding credit to apprentices who successfully complete these programs, which will give the apprentices a leg up toward a degree or certificate. The University of Alaska offers an Associate of Applied Science in Apprenticeship Technologies Degree, for which a Registered Apprenticeship completer may earn credit towards degree completion. Due to the efforts of SCAHEC, apprentices who complete their program can gain college credit from Alaska Pacific University. The University of Alaska Anchorage (UAA) has hired an Apprenticeship Coordinator and operates apprenticeship programs in Diesel Technology and Automotive Technology, which will also lead to degree attainment.

While women represent 48 percent of the population of Alaska, only 20 percent of apprentices are women. This is a ten-percent increase since 2014 and can be attributed to the growth in health care apprenticeships. Of all apprentices, 66 percent are Caucasian, 19 percent are Alaska Native or American Indian, 4.6 percent are African American, 1.6 percent are Hispanic (who can be of any race), 1.6 percent are Asian, and the remaining apprentices are Native Hawaiian, Other Pacific Islander, or did not identify an ethnicity or race. These numbers are roughly comparable to their proportion in the total Alaska population. The average age of Alaska apprentices is 27, with 50 percent between 18 and 24 and 34 percent between 25 and 35.

Expanding the utilization of Registered Apprenticeship will have a significant impact on increased earnings by Alaskans who become apprentices. Based on the latest data available from the Research and Analysis section of DOLWD, those who complete an apprenticeship earn three times more on average than they did the year before they entered apprenticeship. Those participating in an RA program had an average wage of \$52,281, 35% higher than all other workers. Increasing the number of apprentices and the completion rate will have a significant impact on the local and statewide economy as well as in the lives of individuals and their families.

## **(B) The Strengths and Weaknesses of Workforce Development Activities**

### **Strengths**

#### **Workforce Plans**

Existing sector partners are already actively involved in workforce development for their sectors, as identified in the various industry sector workforce development plans discussed in previous sections. In addition, a robust Career and Technical Education (CTE) Plan, which provides a framework for technical training at both the secondary and postsecondary levels, was developed in 2010 with implementation led by the Alaska Workforce Investment Board (AWIB), Departments of Education & Early Development and Labor and Workforce Development, and the University of Alaska. Used by school districts, university programs, and other postsecondary training programs, it advances a seamless system of CTE for Alaska. In 2017, the Alaska Workforce Investment Board convened a workgroup to update the CTE Plan and provide

implementation guidelines for various audiences such as educators, parents, industry, and policymakers.

### **Alaska Native Groups**

Alaska Native Corporations and other Alaska Native groups are extremely important to Alaska's economy and the health and prosperity of every region. Alaska Native non-profit organizations assure adequate and appropriate attention to cultural and geographic barriers that inhibit workforce development. The twelve regional Alaska Native Non-Profit Corporations organized under the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act recognized under Section 4(b) of the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (PL 93-638, 25 U.S.C. 450b) provide a wide range of social, education, and employment services. Each has unique abilities and resources to serve Alaska Natives and American Indians and drive new initiatives to overcome education and employment barriers for greater success among these populations. They provide a vital connection among education, training, and employment and are most able to respond to the needs and strengths of Alaska's Native and American Indian people.

### **Other Groups**

A diversity of groups actively promote workforce and economic development, including: Business Education Compact; Alaska Native Coalition for Employment and Training (ANCET); the Alaska Apprenticeship and Training Coordinators Association; Alaska Association for Career and Technical Education; the AWIB; state agencies including: the Department of Education & Early Development, and Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development; the University of Alaska system; regional training centers; the Alaska Postsecondary Access and Completion Network; the Alaska Safety Alliance; Alaska Native education and training providers; Alaska Works Partnership, and the Fairbanks Pipeline Training Center Trust, among others.

### **Partnerships**

Strong partnerships and collaborations among state agencies ensure that programs or services are complementary rather than duplicated.

Alaska's Regional Development Organizations (ARDORs) contribute greater understanding of regional economic realities and bring a comprehensive economic and workforce focus for regional communities, industries, and employers. Collaboration with ARDORs incorporates broad-ranging economic goals into specific workforce development actions that strengthen each region. ARDORs provide a vital tool for resource-leveraging, innovation, and the ability to sustain a regional workforce system.

The merger of two DOLWD divisions (Business Partnerships and Employment Security) into the Division of Employment and Training Services provides streamlined and efficient services and training for job seekers and employers.

Strong partnership with the USDOL Office of Apprenticeship in Alaska establishes and supports Registered Apprenticeship programs.

## **Weaknesses/Challenges of Workforce Development Activities**

### **Geography**

Alaska's geographic size and diverse population make access to education, training, and apprenticeships a unique challenge. The state's largest cities are connected by road, but a large portion of the state is accessible only by air or water, and travel may be expensive and time-consuming. There is often the additional challenge of cultural differences for people coming from villages to urban areas. Those challenges create a unique need for distance delivery of employment and training services and, in many cases, for funds to cover travel and housing when training can only be completed in-person. To overcome geographic barriers and higher unemployment rates, DOLWD is working to develop mobile information and connections to career training to better serve persons living in rural communities, providing job seekers and employers increased access to services anytime from anywhere.

While urban areas have good access to job training, registered apprenticeships, colleges, and technical schools, most remote rural communities do not. The career and technical education pathways are competitive, adding more difficulty for rural residents to participate because courses fill quickly with those living locally. The cost of connecting students and job seekers to the resources and education needed to succeed are high for those in rural areas. Paying for travel and housing while in training can be a significant barrier that job seekers in an urban area do not face. AJC services alone cannot overcome all of these barriers. Successfully developing an engaged and qualified Alaskan-based workforce in rural communities takes more reliance on collaboration and leveraging of resources due to the challenges that exist both economically and socially in rural Alaska.

### **Technology Access and Skills**

Another skills gap, not illustrated in the graphs and charts, is computer and other technological skills. The difference in internet speed and technology capacity between urban and rural or remote communities is significant; the cities are up to date and the rural/remote communities lag. Many people living in remote communities - students, teachers, employers, and job seekers - simply do not have the electronic capacity to learn skills, apply for jobs, or receive on-line services on par with those living in the city because of the lack of technology infrastructure.

### **Employability Skills**

Many employers report a lack of motivated job seekers with basic employability skills to fill community jobs. There are many causes: personal issues such as substance abuse and system issues such as the lack of local career pathway programs, and few qualified instructors and available mentors. Lack of motivation is affected by seasonality of work and rates of pay for entry-level jobs.

### **Immigrant Population**

Alaska has a sizable immigrant community, with nearly 8 percent of Alaskans born in another country. In 2015, over 58,000 persons residing in Alaska were immigrants, refugees, or asylum seekers. Many are highly educated and have knowledge and skills employers need, with immigrant workers most numerous in the health care, retail trade, accommodation and food services, public administration, and manufacturing industries. Foreign education and credentials may not be as valued or recognized in the United States, which results in high rates of unemployment, underemployment, and poverty among this population. Anchorage is one of the

nation's most ethnically diverse communities. Limited English proficiency is a significant barrier to learning and employment. The inability to recognize foreign education degrees and occupational credentials is another significant barrier.

### **State Fiscal Considerations**

Alaska's economy grew modestly in 2019 as it emerged from its deepest statewide recession since the 1980s. After losing nearly 6,000 jobs over the 2015-2018 period, oil and gas employment is growing again and was up 600 jobs over year-ago levels in the most recent data. Construction is another industry that has had a modest bounce in employment, due to strong military construction spending and increased oil and gas activity. With a few small exceptions, job growth is widespread across industries and geographic areas.

Faced with declining oil revenue and largely depleted rainy day savings accounts, Alaska made significant cuts to its budgets over the last several years. There is substantial work still ahead, however, as the state wrestles with difficult political decisions about what to do with its Permanent Fund Dividend, taxes, and the cost of existing state services. Until those issues are resolved and a new level of normalcy is established, uncertainty and instability will dampen the state's economic growth.

Alaska took a big step towards a more diverse revenue stream and more budget stability when it passed a law allowing investment earnings from the state's \$65 billion Permanent Fund to be used for government services. That single change will reduce the state's dependence on oil-related revenue from 80 percent to about 30 percent, a dramatic shift.

But until the state determines how to rebalance its revenue and spending to deal with still-large budget deficits, there will be strong downward pressure on state government spending. The University of Alaska has been a particularly large target of cuts and is expected to face additional cuts in the next few years.

State budget reductions have meant fewer staff to deliver workforce development programs and services. Reduced funding has resulted in closing job centers located in rural hub communities such as Kotzebue and Utqiagvik. Consolidation of space in urban centers will require shifting to a model that provides fewer in-person services and more information and services online and in conjunction with regional workforce partners such as the University of Alaska community campuses, regional training centers, and Alaska Native WIOA grantees.

### **(C) State Workforce Development Capacity**

#### **Secondary Education and Training**

Alaska has 54 school districts, including a statewide boarding school, most of which have at least one career and technical education program geared toward one or more of Alaska's priority industries. Many districts have articulation agreements with a UA program so students can earn concurrent secondary and postsecondary credits. High school CTE programs are aligned to industry, academic, and employability skills, and to school-to-apprenticeship standards. The recent economic downturn and state budget cuts have hindered CTE across the K-12 spectrum, and Alaska's share of federal Carl D. Perkins CTE funding has remained stagnant for more than two decades. Districts are trying to keep CTE programs viable by forming consortiums with other districts or programs, offering alternative delivery models such as intensive academies, using equipment simulators for training, or partnering with local employers, non-profit organizations, or other agencies to share facilities or instructors.

## **Postsecondary Education and Training**

### **AVTEC**

The Alaska Vocational Technical Center (AVTEC) in Seward is the only state-owned and operated postsecondary technical training center. AVTEC offers student housing and serves a statewide focused mission to expand employment opportunities for Alaskans by preparing students with career and technical skills required for success in the Alaska workforce. Training programs offered include culinary arts, heavy diesel mechanic, welding, construction, plumbing and heating, refrigeration, industrial electricity, office administrative support for medical and accounting, and networking. The Alaska Maritime Training Center, located at AVTEC, is the largest maritime training center in Alaska, offering over forty US Coast Guard-approved courses for licensed and unlicensed marine vessel deck and engine operations plus shoreside vessel maintenance and repair training for small to medium shipyard employees. Students complete their training in less than a year with occupational credentials and certifications and are employed in Alaska's industries with the necessary entry-level technical and employability skills to provide continued career advancement and success.

### **University of Alaska**

The University of Alaska (UA) is an open enrollment institution with education and training programs including pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship programs and hands-on competency-based training, as well as traditional learning labs and classroom settings, leading students to industry recognized certifications, endorsements, and degrees. At UA, students may be eligible for credit for prior learning through military or prior work experience, and dual enrollment opportunities are available for high school students.

UA has three independently accredited universities, located in Anchorage, Fairbanks, and Juneau, and 13 community campuses across the state offering many distance learning courses for greater access to programs. The community campuses support regional economic growth by training people for local jobs. UA enrolls approximately 27,000 full and part-time students annually through about 400 unique degree, certificate, and occupational endorsement programs.

UA's workforce development focus is aligned with the Alaska Workforce Investment Board's priorities and regional priorities including the health, mining, construction, oil and gas, education, and maritime industry occupations. UA rural campuses serve as regional training centers and support regional economic drivers through engagement with local industries and employers to provide timely education and training programs.

UA participates in apprenticeship programs through membership in the Registered Apprenticeship College Consortium, developing new federally Registered Apprenticeship programs, providing opportunities for apprenticeship completers with credit for prior learning, and sponsoring apprenticeships programs. The UA system also works closely with school districts to provide dual credit opportunities for career and technical education students so they may quickly attain postsecondary certificates and degrees after completing high school. UA also partners with K-12 education through middle colleges and the Alaska Native Science and Engineering Program.

The University is home to the Alaska Small Business Development Center, which has offices in Anchorage, Wasilla, Fairbanks, Soldotna, Homer, Juneau, and Ketchikan, and provides no-cost advising services and low-cost educational programs to entrepreneurs looking to start or grow

their small business. The Center's business advisors work with entrepreneurs in confidential, one-on-one sessions in management, marketing, sales, finance, accounting, and other disciplines required for small business growth, expansion, and innovation.

- University of Alaska Anchorage (UAA)
  - Community & Technical College - Anchorage
  - Matanuska-Susitna College - Palmer
  - Prince William Sound College - Valdez
  - Kodiak College - Kodiak
  - Kenai Peninsula College – Soldotna
  
- University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF)
  - Community & Technical College - Fairbanks
  - Chukchi Campus - Kotzebue
  - Interior Alaska Campus - based in Fairbanks, serves rural areas in Interior Alaska
  - Northwest Campus - Nome
  - Kuskokwim Campus - Bethel
  - Bristol Bay Campus - Dillingham
  
- University of Alaska Southeast (UAS)
  - Juneau Campus
  - Sitka Campus
  - Ketchikan Campus

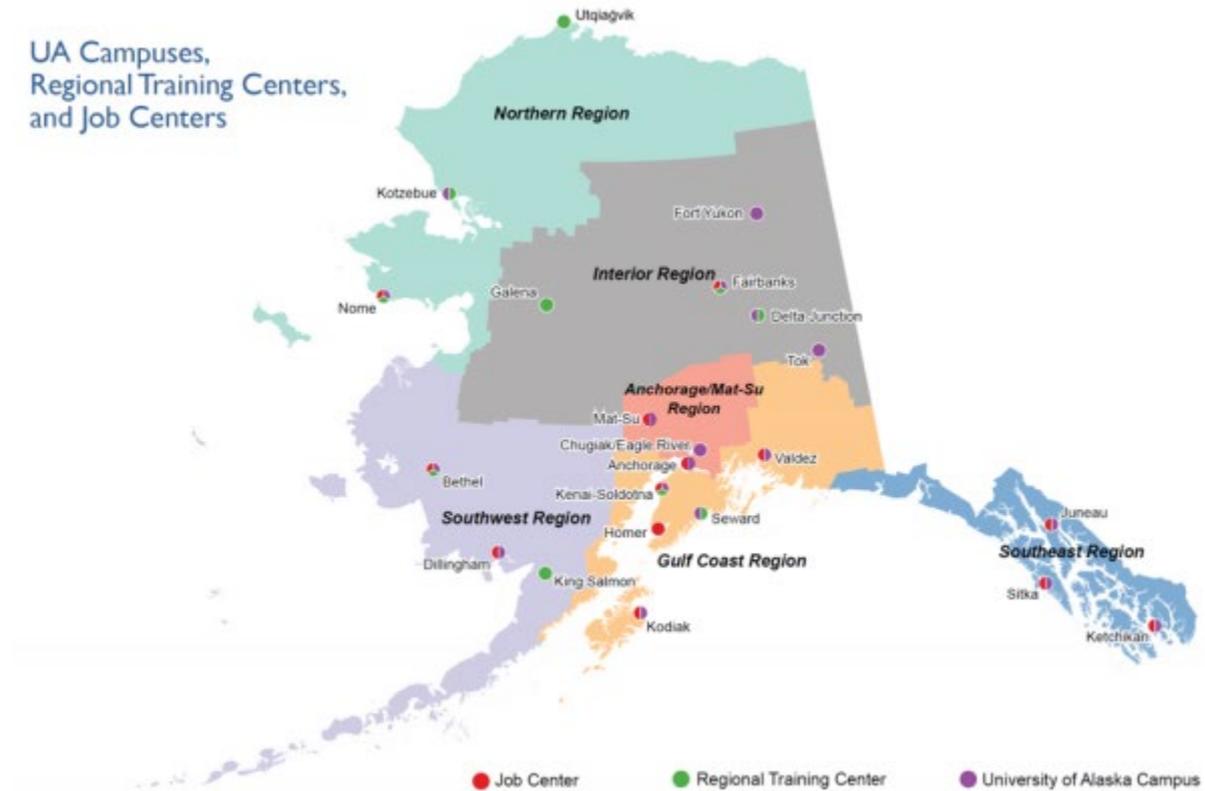
## **Regional Training Centers**

Alaska's regional training centers (RTCs) are public or non-profit centers whose mission is to develop and provide educational and training activities linked to employment opportunities in the region. Each RTC is governed by a local or regional board and is a partnership comprised of two or more of the following types of organizations: business/industry; Alaska Native regional and community organizations; economic development entities; local boroughs; city, state, federal, and tribal governments; registered apprenticeship programs; K-12 school districts; accredited college and university educational institutions; and DOLWD AJCs. RTCs work closely with the region's employers to provide the training necessary to fill the workforce needs of that region. These programs train over 11,000 students each year. Regional training centers include:

- Alaska Technical Center, Kotzebue - <http://www.nwarctic.org/atc>
- Amundsen Educational Center, Soldotna - <http://www.aecak.org/>
- AVTEC, Seward - <https://avtec.edu/>
- Fairbanks Pipeline Training Center, Fairbanks - <http://www.fptcalaska.com/>
- Galena Interior Learning Academy, Galena - <https://www.galenaalaska.org/GILA/>
- Iḷis̱agvik College, Utqiagvik - <https://www.ilisagvik.edu/>
- Northwestern Alaska Career and Technical Center, Nome - <http://www.nacteonline.org/>
- Partners for Progress in Delta, Inc., Delta - <http://www.partnersforprogressindelta.org/>
- Southwest Alaska Vocational Education Center, King Salmon - <http://www.savec.org/>

- Yuut Elitnaurviat - People’s Learning Center, Bethel - <https://yuut.org/>
- UA community campuses - <http://www.alaska.edu/research/wp/ua/>

Figure 7 shows the locations of Job Centers, Regional Training Centers, and University of Alaska campuses across the state.



**Figure 7. Job Centers, Regional Training Centers, and UA Campuses**

### Training Clearinghouse

DOLWD’s Research and Analysis Section maintains the “Alaska Training Clearinghouse,” which is a database of postsecondary providers and programs. It lists over 130 training providers offering several hundred training programs in a variety of industries, including the postsecondary programs listed above.

### Performance Measures

Alaska’s performance outcomes reflect the department’s commitment to continuing improvement of its coordinated and comprehensive workforce development system, and the hard work and dedication of department leadership and program staff. Participants who exit our systems are work-ready and obtain and retain self-sufficient wages. Alaska has historically met or exceeded performance measures for WIOA Title I, II, III, IV, and Senior Community Service Employment Program, illustrating the state’s capacity to provide successful workforce development programs and activities.

## **b. State Strategic Vision and Goals**

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include the State’s strategic vision and goals for developing its workforce and meeting employer needs in order to support economic growth and economic self-sufficiency. This must include—

### **1. Vision**

Describe the State’s strategic vision for its workforce development system.

### **2. Goals**

Describe the goals for achieving this vision based on the analysis in (a) above of the State’s economic conditions, workforce, and workforce development activities. This must include—

(A) Goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce, including preparing youth and individuals with barriers to employment<sup>7</sup> and other populations.<sup>8</sup>

(B) Goals for meeting the skilled workforce needs of employers.

### **3. Performance Goals**

Using the tables provided within each Core Program section, include the State’s expected levels of performance relating to the performance accountability measures based on primary indicators of performance described in section 116(b)(2)(A) of WIOA. (This Strategic Planning element only applies to core programs.)

### **4. Assessment**

Describe how the State will assess the overall effectiveness of the workforce development system in the State in relation to the strategic vision and goals stated above in sections (b)(1), (2), and (3) and how it will use the results of this assessment and other feedback to make continuous or quality improvements.

#### **(1) Vision**

Alaska’s strategic vision for developing Alaska’s workforce and meeting employer needs is:

“Enhance and improve opportunities for all Alaskans to obtain high skill, high wage jobs and careers by promoting the dignity of work and the value of employment.”

Alaska’s workforce system will provide the guidance, knowledge, and pathways for Alaska’s workforce to acquire the skills Alaskan employers need to become and remain competitive in local, state, and global economies. All Alaskans, including individuals with disabilities, the underserved, Alaska Natives, dislocated workers, and others who experience significant barriers

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<sup>7</sup> Individuals with barriers to employment include displaced homemakers; low-income individuals; Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians; individuals with disabilities, including youth who are individuals with disabilities; older individuals; ex-offenders; homeless individuals, or homeless children and youths; youth who are in or have aged out of the foster care system; individuals who are English language learners, individuals who have low levels of literacy, and individuals facing substantial cultural barriers; eligible migrant and seasonal farmworkers (as defined at section 167(i) of WIOA and Training and Employment Guidance Letter No. 35-14); individuals within 2 years of exhausting lifetime eligibility under the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Program; single parents (including single pregnant women); and long-term unemployed individuals.

<sup>8</sup> Veterans, unemployed workers, and youth and any other populations identified by the State.

to employment, will have access to the career education, training, and support services needed to prepare for and participate in high-demand occupations that pay family-sustaining wages.

The coordinated effort among workforce partners and agencies will improve the efficiency and performance of Alaska's workforce system. The workforce strategies will strengthen accountability across the system by focusing on education and competency attainment, individual progress, career advancement, and participant employment and earnings through coordination and resource leveraging. This will serve to increase access to career pathway programs and lead to self-sustaining employment while avoiding duplication of services. The Department of Labor and Workforce Development (DOLWD) will enhance Alaska Job Centers' effectiveness through technology and mobile services that increase outreach to employers and job seekers. The Alaska Workforce Investment Board (AWIB) and DOLWD will assess how effectively workforce partners are collaborating to achieve good results and identify areas for improvement or innovation. A central focus will be to reduce program and customer obstacles to improve customer outcomes.

## **(2) Goals**

### **(A) Goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce, including preparing youth and individuals with barriers to employment and other populations.**

Goal 1: Build clear routes to careers and/or employment for all Alaskans.

- Enhance and expand career information and guidance for students, parents, guardians, teachers, and counselors, with the help of employers, to engage students in exploring careers and workplaces.
- Increase the life, work-ready, and technical skills of in- and out-of-school youth and adults.
- Help youth transition from high school to post high school education, training, and work.
- Assist veterans with barriers to employment transition into the civilian workforce.
- Increase industry-sector focused work-based learning opportunities for youth and adults through internships, school-to-work, pre-apprentice and apprentice training, seasonal employment work experience, and work-study.

Goal 2: Support job opportunities, training opportunities, and career progression opportunities for all Alaskans.

- Provide career counselors for youth and adults through school district career and technical education partners and Alaska's Job Centers (AJCs).
- Connect youth and adults with disabilities with educational opportunities and employment supports to maximize successful employment retention.
- Improve the ability to accept and transfer credits earned in high school, through apprenticeships, postsecondary education, and college coursework.
- Link veterans with training and educational opportunities in order to optimize career progression.

- Promote competency-based occupational training that reduces the time it takes to complete training and go to work.
- Expand pre-apprentice and apprenticeship opportunities and other work-based learning approaches to individuals with disabilities and others with significant barriers to training and employment.

**(B) Goals for meeting the skilled workforce needs of employers.**

Goal 3: Develop multiple pathways for statewide economic stability and job growth.

- Increase outreach to employers to support career guidance and career awareness activities.
- Cultivate strong long lasting relationships with employers to advocate for the recruitment and retention of veterans.
- Expand industry sector workforce planning to attract and prepare youth and adults for employment.
- Use labor market research to determine where there are significant labor shortages and determine the occupations in-demand.
- Effectively crossmatch and identify current worker skills, including military experience, with skills needed to fill occupations in-demand.
- Connect regional economic and workforce development planning in each economic region to stimulate job creation and growth.
- Expand the utilization of Registered Apprenticeships by industry sector employers to train workers and meet occupational demands.
- Assess how effectively workforce partners are collaborating to achieve good results and identify areas for improvement or innovation.
- Reduce program and administrative and process obstacles to improve customer outcomes.
- Develop focused regional workforce initiatives that blend partner resources (co-investment) to educate and train workers for jobs within the economic region.

**(3) Performance Goals**

See Appendix 1 - Performance Goals for the Core Programs.

**(4) Assessment**

**Accountability Measures**

The state uses the performance accountability measures in Section 116 of WIOA to assess the overall effectiveness of Alaska’s workforce investment system and the individual core programs. These measures align well with the strategic vision and goals. DOLWD will negotiate updated performance goals for WIOA programs in spring 2020.

The state also tracks a number of success metrics for its apprenticeship grants, including the number of new Registered Apprenticeship programs, the number of new apprentices, and the number of sponsors and employers providing employment and training services.

### **Industry Sector Partnerships**

DOLWD will work with industry sector partners and solicit feedback about how the workforce system, programs, and initiatives are working for employers and training providers and solicit their ideas for continuous quality improvements.

### **Data Analysis**

DOLWD and the AWIB will analyze the data from these measures and outcomes such as employment and earnings to assess and compare strategies and determine which are working well and which need adjusting. Workforce program results are published annually for policy makers, the public, and the AWIB to further assess programs and comparative outcomes to determine the services and interventions that work and those that are less effective. The participant data and rich labor market information provide a solid platform for deeper and longer-term evaluation of workforce programs.

### **c. State Strategy**

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include the State's strategies to achieve its strategic vision and goals. These strategies must take into account the State's economic, workforce, and workforce development, education and training activities and analysis provided in Section (a) above. Include discussion of specific strategies to address the needs of populations provided in Section (a).

1. Describe the strategies the State will implement, including industry or sector partnerships related to in-demand industry sectors and occupations and career pathways, as required by WIOA section 101(d)(3)(B), (D). "Career pathway" is defined at WIOA section 3(7) and includes registered apprenticeship. "In-demand industry sector or occupation" is defined at WIOA section 3(23)
2. Describe the strategies the State will use to align the core programs, any Combined State Plan partner programs included in this Plan, required and optional one-stop partner programs, and any other resources available to the State to achieve fully integrated customer services consistent with the strategic vision and goals described above. Also describe strategies to strengthen workforce development activities in regard to weaknesses identified in section II(a)(2)

### **(c) State Strategy**

#### **1. Strategies related to in-demand industry sectors and occupations and career pathways.**

##### **Strategy 1. Engage industry sector partnerships and create career pathways for all Alaskans.**

The Alaska Workforce Investment Board (AWIB) and the department will engage industry sector partners from in-demand industries including health care, construction, maritime, oil and gas, transportation, technology, education, and mining. The AWIB and DOLWD will continue to participate in, and in some cases lead, sector workforce and career planning efforts that include employers and other sector partners (K-12 education; postsecondary education; regional training centers; economic development organizations; labor unions; and other appropriate state

agencies). The efforts will update existing workforce plan(s), gauge the status of current workforce development activities, and determine gaps in training both statewide and regionally. These sector specific partnerships will also help ensure that education and training investments are prioritized and focused on and responsive to employer needs. Career pathways will be accessible to all Alaskans, including all WIOA-targeted populations.

Current labor market information from employers and from DOLWD's Research and Analysis Section will inform sector partnerships. Employers are also encouraged to work closely with the AWIB, DOLWD, and other partners in developing career pathways to address the needs for the industry from K-12 through postsecondary. Postsecondary will be viewed in the broad sense of any education or training that happens after high school, which could include college/university, Registered Apprenticeships, short-term training, industry certification programs, pre-apprenticeship programs, adult education, etc. AJC career specialists and case managers will adopt an industry sector approach to work more effectively with employers and job seekers.

To maintain an understanding of Alaska's workforce needs, each AWIB meeting will continue to include a labor market update, and face to face board meetings will continue to feature a panel and discussion with employers sharing information about their industry's training needs and practices and ties to Alaska's Job Center Network.

The Alaska Job Center Network also maintains strong relationships with key employers in these industries through employer services. These relationships allow the department to effectively connect job seekers, through one-stop programs, to training and employment placements. The MOU executed by the AWIB with the One-Stop Operator and WIOA required partners provides for an Alaskan Job Center Network advisory council that will further facilitate program and regional information sharing about how partners are successfully connecting with industries and employers.

## **Strategy 2. Expand Registered Apprenticeships, pre-apprenticeships, and other work-based learning approaches.**

The governor and AWIB have determined that the expansion of Registered Apprenticeship by employers will lead youth and adults, including those with disabilities and those who have multiple barriers to employment, into good paying jobs with career opportunities, while providing employers with new workers to fill in-demand occupations.

DOLWD's Apprenticeship Coordinator is developing new Registered Apprenticeship programs and increasing the number of apprentices. The Apprentice Coordinator works closely with Alaska's USDOL Office of Apprenticeship to provide support and technical assistance to employer partners.

Alaska is expanding the participation of colleges joining the Registered Apprenticeship College Consortia so that apprentices earn college credit toward degrees and may transfer the credits to other members of the Consortia. The Apprenticeship Coordinator has partnered with programs that are approved by the American Council on Education to provide distance-delivered Registered Apprenticeship Related Technical Instruction. Alaska colleges are awarding credit to apprentices who successfully complete these programs, which will give the apprentices a leg up toward a degree or certificate.

DOLWD is working with the Alaska Department of Education & Early Development and local school districts to expand work-based learning opportunities for students and out-of-school

youth, including youth with disabilities. This includes school-to-apprenticeship programs, internships, and cooperative learning to strengthen career paths and better prepare young Alaskans for employment in their career field.

The U.S. Department of Labor Alaska Office of Apprenticeship and the Division of Employment and Training Services have developed and provide ongoing training for Apprenticeship Specialists and Employment Technicians in the process of creating approved programs and informing job seekers and students about the benefits of apprenticeships. The training includes ways to inform employers about the advantages of sponsoring an apprentice program and training workers with the skills they need to sustain and grow that business.

DOLWD is working with apprenticeship intermediaries to create quality pre-apprenticeship programs tailored to the needs of employers and prospective sponsors. This effort includes the health care industry and the construction industry.

DOLWD has updated its apprenticeship website, has created new outreach materials for job seekers and employers, and has developed a state apprenticeship plan.

More detailed information about Registered Apprenticeship activities is included in Section II (a) 2.A – Workforce Development, Education and Training Activities Analysis.

### **Strategy 3. Demonstrate innovation in delivery of Alaska Job Center services.**

Delivery of services through Alaska Job Centers (AJCs) will increase the use of internet service delivery beginning in summer 2020 with the implementation of a new integrated service delivery system. Wagner-Peyser, Trade Act, WIOA Title IB, Veteran Services, and Alaska Adult Education programs will be accessible once implementation is complete. DOLWD will review programmatic and individual AJC business processes and customer engagement and develop strategies to capitalize on new efficiencies and increase the depth and breadth of services to Alaskans. AJC services will focus on serving WIOA priority populations and connecting residents to career pathways leading to employment and career opportunities. AJCs with co-located programs such as Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF), Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Alaska Adult Education (AAE), and Vocational Rehabilitation, will strengthen the delivery of WIOA core programs within economic regions.

DOLWD has procured a new online labor exchange and case management system to enhance user experience, co-locate data, and provide a single sign-on for Wagner-Peyser, Veterans Services, WIOA Title I, Trade Act, Alaska Adult Education (AAE), and Unemployment Insurance programs. This will allow individuals to enter core information into one system when applying for various programs and benefits.

### **Strategy 4. Prioritize services to target populations.**

WIOA funds will focus on serving WIOA-defined target populations. Outreach will be expanded through regional workforce partners to inform persons with barriers to employment and other target populations of the services that are available to them. Services include career awareness and planning, employment skills, education and training opportunities, job placement, and follow-up services. DOLWD will work to enhance the connection among the variety of systems and programs that serve the targeted populations.

Alaska's high priority target populations are:

- Youth and adults with disabilities
- Alaska Natives
- Veterans and transitioning service members
- Out-of-school youth
- Returning citizens
- Unemployed and underemployed
- Individuals with multiple barriers to training and employment
- At-risk youth
- Homeless

DOLWD's Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) will continue to provide training for AJC and partner staff working with clients who have disabilities to increase referrals to DVR. DVR utilizes vocational evaluation services and local labor market surveys to ensure individuals with disabilities are provided informed choice to foster the pursuit of career pathways in high-demand industries and apprenticeship opportunities. DVR partners with WIOA core programs to maximize services to individuals with disabilities and coordinate services to promote successful employment outcomes.

The Department of Health and Social Services developed a website called "Disability Benefits 101," an online tool for those with disabilities that provides available work incentives and helps individuals determine how their Social Security Insurance, Social Security Disability Insurance, or other public benefits may be impacted by employment. The Achieving a Better Life Experience Act (ABLE) allows eligible persons with disabilities to secure a "taxed advantaged" savings account of up to \$100,000 without affecting public benefit limits. Calculating benefits and ABLE savings is a critical tool for achieving quality long-term outcomes. DVR works with Work Incentives Planning & Assistance Project to ensure there is a system with multiple partners to meet the needs of Alaska's youth and adults with disabilities by expanding access to employment and career pathways to prepare for in-demand careers through comprehensive access to benefits planning by certified Community Work Incentive Counselors (CWICs).

Alaska's "Employment First" legislation calls for "competitive integrated employment" as the preferred outcome for those with disabilities. DOLWD has executed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services and is working on an MOU with the Alaska Department of Education & Early Development to ensure progress towards that goal. The MOU includes commitments for active participation on the Interagency Council on Employment First. DVR partners with employers to promote the hiring of individuals with disabilities. DVR utilizes a dual customer model and works with employers to provide human resource services and connections to potential employees. DVR has hired an Employment First Coordinator to promote industry sector partnerships with businesses in industries that are both high-demand and high-wage.

Through DVR, Pre-Employment Transition Services (PETS) provides the following required activities to students with disabilities (14- to 21-year-olds) who are eligible or potentially eligible for vocational rehabilitation services: (1) job exploration counseling, (2) work-based learning opportunities, (3) counseling on postsecondary educational opportunities (4) workplace readiness training, and (5) instruction in self-advocacy. PETS implementation has increased coordination among local school districts and DVR.

DOLWD works with Alaska Native organizations already engaged in workforce development activities to ensure services are provided as widely as possible while avoiding duplication.

DOLWD continues to participate in Alaska's Returning Citizens Initiative in partnership with the Alaska Department of Corrections to assist youth and adults leaving correctional facilities in obtaining gainful employment and connecting to a career path. DOLWD secured a two-year Linking to Employment Pre-release grant intended to reduce recidivism. The program will provide 600 pre-release inmates with career services, 200 of whom will be enrolled in the nine-week individualized Bridge to Success curriculum.

DOLWD will work with agencies such as Catholic Social Services to support refugees, asylum seekers, and other immigrants in improving their skills and pursuing education, training, and sustainable employment in alignment with the White House Task Force on New Americans Plan developed with the participation of the Municipality of Anchorage.

DOLWD will continue working with Alaska's military leadership in providing training and employment opportunities to veterans and transitioning service members. DOLWD is working with the Soldier for Life and Airmen for Life transition centers to assist with career path training for Transitioning Services Members, preparing them for employment in Alaska as they leave military service. The military-approved training providers will create pre-apprentice and occupational training pathways to priority industry jobs.

**Strategy 5. Partner with other agencies, organizations, and programs to leverage resources.**

DOLWD will continue and expand its partnerships with other agencies and organizations. While the following list is not all-inclusive, below are some examples of partnership development and partner programs:

- Alaska AFL-CIO
- Alaska Apprenticeship and Training Coordinators Association
- Alaska Association for Career and Technical Education
- Alaska Career and Technical Education Plan AWIB Workgroup
- Alaska Health Workforce Coalition
- Alaska Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Eielson Airforce Base, and Fort Wainwright Military Transition Services
- Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority
- Alaska Native Organizations

- Alaska Native Coalition for Employment and Training
- Alaska Native Regional Employment and Training Entities
- Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium
- Alaska Performance Scholarship Program
- Alaska Postsecondary Access and Completion Network
- Alaska Primary Care Association
- Alaska Regional Economic Development Organizations
- Alaska Safety Alliance
- Alaska state agencies such as Departments of Corrections; Health and Social Services; Administration; Commerce, Community, and Economic Development; Education & Early Development
- Alaska Vocational Technical Center
- Alaska Works Partnership, Inc.
- Alaska Youth Works (Alaska Mental Health Trust Program)
- Alaska Youth Works (Disability Employment Initiative)
- Anchorage Literacy Project
- Catholic Social Services - Refugee Assistance and Immigration Services
- Fairbanks Pipeline Training Center
- Governor's Council on Disabilities and Special Education
- Joint-Administered Training Trusts
- Northern Industrial Training, Inc.
- Regional Training Centers
- Renewable Energy Alaska Project
- Sponsors of Federal Registered Apprenticeship Programs
- University of Alaska and Community Campuses
- USDOL Office of Apprenticeship in Anchorage

**Strategy 6. Streamline internal processes by creating full integration of programs and services.**

DOLWD has taken steps to streamline internal processes by creating full integration of programs and services. This includes the following activities:

## **Grants/Systems Support Realignment**

In July 2019, the Commissioner of the Department of Labor and Workforce Development realigned the grants unit under the Alaska Workforce Investment Board. This realignment ensures greater coordination and efficiency of workforce investment dollars in the state. The realignment is consistent with the WIOA State Plan and elevates the status of the grants unit to be consistent with other state models.

### **Alaska Workforce Investment Board Grants Unit**

The AWIB grants unit is led by an executive director along with an assistant director overseeing the following programs and initiatives:

- WIOA Youth
- Apprenticeship
- At Risk Youth
- State Training Employment Program
- Technical Vocational Education Program
- Career and Technical Education

### **Policy Review**

Reorganization required developing a policy adopting prior policies of the Division of Employment Training Services.

### **Integrity, Program Assessments, and Grants**

The AWIB provides integrity for the allocation and use of public resources and the assessment, evaluation, and continuous improvement of workforce strategies and programs.

AWIB staff prepare public solicitations for grants and perform due diligence to assure all applicants considered for funding meet the application requirements. Grant administrators assist with the collection of grant applications and assist the AWIB with independent grant application reviews. AWIB members independently review applications, make recommendations to the commissioner for awarding grants, and ensure integrity in award, denial, and appeal of decision processes.

### **Other**

DOLWD has been working with the Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education (ACPE) in streamlining processes for DOLWD grantees and Eligible Training Providers by sharing information between the two agencies regarding the status of training providers' compliance with ACPE regulations.

DOLWD coordinates with the University of Alaska and the Department of Education & Early Development on education and workforce issues such as continued implementation of the Alaska Career and Technical Education Plan; dual and concurrent credit for high school students; aligning secondary and postsecondary programs to industry standards and industry

needs; and partnering to provide pre-apprenticeship and Registered Apprenticeship opportunities.

### **Strategy 7. Promote job creation and workforce development opportunities identified by regional data.**

The Research and Analysis Section of DOLWD publishes employment, unemployment, wage, and population data for all of Alaska's economic regions and regularly profiles different parts of the state to identify their key economic drivers (fishing, mining, oil and gas, tourism, military, etc.) in its monthly publication *Alaska Economic Trends*. Below are a few examples of those types of regional or local-area articles:

- <https://laborstats.alaska.gov/trends/jun19art2.pdf>
- <https://laborstats.alaska.gov/trends/nov18art3.pdf>
- <https://laborstats.alaska.gov/trends/feb18art1.pdf>

### **Strategy 8. Actively engage at-risk youth and provide immediate accessibility to program services.**

DVR, along with other DOLWD programs and the Office of Children's Services, have created a task force to address the needs of at-risk youth exiting the foster care and juvenile justice systems. DVR will take a lead role in ensuring vocational rehabilitation services are provided to youth who experience disabilities to increase the likelihood of success and independence through employment.

#### **(2) Strategies to Align Programs**

All core programs and the combined plan partner program - Senior Community Service Employment Program - are administered by DOLWD. All the strategies listed under Section (c) State Strategy (1) serve to align the core and partners and programs, as well as other entities in the state's education, workforce, and economic development arena. Staff members from each program meet regularly to discuss operational strategies aligned with the goals. These meetings identify areas of alignment that create efficiencies and increase program benefit to Alaskans. This includes cross-program training, AJC staff training, DOLWD policy changes, communication strategies, and frequent reviews of performance metrics.

DOLWD engages One-Stop partners (See Appendix 2.2) on a regular basis to further implement state workforce programs and to coordinate activities regionally to ensure the focus on WIOA target populations while supplying good job applicants and apprentice applicants for employers and apprentice sponsors. Key projects include improving services for persons with disabilities, expanding Registered Apprenticeships, modernizing AJCs and service delivery, and increasing services for youth and adults reentering society - all of which require continuous program review and coordinated activities among partners.

#### **Strategies to Strengthen Activities Regarding Identified Weaknesses**

**Weakness:** A continued challenge is Alaska's geographic size and diverse population, which makes access to education, training, and apprenticeships uniquely challenging. The state's largest cities are connected by road, but a large portion of the state is accessible only by air or water, and travel may be expensive and time-consuming. There is often the additional challenge of cultural differences for people coming from village settings to urban areas. Those challenges create a

unique need for distance delivery of employment and training services and, in many cases, for funds to cover travel and housing when training can only be completed in-person.

**Strategy:** Alaska's strategies include making employment and training services available via the internet and smart phones; support local rural resources such as libraries and tribal council offices to provide public internet access to employment and training services in areas without an AJC; and strengthen partnerships with rural organizations, such as tribal organizations, to co-enroll and share the costs of travel and housing when participants must travel to attend training.

**Weakness:** Rural/remote communities continue to lag in internet speed and technology capacity. Many people living in remote communities, including students, teachers, employers, and job seekers, simply do not have access to the electronic tools and abilities to learn skills, apply for jobs, or receive on-line services on a par with those living in the city because of the lack of technology infrastructure.

**Strategy:** DOLWD will strengthen partnerships with the University of Alaska rural campuses, state funded technical and vocational education program locations, and local governments to provide the best internet access available in as broad an area as possible so rural residents will have access to employment and training services via the internet. Alaska is implementing a new integrated labor exchange and case management system that will allow clients to access services through one portal. DOLWD is providing mobile device access as a part of this new system. Mobile device usage in rural Alaska is increasing and becoming a primary internet access method.

**Weakness:** Many employers report a lack of motivated job seekers with basic employability skills to fill community jobs. There are many causes: personal issues such as substance abuse and system issues such as the lack of local career pathway programs, and few qualified instructors and available mentors.

**Strategy:** Alaska promotes the ACT Career Ready 101 Soft Skills Suite in job centers as an individualized service or workshop for jobseekers' initial visits specifically to address the lack of motivated job seekers with basic employability skills. The workshops also introduce other Career Ready 101 courses, WorkKeys® assessments, and the National Career Readiness Certificate for jobseekers. Alaska has promoted WorkKeys for several years, and the certificate gives job seekers a document they can reference on their resume and include with their interview packet that will give them an advantage in the job application process. Alaska encourages employers to recognize, request, and/or require the certificate, knowing it can save them money in their hiring, training, and succession planning activities.

**Weakness:** Remote rural communities do not have good access to job training, apprenticeships, colleges, and trade schools.

**Strategy:** The University of Alaska acts as a community college at its rural campuses across the state. They and other training providers are increasing their training programs that are available via distance delivery. DOLWD will support distance delivered training by funding participant tuitions through Individual Training Accounts where appropriate. Where distance delivery is not available, DOLWD will seek out local organizations such as Alaska Native Tribal organizations to co-enroll rural participants and share the costs of travel and housing for participants to attend job and apprenticeship trainings not available in their local area.

**Weakness:** Limited English proficiency is a significant barrier to learning and employment. The inability to recognize foreign education degrees and occupational credentials is another significant barrier.

**Strategy:** Alaska Job Center (AJC) staff will refer limited English-speaking customers to the Department's WIOA Title II Alaska Adult Education programs. Customers holding foreign education degrees can meet individually with Employment Services Technicians in the job centers to work on a plan to have their degrees recognized and/or to find work in their field of study.

**Weakness:** Worker layoffs have increased due to the declining production of oil in Alaska and the significant decline in the price of oil, revenue from which has provided the bulk of the state's operating revenue. Alaska is currently experiencing a growth in dislocated worker clients due to layoffs of workers in the oil and gas industry, workers employed by contractors and vendors that support the industry, and local and state publicly funded positions.

**Strategy:** DOLWD will maximize the use of Dislocated Worker and Rapid Response funding to return laid-off workers to jobs with living wages as quickly as possible.

### III. Operational Planning Elements

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include an Operational Planning Elements section that supports the State’s strategy and the system-wide vision described in Section II(c) above. Unless otherwise noted, all Operational Planning Elements apply to Combined State Plan partner programs included in the plan as well as to core programs. This section must include—

#### a. State Strategy Implementation

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include—

##### 1. State Board Functions

Describe how the State board will implement its functions under section 101(d) of WIOA (i.e., provide a description of Board operational structures and decision making processes to ensure such functions are carried out).

As the governor’s lead workforce policy entity, the (AWIB) reviews statewide programs and policies to ensure Alaska’s workforce system is useful, accessible, and understandable to all customers. This includes businesses seeking qualified workers, unemployed Alaskans looking for jobs, and incumbent workers wanting to upgrade their skills to meet the demands of a changing work environment.

AWIB members are appointed by the governor, and the AWIB is supported by an Executive Director, an assistant director, five full-time program coordinators, two grants administrators; and one administrative assistant. The AWIB operates according to Alaska statutory requirements and board bylaws. A Chair and Vice-Chair are elected annually and serve for one year. The AWIB makes formal decisions during its full board meetings; in between these meetings, the Executive Committee, composed of the Chairs of each standing committee and the current and past Chair and current Vice-Chair, are authorized by its bylaws to make decisions on behalf of the AWIB. Staff keep track of action items and next steps necessary to complete them. The Executive Director works with the Executive Committee in setting meeting agendas and activities to ensure all functions are carried out.

Organizationally, the AWIB is housed under the Commissioner of the Department of Labor and Workforce Development (DOLWD). The vision of the AWIB is “to build connections that put Alaskans into good jobs.” The AWIB achieves this vision by utilizing labor market data and regional and sector stakeholder input to guide DOLWD in continuous improvement of Alaska’s workforce system. The AWIB develops a statewide workforce investment policy framework and drives coordination and collaboration among programs and agencies.

The AWIB is proactive in identifying and utilizing labor market data to identify priority industries to target for employment training and investment and has developed or supported workforce-training plans for these industries. The AWIB has also been deeply engaged in creating a strong career pathway system through the statewide Alaska Career and Technical Education (CTE) Plan and has endorsed workforce development plans for the health care, transportation, construction, oil and gas, mining, and maritime industries. The AWIB remains actively engaged with priority sectors in Alaska on workforce strategies.

Identifying areas of improvement is a top priority for the AWIB, and it is active in the assessment and evaluation of Alaska Job Centers (AJCs). In addition to monitoring Job Center

sites, the AWIB assesses WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, Dislocated Worker Training-National Emergency Grant, and National Emergency Grant funds.

The AWIB is actively engaged in training programs targeted for youth and other Alaska residents. The AWIB participates in the evaluation of training and education grants, and through this process, emphasizes investment in training for individuals who experience barriers to employment, as well as utilizing labor market analysis to recommend investment in programs that prepare Alaskans for high-demand occupations in priority industries.

To fulfill its role of guiding DOLWD through oversight of training programs, the AWIB coordinated the preparation of this new WIOA State Plan. As an additional measure of WIOA core program success, AWIB members receive regular program updates at their business meetings.

The AWIB was engaged, and their feedback solicited, during the process to rewrite this plan . The full AWIB discussed the new WIOA Combined Plan at its February 2020 meeting. External stakeholder feedback was solicited and considered in the new plan. The Board's Executive Committee approved the Combined Plan Update in February 2020. Per AWIB bylaws, the Executive Committee can act on behalf of the full board and supervise the affairs of the Board between regular meetings.

## **2. Implementation of State Strategy**

Describe how the lead State agency with responsibility for the administration of each core program or a Combined Plan partner program included in this plan will implement the State's Strategies identified in Section II(c). above. This must include a description of—

### **A. Core Program Activities to Implement the State's Strategy**

Describe the activities the entities carrying out the respective core programs will fund to implement the State's strategies. Also, describe how such activities will be aligned across the core programs and Combined State Plan partner programs included in this plan and among the entities administering the programs, including using co-enrollment and other strategies, as appropriate.

DOLWD supports integration of services through a single delivery system for both businesses and individuals. This efficient use of resources includes integrating all WIOA core programs with Unemployment Insurance (UI), veterans' programs, the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP), the Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) program, apprenticeship and sector partnership development, and the Disability Employment Initiative (DEI).

The WIOA core programs are delivered through 14 AJCs located throughout the state, ten vocational rehabilitation offices, five of which are co-located with the AJCs, ten WIOA Youth Program sub-recipients, and 15 Alaska Adult Education (AAE) sub-recipients. SCSEP is co-located within the Division of Employment and Training Services (DETS) and works closely with its integrated partners to ensure that participants are co-enrolled with other appropriate services. Program staff are trained to refer customers to the programs and resources that best fit their needs.

All core programs and the combined plan partner program - Senior Community Service Employment Program - are housed under DOLWD. These programs serve to align the core partners and programs, as well as other entities in the state's education, workforce, and economic

development arena. Staff members from each program have bi-monthly meetings to discuss operational strategies aligned with the goals. These meetings will continue to identify areas where alignment is required. This includes cross-program training, AJC staff training, DOLWD policy changes, communication strategies, and frequent reviews of performance outcomes.

DOLWD engages One-Stop partners on a regular basis to further implement state workforce programs and to coordinate activities regionally to ensure the focus on WIOA target populations, while supplying good job applicants and apprentice applicants for employers and apprentice sponsors. Key projects include improving services for persons with disabilities, expanding Registered Apprenticeships, modernization of AJCs and service delivery, and increasing services for youth and adults reentering society - all of which require constant program review and coordinated activities among partners.

## **B. Alignment with Activities Outside the Plan**

Describe how the activities identified in (A) will be aligned with programs and activities provided by required one-stop partners and other optional one-stop partners and activities provided under employment, training (including Registered Apprenticeships), education (including career and technical education), human services and other programs not covered by the plan, as appropriate, assuring coordination of, and avoiding duplication among these activities.

### **Core and One-Stop Partners**

Core program staff and partners continuously work towards an integrated partnership that seamlessly incorporates services to fit customer needs. Core and One-Stop partners will meet regularly to collaborate on operational policies, procedures, and best practices for an integrated system of performance. Communication and the use of technology will help to achieve integration and expand service offerings to achieve success.

DOLWD works with other state agencies, mandatory One-Stop partners, the University of Alaska, Alaska Native Corporations, private-sector employers, trade associations, and Joint Apprenticeship Training Programs to develop high-wage, high-demand employment and training plans that make the most of existing Registered Apprenticeship and other training models. These training plans will have an increased focus on industry sectors and career pathways under WIOA.

Industry representatives help drive decisions and design of workforce solutions as shown in successful public-private partnerships for training apprentices and skilled workers for pipeline construction and maintenance on Alaska's North Slope. The training partnership includes contractors, labor organizations, Joint Apprenticeship Training Programs, and the State Training and Employment Program, which all provide opportunities for workers from across the state to attend pipeline construction courses.

### **TANF**

The Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and Tribal TANF programs are used as a primary engagement and recruitment mechanism to identify and enroll appropriate low-income Alaskans into Career and Training Services offered through WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, Wagner-Peyser, and other programs specific to client need and eligibility, such as the Disabled Veterans Outreach Program. At locations throughout the state, DOLWD staff engage with the Division of Public Assistance (DPA) or their contractor's Work First/Families First program to identify individuals on their caseload to be co-enrolled with services offered through the AJCs. In locations served through Tribal TANF, the partnerships exist and are being expanded with

each of the seven programs in the state to ensure that collaboration and co-enrollment is promoted. These activities identify additional barriers to employment, allow for a complete employment plan with direct or partner supports to overcome barriers, and continue the progress towards sustainable employment for the individual.

### **Alaska Job Centers and Partners**

The AJCs provide access and outreach to areas with higher numbers of low-income Alaskans. The AJCs provide a critical pathway to Career and Training Services through their physical locations, partner linkages, online presence, and itinerant services. Local coordination with partners, such as the Alaska Housing Finance Corporation, TANF, Alaska Native entities, area correctional facility release programs, and regional training centers, promotes cross-referrals to services that address barriers to employment and facilitate attachment to employment or training. Apprenticeship and On-the-Job Training (OJT) are particularly beneficial for low-income individuals and those reentering the workforce after incarceration, due to the immediate attachment to the community and to income.

### **Senior Community Service Employment Program**

The AJCs partner with the state's SCSEP, branded as Mature Alaskans Seeking Skills Training (MASSST). AJCs are utilized as a "finishing" site to provide culminating customer service training; training on the use of job search tools, resume writing, and interviewing; and ultimately, job placement through referral and application or job development. The state provides a wide range of programs and services to seniors, spanning multiple divisions and other private and public entities. Funds from the Older Americans Act (OAA) are leveraged with WIOA, other federal programs, and resources from the Alaska State Training and Employment Program (STEP), assuring coordination and avoiding duplication of services or activities. The programs provide local training in priority industry sectors by placing participants in community work-based training sites at non-profit, faith-based organizations, transportation and public facilities, governmental offices, senior centers, schools, and hospitals, to name a few.

### **Referrals**

The referral process among the core programs is implemented on an individualized basis depending on the specific needs of the individual. All DOLWD staff are trained and expected to be knowledgeable in the requirements and eligibility of other core programs to ensure an appropriate program referral. Appropriate referrals are necessary to leverage resources and maximize service delivery to individuals while ensuring non-duplication of services. For example, AJC staff who provide initial intake and career services have been trained through the Disability Employment Initiative (DEI) to appropriately identify and refer individuals to disability services such as the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR), Tribal Vocational Rehabilitation, and other supporting entities. This training has provided a high level of thoughtfulness to the reason for each referral, increasing the success for the participant when obtaining needed services. Coordinated data collection mechanisms will be implemented to capture cross-agency referrals.

## **C. Coordination, Alignment and Provision of Services to Individuals**

Describe how the entities carrying out the respective core programs, Combined State Plan partner programs included in this plan, and required and optional one-stop partner programs will coordinate activities and resources to provide comprehensive, high-quality, customer-centered services, including supportive services (e.g. transportation), to individuals, including those

populations identified in section II(a)(1)(B), and individuals in remote areas. The activities described shall conform to the statutory requirements of each program.

DOLWD is the lead agency for the administration of the four core WIOA programs. DOLWD is also responsible for Veteran Services through the Jobs for Veterans State Grant, TAA, and UI. Additionally, the SCSEP, operated as MASST, is also within DOLWD and is the Combined State Plan partner program. Whether through direct service or sub-recipient, the AJCs are primary access points for much of the services provided by DOLWD's programs.

DOLWD manages Title V of the Older Americans Act (OAA) for senior employment. The planned action to coordinate activities includes following labor and education directives and guidance from health and social services programs in developing the workforce needs. SCSEP is aligned with the state's commitment to economic development, and its workforce development programs rely on the broad strategic policy decisions of the AWIB and Alaska Commission On Aging (ACoA).

Partners collaborate to develop policies, procedures, and best practices to facilitate the integration of services to ensure job seekers' needs are being met and referrals to other resources are successful.

AJC partners are committed to the provision of co-enrollment to deliver customer-focused, integrated, and coordinated services. This includes the sharing of relevant customer program information and records such as referral information, assessment results, training plans, progress reports, and job-development strategies. Co-enrollment is encouraged to coordinate cohesive and consistent services that complement and strengthen the services offered by each individual program. The coordination of services, including referrals, is supported by DETS and DVR Policy 07-505, which is designed to promote cooperative partnerships to maximize resources. The policy encourages program staff and grant sub-recipients to develop procedures for the provision of co-enrollment.

Local management teams representing partner agencies at the AJCs work collaboratively to ensure that services provided in the locality are coordinated and non-duplicative. Customer flow, shared resources, co-enrollment, special initiatives/programs, and area workforce needs are addressed collectively.

Alaska Adult Education (AAE) has a required intake document that gathers information about each student's employment status and training goals. AAE programs also teach a career and college awareness class that includes discussing what is available in the community and through workforce partners.

The workforce system aligns services with those most in need and who can be served through efficient and effective strategies. Efficient strategies support the timely delivery of services through a process that is aligned with the priorities of the Alaska Workforce Investment Board (AWIB). Effective strategies ensure job seekers and employers receive services based on their needs and circumstances.

DOLWD's objective is to maintain a fully integrated workforce development system that ensures availability of workforce services to all customers, with a focus on veterans and military spouses, low-income individuals, public assistance recipients, adults and youth with disabilities, out-of-school youth, Alaska Natives, and individuals with barriers to employment.

## **D. Coordination, Alignment and Provision of Services to Employers**

Describe how the entities carrying out the respective core programs, any Combined State Plan partner program included in this plan, required and optional one-stop partner programs will coordinate activities and resources to provide comprehensive, high-quality services to employers to meet their current and projected workforce needs and to achieve the goals of industry or sector partners in the state. The activities described shall conform to the statutory requirements of each program.

A relationship between DOLWD and industry sector employers is critical to Alaska's workforce investment system. DOLWD continuously looks for ways to develop cooperative working relationships based on Alaska employer needs, and this creates lasting partnerships with the business community.

### **Business Connection Staff**

Employer service representatives, particularly Business Connection staff, pay attention to local labor market trends to match employers with skilled job seekers. Staff work with employers to coordinate recruitments, plan job fairs, post job orders, provide applicant pre-screening and referrals, develop jobs, provide space for job recruitments, and offer employment and training service plans. Using a mass e-mail distribution list of employers and other interested parties, staff send daily messages on new job postings, recruitments at the AJCs, and upcoming job fairs. DOLWD has identified that the health care, oil and gas, and mining industries are the highest-demand industries and continually engages industry leaders in these fields. Under WIOA, Business Connection staff will be provided more in-depth training to work with the various industry sector partnerships to meet training and labor needs for those industries.

### **Services and Programs**

Employer services and programs available through AJCs include:

- Veteran services provided by a full-time veteran employment specialist who conducts outreach to employers to advocate for veteran hire;
- Youth services provided by ten youth program grant recipients, which coordinate work experience opportunities with businesses to ensure young job seekers are prepared to enter the job market;
- Apprenticeship specialists in AJCs who increase employer involvement in Registered Apprenticeships;
- On-the-Job Training (OJT) that offers employers the opportunity to hire and custom train employees and receive partial employee wage reimbursements;
- Training based on current employer demands (including incumbent worker training) and the perceived needs of the future job market;
- Rapid Response (RR) services, including employee protection and layoff aversion strategies to companies facing layoffs and closures;
- Seafood and other specialized recruitments, orientations, and interviews;

- Hire incentives like tax credits and Fidelity Bonding that encourage employers to hire at-risk workers; and
- Referral to local AAE programs and other partner programs.

### **Alaska Career Ready**

Alaska recognizes the gaps between job seekers' education, training, and skills and those that Alaska employers request or require. The Alaska Career Ready program uses ACT WorkKeys® to help fill those gaps. WorkKeys assessments help job seekers obtain the National Career Readiness Certificate, a portable credential that certifies job seekers have essential, verifiable workplace skills. The foundational skills certified by the National Career Readiness Certificate are recognized and used by thousands of employers nationwide.

### **Employer Relationships and Outreach**

Business Connection staff members build trusting, long-term relationships with Alaska employers from small businesses to large industries. Promotion of DOLWD's employment and training programs is based on meeting employer needs. It emphasizes the benefits to employers and avoids the impression of a "hard-sell" or bombardment with unwanted information. These relationships also ensure employers view DOLWD as a valuable resource. For example, DOLWD fosters relationships with mining industry employers and works closely with the University of Alaska Southeast mining training program to fill positions with Alaska workers. An example is annual underground miner training and incumbent worker training, including haul truck simulator training, in Southeast Alaska. The goal is to provide Juneau-area mining employers such as Hecla Greens Creek and Coeur Alaska Kensington with qualified Alaska workers.

Exploration of new outreach methods that can reach many employers at once, and material with better content, are intended to increase employer awareness of DOLWD employment and training resources. For example, the apprenticeship and veteran programs are working to determine the best ways to use GI Bill, WIOA, and STEP funds to support apprenticeship and other training opportunities for Alaska's veterans.

DOLWD's tax and employer services units established a cost-effective, mutually beneficial method of employer outreach. The exchange of material reaches an average of 20 employers per week. It includes employment and training information such as Alaska Career Ready, veterans' services, and OJT's as part of the new or returning-employer packets mailed by the tax unit. In return, AJC Business Connection staff help alleviate overflow calls to the tax unit by promoting web-based tax self-registration to employers with whom they come into contact. An apprenticeship brochure will be included in the new-employer packet and will highlight significant wage incentives for hiring a veteran into an apprenticeship program. This supports the state's WIOA strategies of expanding Registered Apprenticeships and focusing on veterans and transitioning service members as a priority population.

### **Website**

DOLWD is revising its web pages that are specific to employer needs. The Business Connection page will focus on the most requested employer services under easily identifiable general headings with associated topics underneath. The overarching theme of the modification is to answer the question, "What is the benefit to the employer?" For example, the heading "Protect

Your Workers” will lead employers to topics including TAA, Layoff Aversion Strategies, Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification requirements, and COBRA continuation of employee health care benefits. Other main headings include Post a Job, Employment and Labor Laws, Hire Leadership and Experience (veterans), and Hiring Incentives.

### **Employer Recognition for Veteran Hire**

Plans to recognize employers who hire veterans will include public identification of the business by public service announcements, listings on the Business Connection and veterans’ web pages, and window decals. The goal is to produce a logo decal, easily identifiable to all Alaska employers, showing that a particular business honors America’s veterans by hiring them, and that will inspire friendly competition among employers, generating greater momentum for veteran hiring. Business Connection and veteran staff plan to increase their presence at the Society for Human Resources Management and local chambers of commerce meetings on a regular basis in Juneau, Anchorage, and Fairbanks.

### **Division of Vocational Rehabilitation**

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) partners with employers to promote the hiring of individuals with disabilities. DVR has implemented the dual customer model to deliver services to employers. DVR has created a Business Employment Services Team (DVR-BEST), which is tasked with providing employers with the four required services as outlined in Section 109 of the Rehabilitation Act within WIOA, to secure competitive integrated employment for individuals with disabilities, which is part of DOLWD’s strategy to focus on serving those with disabilities.

### **Senior Community Service Employment Program**

SCSEP service delivery is integrated into both the state’s workforce investment system and the senior service system. Employers have reported high satisfaction levels with SCSEP participants who have entered unsubsidized employment with them. Employers have reported that they have experience with computers, proficiency in other languages, and are motivated, friendly, and reliable. Alaska’s long-term strategy is to continue to reach out to workforce development partners, the business community, and social service partners to ensure successful outcomes for workers and Alaska businesses alike.

DOLWD strives to provide outstanding customer service to employers by focusing on long-term, respectful relationships; understanding and responding to their employment and training needs; and promoting and providing consequential services and resources that meet those needs. DOLWD will continue to meet or exceed the expectations of employers to include excellent performance outcomes for mutual workforce goals.

### **E. Partner Engagement with Educational Institutions**

Describe how the State’s Strategies will engage the State’s community colleges and area career and technical education schools, as partners in the workforce development system to create a job-driven education and training system. WIOA section 102(b)(2)(B)(iv).

Alaska understands the vital role training providers play in workforce development and the need to focus attention on an effective career and technical training system. The state has pledged to create world-class schools that prepare graduates for careers that may begin immediately after high school graduation or may require additional education and training.

The DOLWD is committed to assuring individuals with disabilities have access to all educational institutions and training providers. The Division of Employment and Training Services (DETS) and Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) are committed to delivering customer-focused, integrated, and coordinated services. This includes determining and coordinating education and training opportunities to individuals with disabilities. DOLWD grant recipients providing education and training opportunities are responsible providing access to individuals with disabilities.

### **Career and Technical Education Plan**

A comprehensive Alaska Career and Technical Education (CTE) Plan was approved by the AWIB in 2010 and involved a broad cross-section of policy makers, educators, employers, state agencies, training institutions, and parent representatives. The AWIB and the Departments of Education & Early Development and Labor and Workforce Development, in coordination with the University of Alaska, have continued to meet on a regular basis to implement, review, and refine CTE strategies.

The 2010 Alaska CTE Plan recognized six key strategies to strengthen Alaska's CTE system and the need for career preparedness and an education and training system that is efficient, effective, and coordinates with regional and state current and future workforce needs. The CTE Plan strategies that remain relevant to improving CTE programs include:

- Ensure planned transitions and accountability for both successful student progress and systemic cooperation;
- Align curricula at all training institutions to meet current industry standards;
- Identify and promote CTE delivery models that ensure that Alaskans have opportunities to attain the knowledge and skills needed for further training and careers;
- Recruit, develop, support, and retain high-quality CTE teachers and faculty;
- Maximize the use of public facilities for training; and
- Establish and maintain sustainable funding mechanisms for a successful CTE system for youth and adults.

In 2017, the AWIB convened a CTE Workgroup of career and technical education professionals to review the 2010 Alaska CTE Plan and draft an updated addendum to reenergize CTE programs statewide, reexamine the existing CTE Plan strategies, and create an advocacy vehicle identifying the education and training opportunities available in Alaska. The update included feedback from stakeholder groups including employers and private sector businesses through in-person presentations, webinars, and online surveys. The updated plan was approved by the AWIB in October 2018, as the 2018 Addendum to the Alaska CTE Plan. The Addendum is listed on the AWIB Plans, Policies, Initiatives webpage <https://awib.alaska.gov/ppi.htm>. The direct link for the Addendum in PDF format is [https://awib.alaska.gov/CTE\\_Addendum\\_10-2018.pdf](https://awib.alaska.gov/CTE_Addendum_10-2018.pdf).

During the review of the Alaska CTE Plan and development of the 2018 addendum, several topics consistently arose related to implementation of the CTE strategies and on-going system improvement which included the following:

- Promote CTE as a skills-based model that prepares Alaskans for high wage jobs;
- Leverage existing workforce planning efforts and CTE programs that lead to employment outcomes;
- Communicate with partners to promote programs and avoid duplication of effort; and
- Advocate for increased investment in CTE programs.

### **Technical Vocational Education Program**

One of the funding mechanisms for Alaska CTE is through the Technical Vocational Education Program (TVEP), which provides state funding through a portion of unemployment taxes to designated technical training entities to provide industry specific training, OJT, and classroom-linked job training. Grant funds are appropriated by the Alaska Legislature and administered by DOLWD, the Department of Education & Early Development, and the University of Alaska. The AWIB establishes a list of industry priorities for training under this program.

State education and training providers are critical to prepare Alaskans to be successful with the academic and technical knowledge required for a specific career pathway. Programs of study incorporate industry and business standards and are validated using benchmarks, assessments, and a body of evidence to demonstrate that job seekers are prepared to be successful in their chosen career.

### **Community Colleges and Area Career and Technical Schools**

Alaska no longer has separate community colleges; rather, the community college mission is carried out by the University of Alaska (UA) through its Office of Workforce Development and the programs offered at its network of community campuses. DOLWD is in regular contact with UA and with the state's career and technical schools (as defined in the Carl Perkins CTE Improvement Act of 2006), including both secondary and postsecondary programs. Members of the AWIB represent these providers (university workforce programs and secondary and postsecondary CTE) and provide information to the AWIB as they develop recommendations for coordination and alignment of the state's workforce system. DOLWD meets annually with secondary and postsecondary CTE coordinators and directors to align programs and discuss issues of mutual interest. In addition, DOLWD meets monthly with the state's CTE plan lead partners to continue implementation of the CTE plan and CTE system.

### **F. Partner Engagement with Other Education and Training Providers**

Describe how the State's Strategies will engage the State's other education and training providers, including providers on the state's eligible training provider list, as partners in the workforce development system to create a job-driven education and training system.

The state routinely engages with partners and other education and training providers. An example is the Eligible Training Providers List (ETPL) policy and procedures. These were created in concert with education and training providers who provided feedback during AWIB meetings and a public comment period. The largest provider, the University of Alaska, was integral in providing feedback during the drafting of the ETPL process. The AWIB played an active role in reviewing guidance, and the education and training board members provided critical feedback that was incorporated with the final products. The goal is to make the ETPL a

robust product that offers training to meet the needs of Alaska’s high growth industries while making the ETPL process less cumbersome for education and training providers.

### **G. Leveraging Resources to Increase Educational Access**

Describe how the State’s strategies will enable the State to leverage other Federal, State, and local investments that have enhanced access to workforce development programs at the above institutions, described in section (E).

Alaska leverages resources as a strategy to increase and sustain economic growth. This practice fosters enhanced partnerships between federal, state, local, and private resources in innovative ways, relying on three different levels of leveraged resources.

First, cash contributions are state, local, and private resources that are allocated in direct support of a training project. A state general fund appropriation is an example of a cash contribution. Second, in-kind contributions are federal, state, local, and private resources that support the efforts of a training project but are not easily cost allocated. Third, Alaska applies federal and state resources as potential leveraged funds that are consistent with the economic and workforce development goals of the state, preparing Alaska workers for employment in high-wage, high-demand occupations.

At the community-based participant level, AJC partners conduct joint planning and case management to maximize resources, providing individuals with comprehensive services. By working together for the common benefit of participants, each partner agency can reach more participants and ensure comprehensive services.

### **H. Improving Access to Postsecondary Credentials**

Describe how the State’s strategies will improve access to activities leading to recognized postsecondary credentials, including Registered Apprenticeship certificates. This includes credentials that are industry-recognized certificates, licenses or certifications, and that are portable and stackable.

The workforce and education systems work closely to expand the supply of skilled workers for Alaska’s high-growth industries. Through partnership with the DOLWD, University of Alaska, and Department of Education & Early Development, the AWIB developed the Alaska CTE Plan to align education programs with Alaska’s in-demand industries and occupations. Alaska continues to support the use of work-based and applied learning to cultivate student awareness of, and interest in, high-demand industries. The state will continue to expand the use of Registered Apprenticeships and industry led CTE programs.

Alaska’s primary focus in responding to employers and job seekers is to maximize the benefits of workforce development, offering services and training to job seekers that lead to employment. Programs such as Registered Apprenticeship and OJT are exemplary examples of this dual focus. The most effective are programs that result in portable, industry-recognized credentials.

DOLWD is an active partner in Alaska’s Postsecondary Access and Completion Network. The Network is continuing to work towards the goal of “65 by 2025” - where 65 percent of Alaskans will have a postsecondary credential or degree by 2025. DOLWD works directly with other Network partners to ensure that Registered Apprenticeship certificates, industry certifications, and occupational endorsements are included in the definition and corresponding outcome data

are collected and reported. DOLWD's Research and Analysis staff regularly provide labor market information updates to the Network as well as ad hoc reports whenever possible.

## **I. Coordinating with Economic Development Strategies**

Describe how the activities identified in (A) will be coordinated with economic development entities, strategies, and activities in the State.

### **Alaska Regional Development Organizations**

According to the Alaska Department of Commerce, Community & Economic Development, Alaska has ten economic development entities called "ARDORs" - Alaska Regional Development Organizations. Their mission is to prepare and implement regional development strategies. Through these strategies, local knowledge, and coordinated implementation, ARDORs champion economic development planning for Alaska's regions and communities by leveraging baseline support provided by the State of Alaska.

As partners of the state and leaders of regional economic development efforts, ARDORs serve as conduits to a network of economic development programs and support services for their regions, communities, and businesses. Although ARDORs have much in common and implement similar scopes of work, the form and function of each ARDOR is customized to the region. Decisions are made by elected or appointed boards of directors that reflect the economic diversity and character of the region.

### **Regional Economic Development Strategies**

As provided by Alaska Administrative Code (3 AAC 57.090), ARDORs are required to develop and implement regional economic development strategies or similar economic development plans. These strategies or plans are commonly referred to as comprehensive economic development strategies, and they satisfy the following requirements:

- Fact-gathering, to assure the region understands the current development situation;
- Identification of potential resources that serve as assets for economic development initiatives;
- Establishment of goals and objectives to guide direction of economic development activities;
- Production of a strategy for regional and local economic development that includes a work plan detailing the methods, resources, responsibilities, and schedules for implementing the strategy; and
- Development of a set of regional and local economic profiles for every community within the region.

### **Work Plans**

Further, each ARDOR develops its own economic development strategies and customized work plan for addressing regional economic development needs. Although each plan includes region-specific goals, objectives, and strategies, they all include the following broad goals:

- Facilitating development of a healthy regional economy that results in sustainable business growth, new business investment, and economic diversification;

- Identifying and working to eliminate regional economic development barriers;
- Developing and implementing a comprehensive economic development strategy;
- Coordinating regional planning efforts that result in new employment and business opportunities;
- Working to enable multiple communities to collaborate and pool limited resources;
- Strengthening partnerships with public, private, and non-government organizations; and
- Providing technical assistance to encourage business startup, retention, and expansion.

The work plans are available on the Alaska Department of Commerce, Community & Economic Development website at:

<https://www.commerce.alaska.gov/web/ded/DEV/ARDORS/DevelopmentStrategies.aspx>.

### **Coordination**

The AWIB and DOLWD coordinate with the ARDORS in a variety of ways:

- DOLWD staff are in regular contact with the ARDOR program manager to discuss workforce and economic development activities, needs, and opportunities;
- The Commissioner of Commerce, Community and Economic Development, is a member of the AWIB, and brings the ARDOR voice to discussions; and
- ARDORS participate in providing public input into the WIOA plan and will continue to provide input to DOLWD on implementation of the plan.

ARDORS also maintain robust partnerships with education, training, and economic development entities within their state-defined region to foster growth in that region. At the core of the ARDOR mission is economic development that retains and creates well-compensated jobs. Once the jobs are available, the task of providing motivated, skilled, and reliable workers tailored for those jobs must also be accomplished. The ARDORS provide communication, collaboration, and knowledge of rural regions of the state to help inform the enhancement of the workforce investment system.

### **b. State Operating Systems and Policies**

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include a description of the State operating systems and policies that will support the implementation of the State strategy described in section II Strategic Elements.

Alaska uses multiple management information systems to collect and report data. In PY 2020, Alaska will transition from a multiple system approach to a Virtual OneStop (VOS) combined management information system that will house WIOA Title IB, II, III, TAA, WOTC, Apprenticeship, and Veterans programs as well as grant solicitation and award management processes. The VOS vendor is Geographic Solutions.

1. The State operating systems that will support the implementation of the State's strategies. This must include a description of—

A. State operating systems that support coordinated implementation of State strategies (e.g., labor market information systems, data systems, communication systems, case-management systems, job banks, etc.)

**WIOA Title I-B - Youth, Adult, and Dislocated Worker** currently use the Individual Case Management (ICM) system, which allows AJC staff delivering adult and dislocated worker services and sub-recipients delivering youth services to maintain comprehensive records documenting interaction with participants. This includes planned and actual services for participants, training and supportive service-related costs, Individual Employment Plans, Individual Service Strategies, referrals to partner agencies, and funding amounts from each of the partner services involved in the participant's service strategy. These programs will transition into VOS in FY 2020.

**Title II – Alaska's Adult Education (AAE)** programs report individual student data into the Alaska Statewide Adult Education Database. The database is available to program staff only and is accessed through myAlaska, a state-managed system for Secure Single Sign-on and Signature authentication, allowing citizens to interact with multiple State of Alaska services through a single username and password. AAE will be integrated into VOS and all sub-recipients will utilize the myAlaska secure single sign-on portal.

**Title III - Wagner-Peyser** currently utilizes the Alaska Labor Exchange System (ALEXsys). ALEXsys is not only a job bank but a Virtual AJC system for clients looking for work, job search assistance, training, or career exploration. Registered employers can post jobs, view resumes of qualified candidates, and access a wide range of economic and labor market information. ALEXsys provides staff with the online tools to deliver, track, and report on Wagner-Peyser services for job seekers and employers. Automated interfaces are used to communicate and exchange information between ALEXsys and the Unemployment Insurance (UI) wage system to facilitate better delivery of services. With the implementation of VOS, information will be automatically exchanged between multiple programs to further enhance services to Alaskans and support the implementation of the state's strategies.

**Title IV - Vocational Rehabilitation** utilizes a management information system called AWARE. AWARE was developed based on Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) business practices and federal requirements. AWARE offers a comprehensive set of case, financial, and organizational modules. The features and procedures in AWARE are consistent and standardized throughout all modules and are designed around the natural flow of the VR case process, making it intuitive for VR counselors.

AWARE VR consists of 17 modules, approximately 300 data pages (screens), more than 350 reports, and a central database with over 330 tables. From AWARE, rehabilitation staff can perform all tasks, and collect and access all data required to perform case management. AWARE software is updated regularly to meet Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) federally mandated reporting requirements and to produce the data file for uploading the quarterly RSA-911 to RSA.

**Electronic Grants Administration and Management System (EGrAMS)**, is a web-based system utilized to issue subawards for Apprenticeship, WIOA Youth, Alaska Adult Education, and SCSEP programs to organizations and training providers to conduct program activities. The system provides consistent and standard user interfaces to handle the process from grant application entry to closeout and uses a comprehensive security framework for user

authentication and authorization. The new VOS system includes a grants management component and integration with detailed participant activities for program coordination and state and federal reporting.

**Research and Analysis**, a component of the DOLWD Administrative Services, has access to databases containing much of the relevant data needed for state and federal reporting, including wage records, student records from the Department of Education & Early Development (DEED) and the University of Alaska (UA), and Permanent Fund Dividend data.

Alaska leverages and supports the understanding of labor market information, particularly as it relates to high-wage, high-demand industries, to the One-Stop operator responsible for determining and negotiating individual training accounts and delivering the majority of WIOA core program services. Labor Market Information staff work with AJC staff, partners, and sub-recipients upon request to explain how the state and local economies operate, how to assess occupational employment opportunities at the state and local level, and how to use the tools and information available on the DOLWD Research and Analysis Section's website. In this era of consumer choice, labor market information creates informed consumers who can make better decisions about employment and training options leading personal career development.

The primary vehicle for disseminating workforce information to internal and external customers is the internet. The AJC home page includes "Labor Market Information" as a main link with many other related links, including "Business/Employer Connection" and "Job Seeker Resources." The site is used in all AJC resource rooms and available to anyone with an internet connection, including libraries, schools, work sites, and homes. The DOLWD Research and Analysis Section also produces a monthly magazine, Alaska Economic Trends, which is distributed to businesses and individual subscribers, as well as published on the web.

In addition to the management and exchange of participant services, employer data, and labor market information, a variety of web-based systems that are essential in supporting state workforce development strategies are the Alaska Career Information System, America's Career InfoNet, America's Service Locator, O\*NET OnLine, Alaska's Labor Exchange System (ALEXsys), and America's Job Bank websites.

The **Semi-Autonomous Research Assistant (SARA)** communication system is used by DETS Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Veterans programs and DVR. In year four of a five-year pilot project, SARA is designed to improve the communications between division staff and program participants through the use of text messages and emails, automating tasks such as reminding individuals of appointments, gathering employment information, and collecting post-exit information. The first year of the pilot project was spent designing the software to meet Alaska's unique needs, and many improvements continue to be made based on staff and participant feedback. Anecdotal data suggests that client communication has improved both in clarity and frequency. With automatic appointment reminders now being sent electronically to individuals, there has been an increase in the number of appointments kept, data validation documents received, and follow-up contact responses.

SARA continues to improve the overall employment and training experience. Individuals are now able to use their smartphones to photograph documents for transmission to division staff, reducing the need for them to make a special trip to an office. Additionally, staff can now electronically send documents for review or signature.

With the new system implementation, SARA will be a key communication tool and expanded to the WIOA Youth program, Adult Education program, and SCSEP.

#### B. Data-collection and reporting processes used for all programs and activities, including those present in one-stop centers<sup>9</sup>

Core program staff and sub-recipients are responsible for the collection of data and subsequent entry into the applicable data systems. The collection of wage data is coordinated with DOLWD's Research and Analysis Section to automate the association of wage data. Strict data-sharing agreements are adhered to when determining access levels and handling of wage data and participant information to ensure compliance with confidentiality agreements and requirements to safeguard Personally Identifiable Information. Wage data are used for reporting on the quarterly and annual reports. These data are also used in reporting pre- and post-training earnings change for various state level reports, including ad hoc reporting.

**Youth, Adult, and Dislocated Worker** data is collected from program participants in several ways. The Youth, Adult, and Dislocated Worker programs require a paper application, and the information is then entered into the ICM system by AJC staff or subrecipient staff. Periodic data validation is conducted to verify the accuracy and completeness of the collected information.

**Wagner-Peyser** participants complete an on-line registration, and subsequent service information is system-generated based on the participant's activity in ALEXsys. Service information may also be manually entered by AJC staff.

**Adult Education** individual student data is collected by program staff and entered into the Alaska Statewide Database. The data is used to manage participants, for program improvement, and for required federal reporting.

**DVR** participant data is collected through a paper application and one-on-one interviews. Data are also collected outside of the system to validate disability and public support dollars. The AWARE system is used to maintain continuous case information and documentation to meet the goal of successful employment for the participant.

**Senior Community Service Employment Program** participant data are collected by program staff through a paper application and entered into the USDOL SPARQ database. The system provides reports to aid in the monitoring of grantees' and sub-recipients' data collection, reporting, and performance. By having all SCSEP grantees and sub-recipients use a standardized database, USDOL can ensure the quality of the information used to assess the effectiveness of the SCSEP program.

The USDOL Employment and Training Administration will be replacing the SPARQ system in FY 2020 with the Grantee Performance Management System. Additional details on this transition will be available and provided in the next State Plan update.

2. The State policies that will support the implementation of the State's strategies (e.g., co-enrollment policies and universal intake processes where appropriate). In addition, provide the State's guidelines for State-administered one-stop partner programs' contributions to a one-stop delivery system

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<sup>9</sup> For the PY 2016 state plan, descriptions of data collection and reporting processes need only include currently known indicators.

Alaska's policies support the implementation of the state strategies and ensure compliance with the statutory requirements for each title under WIOA. Policy examples include program-specific Eligibility, Job Center Universal Access, Prioritizing Services to Target Populations, Pre-Apprenticeship, Co-enrollment, and High Concentration of Eligible Youth, which are all in alignment with the state's strategies.

Most of Alaska's policies are cross-divisional between AWIB and DETS, while others are division specific or inclusive of DVR. Additionally, the requirement to adhere to DOLWD policies is passed through to grant sub-recipients in sub-award agreements.

Alaska's policies are all accessible on DOLWD's public website and have been communicated to AJC staff and sub-recipients to ensure full awareness of the policies and methods for compliance. It is important to ensure that policies are reasonable and necessary and provide adequate flexibility while meeting Alaska's strategic goals and vision.

Policy documents for WIOA Adult, Youth, Dislocated Worker, Wagner-Peyser, SCSEP, are available here: <https://labor.alaska.gov/dets/policies.htm>

Policy documents for Vocational Rehabilitation are available here: [http://www.labor.state.ak.us/dvr/policy\\_temp.htm](http://www.labor.state.ak.us/dvr/policy_temp.htm)

Alaska's One-Stop Operator Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), available here: [https://awib.alaska.gov/forms/OperatorMOU\\_2018.pdf](https://awib.alaska.gov/forms/OperatorMOU_2018.pdf), provides information on the relationship between the Alaska Job Center Network (AJCN) partners, the AWIB, and DETS serving as Alaska's AJCN One-Stop Operator. The MOU includes the roles, responsibilities, and expectations for implementation of the provisions required per section 121 (c) of Title I of WIOA.

The MOU supports cross training amongst partners to ensure all partners' staff are familiar with all programs represented within the AJCs. All AJCN partners are invited to participate in the AJCN Advisory Council to ensure ongoing communication on service delivery system improvement, training opportunities, new developments with each partner, and identification of web-based or technology driven resources. The MOU establishes joint processes and procedures that enable partners to collaborate in the service delivery system resulting in a seamless and comprehensive array of job matching, education, support services, job training, and other workforce development services.

Section VI. General Provisions includes detailed information on Partner Impasse Resolutions, Local Dispute Process, Alaska Workforce Investment Board Dispute Resolution Process, Supplemental Agreements, Effective Dates and Term of the MOU, and Timelines for Modifications and Revisions.

Each partner is responsible for the funding of their direct program services, and resource/cost sharing is outlined in Attachment C: Infrastructure Funding Agreement, available here: [https://awib.alaska.gov/forms/OperatorMOU\\_2018.pdf](https://awib.alaska.gov/forms/OperatorMOU_2018.pdf).

**WIOA Policies (<http://labor.alaska.gov/dets/policies.htm>)**

<b>WIOA Policy</b>	<b>Policy Number</b>
Allocating Wagner-Peyser Staff to Job Centers	07-519
Allowable Costs	07-520.2
Cash Management	07-504.1
Co-enrollment	07-505.1
Common Exit	07-539
Dislocated Worker Eligibility	07-524.1
Due Diligence	07-527.1
Eligible Training Provider List	07-501.2
Equal Opportunity Discrimination Complaint Policy	07-506.4
Grant Amendments Policy	07-526.1
Grant Award and Appeal	07-507.1
Grant Close-out	07-528.1
Grant Monitor Corrective Action Plan Timelines	200-2016
High Concentration of Eligible Youth	07-503.2
Job Center Universal Access	07-516
Military Veteran Priority of Service	07-509.1
Monitoring and Single Audit	07-523.1
Once-Stop Operator Certification	100-2017
Participant Performance Data Collection	07-508.1
Pre-Apprenticeship Definition Policy	07-525.1
Priority Populations - Adult Populations	07-517.1
Program Complaint and Appeal	07-510.2
Property Management	07-511.1
Process for AWIB Endorsement of Industry Workforce Development Plans	100-2016
Registrant Family Income	07-512
Sanctions for Non-Compliance	07-513.1
Self-Sufficiency	07-514
SCSEP; MASST Eligibility Policy	07-540
SCSEP; MASST Individual Durational Limits	07-533
SCSEP; MASST Participant Termination	07-535
SCSEP; MASST Wages and Unemployment Insurance	07-537
Supportive Services	07-521.1
Time Charging	07-531.1
Tuition and Training Refunds	07-530.1
WIOA Incumbent Worker Training	07-529
WIOA Program Oversight Firewall	01.02.001
WIOA Title IB Within State Funding Allocations	07-518
Work Experience	07-515.1
Youth Incentive	07-522.1
Youth Program Eligibility	07-502.1

**Vocational Rehabilitation Policies ([http://www.labor.state.ak.us/dvr/policy\\_temp.htm](http://www.labor.state.ak.us/dvr/policy_temp.htm))**

<b>Vocational Rehabilitation Policy</b>	<b>Policy Number</b>
Co-enrollment	07-505
Ethics	CS 1.0
Confidentiality	CS 2.0
Informed Choice	CS 3.0
Appeals	CS 4.0
Application	CS 5.0
Eligibility	CS 6.0
Trial Work	CS 7.0
Significance of Disabilities	CS 8.0
Financial Participation	CS 9.0
Individualized Plan for Employment	CS 10.0
Vocational Rehabilitation Services	CS 11.0
Supported Employment	CS 12.0
Self-Employment	CS 13.0
Closure	CS 14.0
Post-Employment	CS 15.0
Transition Services and Pre-Employment Transition Services	CS 16.0
Order of Selection	CS 17.0

### 3. State Program and State Board Overview

#### A. State Agency Organization

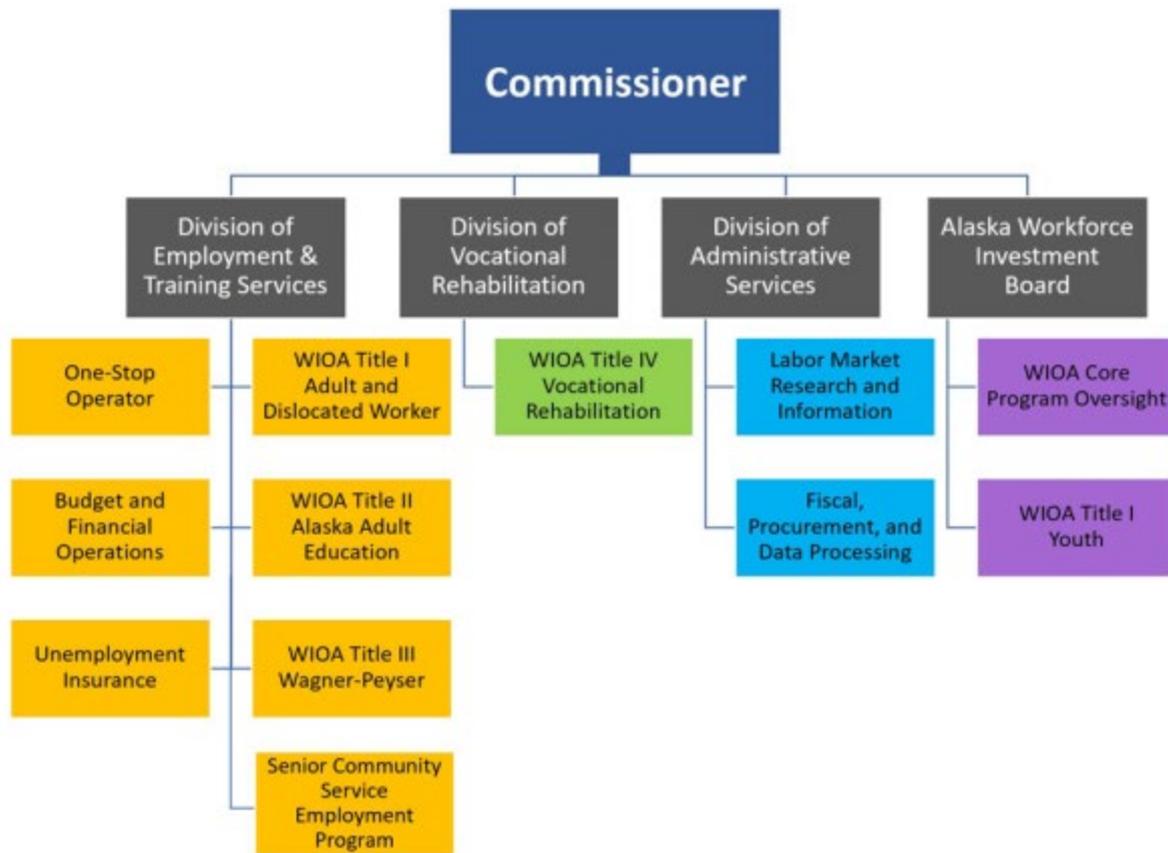
Describe the organization and delivery systems at the State and local levels for the programs covered in the plan, including the organizational structure. Include an organizational chart.

All WIOA core programs and SCSEP are housed within the Alaska DOLWD. WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker (WIOA Title I–B), AAE (WIOA Title II), Wagner–Peyser (WIOA Title III), and the SCSEP program are administered by the Division of Employment and Training Services (DETS). The Alaska Workforce Investment Board (AWIB) administers WIOA Title I-B, Youth. The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) administers WIOA Title IV, Vocational Rehabilitation.

The AWIB provides oversight for the WIOA core programs and several state employment and training programs including STEP, the Alaska Construction Academies (ACA), and the Technical Vocational Educational Program (TVEP), with administrative support provided by the Division of Employment and Training Services (DETS).

DETS administers the Trade Act and Work Opportunity Tax Credit programs and operates the Alaska Job Centers (AJCs), a proud partner of the American Job Center Network, with 14 AJCs across the state. AJC staff provide Wagner–Peyser and Title I–B career services, Title I–B Adult and Dislocated Worker Individual Training Accounts and training related supportive services, STEP training and supportive services, SCSEP OJT, and services to employers through the AJC business connection staff.

Figure 8 shows the organizational chart of Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development divisions and bodies working on WIOA.



**Figure 8. Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development  
WIOA Organizational Chart**

Under WIOA, face-to-face personal services are the foundation of the service delivery system through the 14 AJCs across the state. Wagner-Peyser and Title I B programs are represented in all AJCs. AAE (Title II) is allocated to statewide grantees, and a standard referral mechanism between the AJCs to the grantees has been established. Title IV Vocational Rehabilitation is co-located in several of the AJCs across the state. In AJCs that are not co-located with an on-site Vocational Rehabilitation office, the standard referral method is used.

Under WIOA, AJC staff identify the specific needs of each client by conducting an initial assessment to determine individual skill, aptitude, and ability levels, and the need for supportive services. This supports our “no wrong door” approach to services, eliminates duplication of effort, and promotes access to the appropriate service type for the client’s needs (basic, individualized, and training). This structure enhances rapid identification of need and enrollment into a funded training or education plan, receipt of a credential, or access to other services under the WIOA programs. AJC staff will provide a menu of “career services” to clients who are job ready. For clients who need additional training, education, credentials, or other services, the AJCs act as an access point in the referral and/or enrollment process and help coordinate the introduction to other programs and services. The AJCs have built strong partnerships in their communities, emphasizing seamless service delivery to clients.

Training and education will align with the state’s economic and workforce needs as identified by the AWIB. WIOA core program services will be delivered in-person or itinerantly through the AJCs or electronically at the client’s convenience. The AJCs expect to capitalize on electronic

service delivery with the implementation of a new employment and training services system in summer of 2020.

Upon entering an AJC, each client will be assessed as to how individual needs can best be met. This initial assessment includes self-identification of veteran and other eligible person status to ensure receipt of Priority of Service (POS). Any client who identifies as a veteran will also be assessed for eligibility and assistance through the Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JVSG). Customers seeking services and assistance through ALEXsys are also assessed for POS and JVSG eligibility. Additionally, JVSG-funded staff members are in areas of the state that have the largest veteran populations. All local areas without on-site JVSG-funded staff are served itinerantly or electronically.

WIOA core program staff will co-enroll eligible participants to leverage resources and funding. Co-enrollment ensures access to a wide array of comprehensive, vitally important services like in-depth assessments, interest inventories, reviews of transferable skills, vocational training, and services such as childcare, local transportation and additional partner services to overcome barriers to employment. These partnerships will generate positive outcomes resulting in meaningful, sustainable employment. Customers can also participate in self-service activities through ALEXsys including job search, labor market information, and orientation to AJC services. Customers who view our public website or who are enrolled in ALEXsys periodically receive updated information about job trends and opportunities, training academies, and upcoming career fairs throughout the state.

## **B. State Board**

[Provide a description of the State Board, including—](#)

The AWIB is authorized by Alaska statute and comprised of members appointed by the governor. The AWIB operates a single statewide board under an Alternative Entity State Board designation through the USDOL. Several of the governor's cabinet members are seated on the AWIB, including the Lieutenant Governor; the Commissioners of Labor and Workforce Development, Health & Social Services, Education & Early Development, and Commerce, Community & Economic Development. Board membership also includes a representative from the University of Alaska system and representatives from postsecondary vocational education, secondary vocational education, AAE, and public education. Four members of the board represent business and industry, and four represent organized labor. Additional board members include one who has professional experience with individuals with developmental disabilities, a member who is a veteran, a member from an organization representing the employment and training needs of Alaska Natives, and additional members from the private sector. In addition, two chief local elected officials have been appointed to the board to ensure local input for our Alternate Entity State Board.

Alaska Workforce Investment Board:

3301 Eagle Street, Ste. 305 Anchorage, Alaska 99508

(907) 269-7485, (907) 269-7489 fax, (888) 412-4742 toll free

i. Membership Roster

Provide a membership roster for the State Board, including members' organizational affiliations.

The complete AWIB membership roster is shown in Figure 9, current as of February 2020.

<b>Alaska Workforce Investment Board</b>					
<b>Name</b>	<b>Address</b>	<b>Phone</b>	<b>Fax</b>	<b>E-mail</b>	
<b>1. Lt. Governor Kevin Meyer</b>	Lieutenant Governor State of Alaska	P.O. Box 110015 Juneau, AK 99811-0015	465-3520 269-7460	465-5400 269-0263	kevin.meyer@alaska.gov
<b>Lt. Governor's Designee: No Designee</b>	Lt Governor's Office State of Alaska	P.O. Box 110001 Juneau, AK 99811-0001	465-3500		
<b>2. Commissioner Dr. Tamika Ledbetter</b>	Dept. of Labor & Workforce Development	P.O. Box 111149 Juneau, AK 99802-1149	465-2700	465-2784	tamika.ledbetter@alaska.gov
<b>DOLWD Designee: Duane Mayes</b>	Dept. of Labor & Workforce Development	3301 Eagle St. Ste. 302 Anchorage, AK 99501	334-5963		duane.mayes@alaska.gov
<b>3. Commissioner Dr. Michael Johnson</b>	Dept. of Education & Early Development	P.O. Box 110500 Juneau, AK 99811-0500	465-2800	465-3452	deed.commissioner@alaska.gov
<b>DEED Designee: Deborah Riddle</b>	Dept. of Education & Early Development	P.O. Box 110500 Juneau, AK 99811-0500	465-2892	465-4156	deborah.riddle@alaska.gov
<b>4. Commissioner Adam Crum</b>	Dept. of Health & Social Services	P.O. Box 240249 Anchorage, AK 99524 0249	269-6680		adam.crum@alaska.gov
<b>DHSS Designee: Doniel Wolfe</b>	Dept. of Health & Social Services	3601 C Street Ste. 902 Anchorage, AK 99503	334-2474		doniel.wolfe@alaska.gov
<b>5. Commissioner Julie Anderson</b>	Dept. of Commerce, Community & Econ. Dev.	P.O. Box 110803 Juneau, AK 99811-0803	465-2500		julie.anderson@alaska.gov
<b>DCCED Designee: Amy Demboski</b>	Dept. of Commerce, Community & Econ. Dev.	550 W. 7 <sup>th</sup> Ave Anchorage, AK 99501	269-7387		amy.demboski@alaska.gov
<b>6. University of Alaska Rep Kathy Craft 10/13/21</b>	UofA Statewide Health Programs & Dev.	1116 Pickering Drive Fairbanks, AK 99709	388-9417		kcrafft@alaska.edu
<b>7. Cheryl Edenshaw Post Sec Ed/Voc/Ind,10/13/21</b>	Alaska Technical Center	P.O. Box 571 Kotzebue, AK 99752	442-1501 442-3720		cedenshaw@nwarctic.org
<b>8. Carin Smolin Sec Voc Ed, 10/13/21</b>	Juneau School District	515 Laurel Drive Douglas, AK 99824	523-1877 W 321-2337 C		carin.smolin@juneauschools.org
<b>9. Daniel Domke Public Education, 10/13/20</b>	Fairbanks North Star Borough School District	3900 University Ave. Fairbanks, AK 99709	452-2000 W x11537		daniel.domke@k12northstar.org
<b>10. Malyn Smith Adult Basic Ed, 10/13/23</b>	Alaska Job Corps Center	800 E. Lynn Martin Drive Palmer, AK 99645	861-8801 W		Smith.malyn@jobcorps.org
<b>11. Polly Smith Prof Dev. Disabilities,10/13/20</b>	Alaska Literacy Program	1345 Rudakof Circle #104 Anchorage, AK 99508	907-743- 0201		psmith@alaskaliteracyprogram.org
<b>12. Arth Brown Native E/T Org, 10/13/23</b>	Iilisagvik College	PO Box 1575 Utqiagvik, AK 99723	852-6257 W 385-7561		arth.brown@iilisagvik.edu
<b>13. Brenda Pacarro Business/Industry, 10/13/21</b>	Calista Corporation	5015 Business Park Blvd. Anchorage, AK 99503	275-2818 W 802-0608 C		bpacarro@calistacorp.com
<b>14. Larry Bell, Chair Business/Industry, 10/13/21</b>	Nat. Electrical Contractors Assn. NECA	712 W. 36 <sup>th</sup> Avenue Anchorage, AK 99503	561-1958 244-4166		larry@alaskaneca.org
<b>15. Greg Campbell Business/Industry, 10/13/20</b>	Alyeska Pipeline	P.O. Box 73761 Fairbanks, AK 99707	450-5744 W 488-1763 H 322-6969 C		greg.campbell@alyeska-pipeline.com
<b>16. Meg Nordale Business/Industry, 10/13/20</b>	GHEMM Company, Inc.	3861 Schacht St. Fairbanks, AK 99701	474-0499 H 452-5191 W 460-1069 C		meg@ghemm.com
<b>17. Peter Frank Private Sector, 10/13/20</b>	Bore Tide Construction	1740 North Terrilou Ct. Palmer, AK 99645	841-2169W		peter@boretideconstruction.com
<b>18. Patrick Rose Private Sector, 10/13/23</b>	Northern Industrial Training LLC.	3201 C Street, Ste. 308 Anchorage, AK 99503	743-7704 W 317-4100C		patrick.rose@nitalaska.com
<b>19. James Hastings Veteran, 10/13/23</b>	U.S. Army Retired		232-1527		pafraxis@gmail.com
<b>20. Marcus Trivette Private Sector, 10/13/19</b>	Brice, Inc.	P.O. Box 61202 Fairbanks, AK 99706	452-2512 978-2924		marcust@briceinc.com
<b>21. Bruce Bustamante Private Sector, 10/13/20</b>	Anchorage Chamber of Commerce	1016 W. 6 <sup>th</sup> Ave. Ste. 301 Anchorage, AK 99501	272-2401 351-0185		bruce@anchoragechamber.org
<b>22. Scott Eickholt Organized Labor, 10/13/20</b>	Laborer's Local 942	2740 Davis Road Fairbanks, AK 99709	322-7268		seickholt@local942.net
<b>23. Corey Baxter Organized Labor, 10/13/20</b>	International Union of Operating Engineers 302	9309 Glacier Hwy Bldg A Ste 105 Juneau, AK 99801	586-3850 321-4271	463-5464	cbaxter@iuoe302.org
<b>24. Ryan Andrew Organized Labor, 10/13/22</b>	IBEW Local 1547	3333 Denali Street, Ste. 200 Anchorage, AK 99503	777-7252 440-6099		randrew@ibew1547.org
<b>25. Anthony Ladd Organized Labor, 10/13/22</b>	Ironworkers Local 751	8141 Schoon Street Anchorage, AK 99518	590-9539 C		coordinator751@icloud.com
<b>26. Mayor Ethan Berkowitz Non -Voting Member, 10/13/21</b>	Municipality of Anchorage	P.O. Box 196650 Anchorage, AK 99519-6650	830-0042 343-7101		mayor@muni.org
<b>27. Mayor Bert Cottle Non Voting Member, 10/13/21</b>	City of Wasilla	290 East Herning Avenue Wasilla, AK 99654	373-9055 W 354-1127 H		mayor@ci.wasilla.ak.us

550 W. 7<sup>th</sup> Ave., Ste. 1930 • Anchorage, AK 99501 • (907) 269-7485 • (907) 269-7489 fax • (888) 412-4742 toll free

**Jobs are Alaska's Future**

As of 3/1/2020

Figure 9. Alaska Workforce Investment Board Roster

The AWIB is authorized by Alaska statute and comprised of members appointed by the governor. The AWIB operates a single statewide board under an Alternative Entity State Board designation through the USDOL(a)(2) . Several of the governor's cabinet members are seated on the AWIB, including the Lieutenant Governor and the Commissioners of Labor and Workforce Development; Health & Social Services; Education & Early Development; and Commerce, Community & Economic Development. Board membership also includes a representative from the University of Alaska system and representatives from postsecondary vocational education, secondary vocational education, ABE, and public education. Four members of the board represent business and industry, and four represent organized labor. Additional board members include one who has professional experience with individuals with developmental disabilities, a member who is a veteran, a member from an organization representing the employment and training needs of Alaska Natives, and additional members from the private sector. In addition, two chief local elected officials have been appointed to the board in order to ensure local input for our Alternate Entity State Board. The board chair is from business/industry.

## ii. Board Activities

Provide a description of the activities that will assist State Board members and staff in carrying out State Board functions effectively.

The AWIB meets three times annually either virtually or as a full board with each in person meeting held in a different region of the state. The statewide board meetings serve as an opportunity to engage with regional stakeholders and sector partners. In statewide board meetings, members adopt resolutions or motions designed to provide policy guidance, program oversight, and improvements to Alaska's workforce system. Between the three statewide board meetings, members of the AWIB serve on or more of the following standing committees: Workforce Readiness & Employment Placement; Policy & Planning; Assessment & Evaluation; Legislative; and the Executive Committee. Committees meet bimonthly, except for the Executive Committee, which meets monthly, and the Legislative Committee, which meets at the call of the Chair. Through the committee structure, AWIB members engage in examining the workforce system to identify areas for improvement, build sector partnerships, develop sector strategies, evaluate policies and programs, research and recommend legislative initiatives, and identify areas of improvement in services for Alaska's adults and youth who experience barriers to employment.

## 4. Assessment and Evaluation of Programs and One-Stop Program Partners

### A. Assessment of Core Programs

Describe how the core programs will be assessed each year based on State performance accountability measures described in section 116(b) of WIOA. This State assessment must include the quality, effectiveness, and improvement of programs broken down by local area or provider. Such state assessments should take into account local and regional planning goals.

One way to measure effectiveness is to analyze numbers and percentages of participants going to work. Alaska has the unique ability to match employment and wage records using the Permanent Fund Dividend (PFD) database. The state has a history of working with partners such as the Department of Education & Early Development (DEED), the University of Alaska (UA), and sub-recipients to provide participant information, within the confines of privacy, which allows effective analyses.

Alaska is committed to the use of performance data to evaluate programs and partners. Alaska utilizes the joint performance measures found in Section 116 of WIOA to measure and evaluate program effectiveness, to help improve program evaluations, and to remove potential barriers to integration of services. These joint performance measures promote consistency by creating common definitions of success.

The system is monitored and evaluated on an ongoing basis using the reports required for federal and state reporting as well as ad-hoc reports generated from the databases used to capture service delivery data. Leadership and program staff review these reports and communicate with core program operators and partners to provide technical assistance on areas needing improvement and to obtain information on best practices to share.

Performance levels are established through a negotiation process with the Employment and Training Administration (ETA). A state team representing the core programs reviews actual performance outcomes and determines proposed levels for each core program. This team is responsible for coordinating with ETA to negotiate and report statewide performance levels as required by WIOA.

All core programs are responsible for establishing a system for collecting, reviewing, and evaluating performance required by WIOA. Each core program is responsible for compiling and submitting performance data for that program. If needed, each core program establishes and implements performance improvement plans based on the evaluation of performance data.

Monitoring and assessments related to programs and activities authorized by WIOA are ongoing activities, which allow the AWIB to identify how effectively the state's programs are achieving the vision and goals of the U.S. Departments of Education and Labor and of DOLWD. The results provide the basis for making statewide and regional judgments regarding the effectiveness of the WIOA programs administered within Alaska's workforce development system.

All performance data required by Section 116 of WIOA are collected from each core program and compiled into a combined report as required.

Title II requires the state Alaska Adult Education (AAE) office to monitor and evaluate the quality of, and the improvement in, adult education and literacy activities. AAE programs will be monitored with a formal monitoring document on a predetermined schedule. Routine auditing will be done through desk audits of student records and monthly reviews of program data to assess progress in meeting the performance accountability measures based on indicators in Section 116. Programs not meeting the negotiated levels receive increased technical assistance. AAE reports are submitted to the federal office annually.

The overall strategy to improve core programs, grant administration, on-site monitoring, and assessment of programs is a crucial element for DOLWD's delivery of service and ensures that limited dollars are spent well. Alaska's assessment of programs is based on the delivery of high-quality, outcome-focused job seeker and business services. Alaska's workforce development system is demand-driven and fully integrated, and links employers to job seekers to promote the success of workers and businesses. Alaska uses the USDOL Core Monitoring Guide to ensure that oversight and monitoring practices reinforce USDOL principles while ensuring program outcomes are achieved and a high level of integrity is maintained. The guide provides a consistent framework and starting point for all on-site grant-monitoring responsibilities. The

assessment will include the quality, effectiveness, and improvement of programs broken down by local area or provider.

## B. Assessment of One-Stop Partner Programs

Describe how other one-stop delivery system partner program services and Combined State Plan partner programs included in the plan will be assessed each year. Such state assessments should take into account local and regional planning goals.

The assessment of One-Stop delivery system partner program services is based on participant outcomes identified under their statutorily required performance and reporting requirements. However, the WIOA joint performance measures, which consist of six customer outcomes specific to core indicators of performance and employer satisfaction, demonstrate value in promoting integration of services and boosting accessibility and transparency within the workforce system. Therefore, if possible, the same measures and methodologies are applied to other One-Stop partner programs that are applied to the core programs, in addition to any program-specific measures required by federal or state regulations.

Regardless of whether a program is a core program or a partner program, or whether a measure is required by WIOA or partner program law and regulation, performance measures and performance evaluations will be applied at the customer level first and then may be aggregated by program or population.

## C. Previous Assessment Results

Beginning with the state plan modification in 2018 and for subsequent state plans and state plan modifications, provide the results of assessments of the effectiveness of the core programs and other one-stop partner programs and Combined State Plan partner programs included in the Unified or Combined State plan during the preceding 2-year period (i.e. the 2-year period of the plan modification cycle). Describe how the State is adapting its strategies based on these assessments.

The AWIB monitors Alaska Job Center Network Sites on a rotational schedule to ensure that each site is thoroughly reviewed and provided access to immediate feedback and technical assistance. The programs monitored were WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, Dislocated Worker Training-National Emergency Grant, and Sector Partnership-National Emergency Grant funds.

The AWIB began monitoring Apprenticeship grantees in 2017. The Division of Employment and Training Services works closely with the AWIB to provide technical assistance with monitoring activities.

One-stop sites are the portals to our state's workforce system and its broad array of career services and resources designed to help individuals acquire the skills necessary to gain meaningful employment, and help our businesses to access the talent pipeline that meets their human capital needs and fuels economic growth. Workforce system partners are required to collaborate to support a seamless customer-focused service delivery network. Every region across our state is unique in terms of its economy and geography, but each is actively working to create a system that provides effective services for our job seeker and business customers.

The Alaska Job Center Network Sites (One-Stop) will be evaluated and certified no less than once every three years. The AWIB certified the following One Stop sites over the past 18 months:

- October 25, 2018 – Kenai Peninsula, Dillingham, and Juneau
- May 23, 2019 – Valdez and Homer
- October 23, 2019 – Nome and Kodiak

#### D. Evaluation

Describe how the State will conduct evaluations and research projects on activities under WIOA core programs; how such projects will be coordinated with, and designed in conjunction with, State and local boards and with State agencies responsible for the administration of all respective core programs; and, further, how the projects will be coordinated with the evaluations provided for by the Secretary of Labor and the Secretary of Education under WIOA.

The monitors are conducted in accordance with WIOA Proposed Rules, Federal Register Vol. 80, No 73, Subpart D, Sections 683.440; 2 CFR 200 and the DOLWD/DETS Grant Monitoring policy 07-523. Financial management and program activities are reviewed. The financial reviews include an evaluation of participant expenditure and associated financial documentation, policies, procedures, and staff interviews. The program reviews include an evaluation of program activities and services provided to eligible participants, staff interviews, and the examination of randomly selected participant files. The participant files are reviewed for inclusion of required forms and data, case notes to ensure continuity from program enrollment through exit and follow-up, and data entry practices into the case management system. Additionally, program performance information is compared to the State's federal negotiated performance rates.

Under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), state and local partners share common performance goals and are mandated to collaborate in developing and implementing a one-stop delivery system where services are designed with the customer in the center, resources are leveraged for maximum efficiency, and continuous improvement is the hallmark.

To assure WIOA goals are met, the One-stop certification teams are comprised of AWIB members and staff and individuals who represent local partners with specific expertise serving populations with barriers. Results and outcomes for the public investment in the One Stop Operators are essential to the Alaska Job Center Network's relevance. The effectiveness of the AJCN for employers and job seekers is evident in system performance, and service delivery decisions are based on data. On an ongoing basis, customer data from one-stop partners and regional economic data is collected, analyzed, and shared with all workforce system staff, community stakeholders and WIOA partner representatives. Plans for improvement, enhancement, or adjustment are established and acted upon. The DOLWD and DEED work closely together assure WIOA requirements are met.

## 5. Distribution of Funds for Core Programs

Describe the methods and factors the State will use in distributing funds under the core programs in accordance with the provisions authorizing such distributions.

### A. For Title I Programs

Provide a description of the written policies that establish the State's methods and factors used to distribute funds to local areas for—

#### i. Youth Activities in Accordance with WIOA Section 128(b)(2) or (b)(3)

Alaska has been approved by the US DOL Employment and Training Administration as a Single State Local Area due to the unique labor market and geographic workforce distribution. The DOLWD allocates funds to six regional economic and workforce areas: Anchorage/Mat-Su, Gulf Coast, Interior, Northern, Southeast, and Southwest.

Alaska's WIOA Title IB Within State Funding Allocation Policy 07-518.2 describes the methodology used to allocate Youth funds among the six regional economic and workforce areas.

For the state level distribution of funds, five percent for statewide administration and 10 percent for statewide projects will be reserved annually. The remaining Youth funds will be distributed primarily through competitive grants as required by 20 CFR § 681.400 Subpart C. However, as much as is practicable, from the total to be distributed between economic regions: 1) One third shall be allocated on the basis of the relative number of unemployed individuals in areas of substantial unemployment (census areas with an unemployment rate of 6.5 percent or higher) in each economic region compared to the total number of unemployed individuals in areas of substantial unemployment statewide; 2) One third shall be allocated on the basis of the relative excess number of unemployed individuals (census areas with an unemployment rate of 4.5 percent or higher) in each economic region compared to the total excess number of unemployed individuals statewide; and 3) One third shall be allocated on the basis of the relative number of disadvantaged youth in each economic region compared to the total number of disadvantaged youth statewide.

#### ii. Adult and Training Activities in Accordance with WIOA Section 133(b)(2) or (b)(3)

Alaska has been approved by the US DOL Employment and Training Administration as a Single State Local Area due to the unique labor market and geographic workforce distribution. The DOLWD allocates funds to six regional economic and workforce areas: Anchorage/Mat-Su, Gulf Coast, Interior, Northern, Southeast, and Southwest.

The WIOA Title IB Within State Funding Allocations Policy 07-518.2 describes the methodology used in allocating funds for Adult employment and training activities among the six regional economic and local workforce areas in the state.

For the state level distribution of funds, five percent of the Adult federal allotment for statewide administration and 10 percent for statewide projects will be reserved annually.

From the balance the DETS Director or designee will determine the amount or percent of funding to be distributed to the economic regions. The most recent labor market, employment, and unemployment data available from the DOLWD, Research and Analysis Section will be used to determine the allocation.

As much as is practicable, from the amount to be distributed between economic regions: 1) One fourth shall be allocated on the basis of the relative number of unemployed individuals in areas of substantial unemployment (census areas with an unemployment rate of 6.5 percent or higher) in each economic region compared to the total number of unemployed individuals in areas of substantial unemployment statewide; 2) One fourth shall be allocated on the basis of the relative excess number of unemployed individuals in each economic region compared to the total excess number of unemployed individuals statewide; 3) One fourth shall be allocated on the basis of the relative number of disadvantaged adults in each economic region compared to the total number of disadvantaged adults statewide; and 4) One fourth shall be allocated on the basis of the relative number of employed individuals in each economic region compared to the total number of employed individuals statewide.

Adult program allocations will be distributed through the job centers for Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) and Supportive Services. The DETS Director or designee may reallocate Adult funds between the economic regions to make effective and efficient use of the funds while taking into consideration statewide needs. The transfer of up to 100 percent of funds between the Adult and Dislocated Worker programs is allowed with approval from the DETS Director or designee and supported by the Alaska Workforce Investment Board (AWIB) through resolution 16-06.

### iii. Dislocated Worker Employment and Training Activities in Accordance with WIOA Section 133(b)(2) and Based on Data and Weights Assigned

Alaska has been approved by the US DOL Employment and Training Administration as a Single State Local Area due to the unique labor market and geographic workforce distribution. The DOLWD allocates funds to six regional economic and workforce areas: Anchorage/Mat-Su, Gulf Coast, Interior, Northern, Southeast, and Southwest.

The WIOA Title IB Within State Funding Allocations Policy 07-518.2 describes the methodology used in allocating funds for Dislocated Worker employment and training activities among the six regional economic and local workforce areas in the state.

For the state level distribution of funds, the DOLWD will: 1) Reserve five percent of Alaska's Dislocated Worker federal allotments for statewide administration; 2) Reserve 10 percent of Alaska's Dislocated Worker federal allotments for statewide projects; 3) Reserve up to 25 percent of the Dislocated Worker federal allotment for rapid response activities.

From the balance the DETS Director or designee will determine the amount or percent of funding to be distributed to the economic regions. The most recent labor market, employment, and unemployment data available from the DOLWD, Research and Analysis Section will be used to determine the allocation.

For the Dislocated Worker program, as much as is practicable, from the total to be distributed between economic regions: 1) One fourth shall be allocated on the basis of the relative number of insured unemployed individuals in each economic region compared to the total number of insured unemployed individuals statewide; 2) One fourth shall be allocated on the basis of the relative concentrations of unemployed individuals (census areas with an unemployment rate of 6.5 percent or higher) in each economic region compared to the total concentrations of unemployed individuals statewide; 3) One fourth shall be allocated on the basis of the relative number of long-term unemployed (15 weeks or more) individuals in each economic region compared to the total number of long-term unemployed individuals statewide; and 4) One

fourth shall be allocated on the basis of the relative number of employed individuals in each economic region compared to the total number of employed individuals statewide.

Dislocated Worker allocations will be distributed through the job centers for Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) and Supportive Services. The DETS Director or designee may reallocate Dislocated Worker funds between the economic regions to make effective and efficient use of the funds while taking into consideration statewide needs. The transfer of up to 100 percent of funds between the Dislocated Worker and Adult programs is allowed with approval from the DETS Director or designee and supported by the Alaska Workforce Investment Board (AWIB) through resolution 16-06.

## B. For Title II

i. Describe how the eligible agency will award multi-year grants or contracts on a competitive basis to eligible providers in the State, including how eligible agencies will establish that eligible providers are organizations of demonstrated effectiveness.

Title II funds will be awarded as three-year Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) grants to fifteen (15) eligible providers of adult education. Alaska Adult Education (AAE) has 13 regional economic programs funded by AEFLA grant monies. Each grant serves as the main delivery system of AAE throughout Alaska but is a separate competition for each region. Two additional grants are awarded under a statewide competition for Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education (IELCE) and AAE services to be offered in the Department of Corrections' (DOC) correctional centers.

The AAE program funds 13 regional economic programs through a formula that specifies a base budget allocation of \$50,000; a cost of living adjustment, based on the Alaska Department of Education's Area Cost Factor Differentials, used for the state's distribution to public school districts; an adjustment for the number of adults in each region over the age of 18 who do not have a high school diploma, as calculated from American Community Survey data; program performance during previous grant cycle; and maintained compliancy with programmatic, state and federal policies and regulations. The AAE economic regions follow the same regions established by the Alaska Native Regional Corporations. Alaska is not divided into counties or parishes, as is the case in other states, but is divided into Alaska Native Regional Corporations.

The amount of funding to provide services under the DOC grant is determined by the law (section 222. (a)(1)), which states no more than 20 percent of the 82.5 percent of the grant funds used to award sub-grants will be awarded for correctional education and other institutionalized individuals. The funding formula for Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education grant are determined and designated by federal award each year.

Alaska issues one Request for Grant Application (RGA) for all the above-named grants. Grant publications will be made available to a broad range of potential applications through expansion of outreach, including public notice of availability of funds for Title II is published on the State of Alaska Public On-line Notice System. The AAE office will utilize traditional and non-traditional publications, such as websites, press releases, and social media to inform current and potential eligible providers of the process. As established in the RGA, informational teleconferences will be scheduled to provide technical assistance and answer questions on the grant application in an open forum. Frequently asked questions will be compiled and posted on the AAE website.

The RGA is attached as a PDF to the online announcement, thus ensuring that all potential eligible providers have access to the same application. The rubric to score the applications is included. An announcement that the RGA is being published on the State of Alaska Public On-line Notice System is emailed to eligible providers that have signed up for notifications of grant releases from the Online-Notice System. Eligible providers, for the purposes of the RGA, are defined in Title II Section 203 (5). Organizations not previously funded are given fair and equitable opportunity to apply for funding without hindrance.

An eligible provider must demonstrate past effectiveness by providing performance data on its record of improving the skills of eligible individuals, particularly eligible individuals who have low levels of literacy, in the content domains of reading, writing, mathematics, English language acquisition, and GED attainment. An eligible provider must also provide information regarding its outcomes for participants related to employment, attainment of secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, and transition to postsecondary education and training.

There are two ways in which an eligible provider may meet the requirements:

- (1) An eligible provider that has been funded under title II of the Act must provide performance data required under section 116 to demonstrate past effectiveness.
- (2) An eligible provider that has not been previously funded under title II of the Act must provide performance data to demonstrate its past effectiveness in serving basic skills deficient eligible individuals, including evidence of its success in achieving outcomes listed in the paragraph above.

[ii. Describe how the eligible agency will ensure direct and equitable access to all eligible providers to apply and compete for funds and how the eligible agency will ensure that it is using the same grant or contract announcement and application procedure for all eligible providers.](#)

The Department of Labor and Workforce Development (DOLWD) will announce the availability of funds for Title II Alaska Adult Education (AAE) through the State of Alaska Public On-line Notice System as well as utilize traditional and non-traditional publications, such as websites, press releases, and social media to inform current and potential eligible providers of the grant release. A copy of the Request for Grant Application (RGA), scoring rubric, and AAE specific definitions are attached to the online announcement. The announcement and the RGA will both reference WIOA Title II's definition of "eligible provider." Any entity that has signed up for access to the DOLWD On-line Notice System will receive notice regarding the RGA. During the initial period of the grant submission process, any eligible agency that contacts DOLWD with an interest in participating will be told how to access the On-line Notice System, if they have not yet accessed the On-line Notice System. As established in the RGA, informational teleconferences will be scheduled to provide technical assistance and answer questions on the grant application in an open forum. Frequently asked questions will be compiled and posted on the AAE website.

The RGA outlines criterion to be provided in a clear and concise narrative that is aligned with the WIOA 13 considerations. Furthermore, through the RGA process, eligible providers must demonstrate past effectiveness in serving eligible individuals who have low levels of literacy. Providers who are previously funded Alaska Adult Education grantees will be required to show data to demonstrate the average percentage of students who show an increase in achieving a least one educational functional level (EFL); earning an alternative high school diploma through GED testing; and achieving gains in WIOA outcomes measures. An eligible provider that has not been

previously funded under Title II of WIOA may demonstrate effectiveness by providing performance data related to record of recruitment, retention, instructional practices, workforce alignment, and improving the skills of eligible individuals, particularly eligible individuals who have low levels of literacy, in the content domains of reading, writing, mathematics, English language acquisition, and other subject areas relevant to the services contained in the Alaska Adult Education application for funds. They will also be required to provide data in relation to the average percentage of students achieving at least one grade level advancement; high school completion; and employment transition outcomes.

The same announcement, application, and process will be used for all applicants for each RGA issued by the AAE office. The AAE office conducts the grant application process and ensures that the same review process is used for all applications received. The AAE grant recipients are directly funded from the state DOLWD.

### C. Vocational Rehabilitation Program

In the case of a State that, under section 101(a)(2)(A)(i) of the Rehabilitation Act designates a State agency to administer the part of the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan under which VR services are provided for individuals who are blind, describe the process and the factors used by the State to determine the distribution of funds among the two VR agencies in the State.

The DVR is a combined agency; therefore, this is not applicable.

## 6. Program Data

### A. Data Alignment and Integration

Describe the plans of the lead State agencies with responsibility for the administration of the core programs, along with the State Board, to align and integrate available workforce and education data systems for the core programs, unemployment insurance programs, and education through postsecondary education, and to the extent possible, the Combined State Plan partner programs included in this plan. The description of the State's plan for integrating data systems should include the State's goals for achieving integration and any progress to date.

i. Describe the State's plans to make the management information systems for the core programs interoperable to maximize the efficient exchange of common data elements to support assessment and evaluation

Alaska has purchased and is in process of implementing a Software-As-A-Service, Virtual OneStop (VOS) System to replace the WIOA Title IB, II, III, and Trade Adjustment Assistance systems; the Work Opportunity Tax Credit system; and Electronic Grants Management System. This new, robust VOS system will connect with Alaska's Unemployment Insurance system to offer a common front door for employers, training providers, UI customers, job seekers, and workers. Additionally, VOS will allow for streamlined services to customers, prevent duplication of data entry, leverage program resources, and ensure complete and accurate common PIRL reporting. An additional benefiting factor of the new system is that when there is a need for new data elements, identified either internally or federally mandated, all core programs will have shared access to those added elements. The VOS implementation date is scheduled for July 1, 2020.

As the state transitions to the new data management system, the core programs will continue to share and combine participant information for PIRL reporting, performance evaluations, and statistical purposes as has been done since the implementation of WIOA.

The DOLWD's Research and Analysis (R&A) section has coordinated for years with the Department of Education and Early Development, the University of Alaska, and other regional training providers to share data. Additionally, for program performance measures based on employment and wages, R&A has integrated databases to determine, among other measures, program participants' employment status, wages, and continued residency in the state. These relationships with state agencies and training providers support the sharing and integration of data.

[ii. Describe the State's plans to integrate data systems to facilitate streamlined intake and service delivery to track participation across all programs included in this plan.](#)

With the implementation of VOS, Alaska will possess a fully integrated intake and data system except for the Title IV, Vocational Rehabilitation AWARE system. AWARE was developed based on Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) business practices and federal requirements. AWARE offers a comprehensive set of cases, financial, and organizational modules designed around the natural flow of the VR case process, making it intuitive for VR Counselors. The VOS system and AWARE system will integrate through the sharing of information collected by a Semi-Autonomous Research Assistant (SARA). SARA is designed to improve and share communication between division staff and program participants using text messages and emails, automating tasks such as reminding individuals of appointments, gathering employment information, and collecting post-exit information.

[iii. Explain how the State board will assist the governor in aligning technology and data systems across required one-stop partner programs \(including design and implementation of common intake, data collection, etc.\) and how such alignment will improve service delivery to individuals, including unemployed individuals.](#)

The AWIB will implement memorandums of understanding, as appropriate, to ensure that the required common data elements can be collected and stored, and to facilitate shared use by all core programs. This process can ensure that all the core programs are fully sharing resources as much as possible and that the process is transparent to the applicant. This alignment will improve service delivery to individuals, including unemployed individuals, by helping to open lines of communication among staff, reducing duplication of service, and improving efficiency.

[iv. Describe the State's plans to develop and produce the reports required under section 116, performance accountability system. \(WIOA section 116\(d\)\(2\)\)](#)

Alaska has successfully reported all elements identified in WIOA Section 116(d)(2) and will expect a more efficient and streamlined process with the implementation of the AlaskaJobs system in FY 2021.

Participant activity for WIOA Title I, II, III, TAA and SCSEP will be housed in the AlaskaJobs system, allowing for non-duplication of services, common exit, and common participant reporting. Title IV data is housed in the AWARE system for performance reporting.

Eligible training providers will submit training program completer data into the AlaskaJobs system with exception of the University of Alaska System and the Alaska Vocational Technical Center, who provide annual imports of training program completer data directly to DOLWD's

Research and Analysis section. This information is merged with core program participant outcome and unemployment insurance wage data.

The core programs, SCSEP, TAA, Research and Analysis, and unemployment insurance are all part of the Alaska DOLWD, successfully ensuring a coordinated approach to data sharing and reporting. All aspects of the collection, exchange and reporting of required performance data has been designed.

The AlaskaJobs system is maintained by a contracted vendor, Geographic Solutions Inc. who has extensive experience with extracting data needed for accurate PIRL reporting. GSI will provide a quarterly and annual extract of performance data for Alaska staff to review and submit.

#### B. Assessment of Participants' Post-program Success

Describe how lead State agencies will use the workforce development system to assess the progress of participants who are exiting from core programs in entering, persisting in, and completing postsecondary education, or entering or remaining in employment. States may choose to set additional indicators of performance.

In addition to the defined WIOA performance indicators, Alaska has two unique data sets that give it more options for performance analysis. Alaska can determine who left the state by accessing applications for the state's Alaska Permanent Fund Dividend, a program that distributes a share of oil-related state investment earnings each year to Alaska residents. Alaska also has more detailed information about worker occupations because it has been the only state with a history of collecting that information as part of employers' mandatory quarterly reporting under state UI laws. This information, combined with data on participant training completion, entered employment, job retention, entered education, and earnings change, allows for a more in-depth performance analysis to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the workforce system and inform continuous improvement activities.

#### C. Use of Unemployment Insurance (UI) Wage Record Data

Explain how the State will meet the requirements to utilize quarterly UI wage records for performance accountability, evaluations, and as a source for workforce and labor market information, consistent with Federal and State law. (This Operational Planning element applies to core programs.)

Alaska will continue to use quarterly UI wage records to look at outcomes in terms of occupations, wages, etc. The state will carefully control individuals' data and release only aggregated data consistent with federal and state regulations and statutes. DOLWD's Research and Analysis Section has a history of successfully working with various programs to obtain and analyze data while maintaining confidentiality and privacy safeguards.

#### D. Privacy Safeguards

Describe the privacy safeguards incorporated in the State's workforce development system, including safeguards required by section 444 of the General Education Provisions Act (20 U.S.C. 1232g) and other applicable Federal laws.

Alaska will carefully control individuals' data and release only aggregated data consistent with federal and state regulations and statutes. DOLWD restricts access to microdata with file protocols, staff are familiar with working with confidential data, and they are required to take

regular training with the Bureau of Labor Statistics to ensure they are using the most up-to-date procedures.

UI wage record data are securely transferred from the state's UI program to DOLWD's Research and Analysis Section through system extracts. The records are then reviewed for quality control and stored in restricted-access folders. Except where specifically allowed or required by state statute (AS 23.20.100) or federal regulation (20 CFR 603.5), the wage record data are only released or published in aggregated form so that names and other confidential information of individual workers and individual firms are never revealed.

The analysts and economists who work with the data receive annual confidentiality training on state procedures and protocols and participate in annual data confidentiality training on federal-state cooperative data programs with the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. In over 15 years of working with confidential K-12, university, and UI data, there has never been a breach of confidentiality or any type of accidental disclosure.

## 7. Priority of Service for Veterans

Describe how the State will implement and monitor the priority of service provisions for veterans in accordance with the requirements of the Jobs for Veterans Act, codified at section 4215 of 38 U.S.C., which applies to all employment and training programs funded in whole or in part by the Department of Labor. States should also describe the referral process for veterans determined to have a significant barrier to employment to receive services from the Jobs for Veterans State Grants (JVSG) program's Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) specialist.

Alaska state policies ensure Priority of Service (POS) to all covered persons and that they are identified at the initial point-of-entry whether in-person, at an AJC, or through ALEXsys.

After the Jobs for Veterans Act was enacted into Public Law 107-288, and after changes under the WIOA, the state revised, published, and issued an updated POS Policy 07-509. This policy requires that veterans and other covered persons under Public Law 107-288 receive POS under all employment and training programs funded by the USDOL.

DETS administers many programs that are covered by the laws, regulations, and policies encompassing POS. These include the WIOA Adult, Youth, and Dislocated Worker programs, Wagner-Peyser, Trade Act programs, National Emergency Grants, SCSEP, Helmets to Hardhats, and the Disability Employment Initiative (DEI).

### Staff Training

All WIOA and Wagner-Peyser staff receive training including specifics about the Jobs for Veterans Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act, and other legislation that impacts veteran priority, preference, and employability. All AJC staff are also required to complete the National Veterans Training Institute (NVTI) "A Day in the Life of JVSG Staff in an American Job Center" course, which provides a broad overview of how the Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JVSG) staff operate within the AJC. AJC efforts focus on the initial assessment of veterans to facilitate delivery of career and training services, as well as conducting outreach to employers to promote veteran hire. POS education efforts include signage at all AJC entry points. Additionally, all AJC staff provide initial contact, POS, and general information.

### POS Definition

POS means that eligible veterans and covered persons receive head-of-the-line privileges for all programs funded either in whole or in part by the USDOL. All recipients of WIOA funds for employment and training programs are required to identify those who are eligible for POS at the points-of-entry to programs, resources, and services. Once veterans or eligible persons meet a program's eligibility requirements, AJC staff ensure covered persons receive POS, as specified. Other community service providers funded by WIOA or Wagner-Peyser agreements are aware of their requirement to provide POS to veterans and eligible persons.

#### ALEXsys

ALEXsys identifies veterans and places them at the top of candidate search lists. This ensures veterans are reviewed for job openings prior to non-veterans. Additionally, when staff assist a job seeker, ALEXsys clearly identifies whether the individual is a veteran or eligible spouse. When staff see this alert, they know POS is in effect and act accordingly.

Each AJC manager directly monitors POS in his or her office and electronically files a weekly activity report to the central office through regional managers. Upon receiving them, a division assistant director checks the reports to ensure veterans receive services. DETS provides POS by moving veterans and eligible spouses to the top of sign-up lists for workshops and other resources and through dedicated computers for use by veterans at the larger AJCs. As such, veterans and eligible persons receive services and resources before non-covered persons. Local offices annotate veteran status on resource room sign-in logs and staff members compile information for the managers. Regional managers monitor AJC activities by frequent connection with the AJC managers and through weekly or monthly reports.

#### Disabled Veterans' Outreach Programs

Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) specialists and Local Veterans' Employment Representative (LVER) staff are funded by the Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JVSG). The JVSG utilizes federal funding to hire dedicated staff to provide individualized career and training-related services to veterans and other eligible individuals with significant barriers to employment (SBEs) as well as assisting employers in filling their workforce needs with job-seeking veterans. These staff members provide vital services to both veterans and employers seeking employment-related assistance.

The DVOP specialists are housed in AJCs located in areas with the highest veteran populations and provide in-depth interviewing and comprehensive assessments to identify employment goals, interim objectives, and appropriate services that will enable the veteran and/or eligible spouse to meet his or her employment goals. DETS complies with all federal guidance for JVSG staff and seeks to fully utilize the expertise of DVOPs and LVERs. DETS developed a referral process to direct veterans and eligible spouses to the appropriate staff member to ensure a client-centered approach to the delivery of career and training services.

When job seekers indicate veteran status upon initial entry to an AJC, job center staff ask additional questions to determine if they have an eligible SBE. Staff utilize a one-page, quick-look DVOP eligibility guide which contains a concise list of SBE criteria, along with the definitions of eligible spouse, homelessness, and Alaska low-income limits. If a determination is made that the veteran is eligible and in need of individualized career services, they are referred to the DVOP specialist for further assessment. If DVOP services are unavailable, the veteran is seen by the next available AJC staff member.

AJCs follow a team approach to serving customers, including providing services to veterans. Teams work together to support the roles of LVERs and DVOPs in providing services to veterans. All staff are trained to deliver as many services to veterans as possible to ease the burden on DVOPs. DETS encourages staff to engage veterans and insists that all AJC staff are veterans' representatives, not just JVSG-funded staff. The state follows all Special Grant Provisions, Veterans' Program Letters, USDOL/VETS Law 107- 288, and United States Code Title 38.

## 8. Addressing the Accessibility of the One-Stop Delivery System for Individuals with Disabilities

Describe how the one-stop delivery system (including one-stop center operators and the one-stop delivery system partners), will comply with section 188 of WIOA (if applicable) and applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.) with regard to the physical and programmatic accessibility of facilities, programs, services, technology, and materials for individuals with disabilities. This also must include a description of compliance through providing staff training and support for addressing the needs of individuals with disabilities. Describe the State's one-stop center certification policy, particularly the accessibility criteria.

The state's One-Stop system of Alaska Job Centers (AJCs) has developed a comprehensive approach to ensure accessibility and inclusion of all customers, including those with disabilities, to all facilities, programs, and services. Physical and programmatic accessibility are continuously evaluated with an Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) assessment incorporated into the One-Stop certification process and continuous improvement strategies planned and implemented when needed. Alaska will continue to refine the policies, training, and continuous improvement strategies to ensure compliance with WIOA and continued compliance with ADA.

The One-Stop system's approach to ADA compliance includes:

- Physical and programmatic accessibility;
- Staff training and accountability;
- Adaptive technology and other accommodations; and
- On-going survey of effectiveness and continuous improvement.

Physical and programmatic accessibility

- Job centers provide individuals with disabilities access to information, resources, programs, and activities in a manner that allows each individual, no matter their disability, the opportunity of full inclusion. All workshops, public access, programs, etc. are fully accessible, to ensure that the opportunities and benefits provided by the job center are available to individuals with disabilities in an equally effective and integrated manner;
- "Alaska Job Center Universal Access for Customers with Disabilities" policy plays a vital role in establishing the working-level framework for outlining and improving the accessibility, capacity, and accountability of AJCs to serve customers with disabilities. The policy covers both physical and programmatic accessibility within AJCs and outlines the assistive technologies available and required staff training;

- Each location has appropriate signage identifying the policy that no individual with a disability shall, by reason of such disability, be excluded from participation in, or be denied the benefit of, the services, programs, or activities of the AJCs;
- All job centers use universal design with printed materials. All posters, flyers, brochures, etc. use common principles throughout the design. The outreach and marketing materials developed for distribution from the AJCs to partners, job seekers, and employers contain notice of the availability of auxiliary aids and services for needed accommodations to access programs and services; and
- Alaska maintains an ADA Compliance Program: <http://doa.alaska.gov/ada/>. Through the state ADA Coordinator's Office, each department has its own designated ADA coordinator, who acts as a technical assistance provider and liaison for that department.

#### Training and accountability for all AJC staff

- As a result of three Disability Employment Initiative (DEI) grants, all AJC staff have and will continue to receive Disability Resource Coordinator I (DRC I) training, which includes awareness of programmatic and physical barriers to accessibility and covers familiarity of the "ADA checklist for Readily Achievable Barrier Removal." The ADA checklist is completed annually at each facility and any needed corrective action is identified and implemented;
- The DRC I training is an integrated and mandated part of new-hire training for all AJC staff;
- The Local AJC Managers and Vocational Rehabilitation Managers identify periodic and on-going training in specialized topics to augment standardized training and ensure continual learning and awareness in improving access to all services within the AJC system for individuals with disabilities; and
- Each AJC manager documents physical and programmatic complaints and ensures a corrective action plan is developed and addressed by the most appropriate and relevant method: policy change, training, or addressing physical barriers.

#### Adaptive technology and other accommodations

- Each AJC is equipped with a Universal Access Accessibility Station that is designed to improve the quality of the job applicant's experience, no matter the disability. Each station is designed with state-of-the-art technology that can help job seekers with disabilities navigation the World of Work with based on their personal independence level.
- Assistive Technology (AT) available includes screen readers, magnifiers, adaptive software, virtual sign language interpretation, closed captioning on scrolling program and services video, motorized adjustable workstations, specialized keyboards and mice, TTY phones, and personal voice amplification device;
- "Tips for Improving Access to Workshops and Training" has been developed and is a part of the staff training and resources. This document offers guidance and suggestions on increasing accessibility and success for individuals attending AJC workshops and

training sessions and is broken down by disability type. The document outlines ways the facilitator or trainer can incorporate accommodations and adaptations into the class to ensure an optimal learning environment for all; and

- Any program and service may be accommodated for full inclusion on an “as needed” basis with the accommodation being dependent on the needs of the individual customer and provided through the AJCs in collaboration with partners.

On-going survey of effectiveness and continuous improvement

- AJC certification is a collaborative process involving all partners of the One-Stop delivery system. The joint AJC management team collectively completes the documents and surveys for the certification and submits them to the AWIB for approval. Certification involves reviewing site working agreements, cost allocations, self-assessment surveys, and the ADA accessibility survey. In addition to reviewing all submitted documents, members of the AWIB conduct an on-site review identifying best practices and need for corrective action planning. Based on their review and findings, the AWIB recommends and approves certification; and
- Regular AJC management team meetings occur between all on-site partners, during which all joint operations are discussed and plans for system improvement and any corrective action are implemented. This forum is effective for change and involves addressing and improving accessibility for customers with disabilities.

## 9. Addressing the Accessibility of the One-Stop Delivery System for Individuals who are English Language Learners

Describe how the one-stop delivery system (including one-stop center operators and the one-stop delivery system partners) will ensure that each one-stop center is able to meet the needs of English language learners, such as through established procedures, staff training, resources, and other materials.

The state provides staff training, materials, and resources to meet the needs of Limited English Proficient individuals, including direct referral to the Alaska Immigration Justice Project Language Interpreter Center. The AJCs utilize a contract with language interpreter services to be provided telephonically.

## IV. Coordination with State Plan Programs

Describe the methods used for joint planning and coordination among the core programs, and with the required one-stop partner programs and other programs and activities included in the Unified or Combined State Plan.

Designated staff representing each core program including Titles I, II and III, Veterans, IV-DVR, and the Senior Community Service Employment Program meet on a regular basis to implement joint planning and coordination efforts. The working group addresses various issues including data coordination, policy development, performance accountability, Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL), and One-Stop operator designation. The Combined Plan programs strive for workers' economic self-sufficiency by aligning workforce development with education and economic development to support employment and training opportunities, and career progression opportunities for all Alaskans. Updates to this plan are from findings of WIOA board members' planning meetings and surveys, along with ongoing input from employers, apprentices, workforce intermediaries, state agencies, and other partners' joint planning and coordination efforts to develop these WIOA goals, strategies, and performance measures. Core and partner program staff continue to meet to explore and enhance best practices for providing job seekers suitable employment and employers qualified, well-trained candidates.

An example of joint planning and coordination of core programs with other programs is the Alaska State Plan on Aging under the Older Americans Act (OAA) that was approved on August 29, 2019 for October 1, 2019 through June 30, 2023. The Senior Services State Plan was developed by the Alaska Commission on Aging (ACoA) in conjunction with the Division of Senior and Disability Services and the Division of Employment and Training SCSEP. It is the culmination of years of planning, surveying, and in-depth consideration of specific goals, including that seniors are financially secure. Through these joint planning efforts, Alaska aims to keep pace with its employment needs through planning, advocacy, and public awareness efforts, in collaboration with all organizations focused on the well-being of Alaskans.

The coordination and planning process also included seven listening sessions between February 2017 and November 2018, a statewide senior survey with 3,130 responses, and a provider survey to identify the top issues of concern to Alaskans. Access to health care and financial security are the greatest concerns for respondents of the 2018 Senior Survey. The provider survey identified financial need (not enough food, money to cover energy costs, etc.) as the most important issue facing Alaskan seniors today. To address this need, a Senior Employment Initiative is being developed by DVR, WIOA, ACoA, and SCSEP to promote our services to seniors who desire to or need to be employed because they do not have enough retirement income, and to assist them in obtaining new skills so that they can remain competitive and find employment.

The combined WIOA plan is developed alongside several existing and collaborating planning efforts: Alaska Career and Technical Education Plan; Apprenticeship Training Plan; Alaska Gasline Workforce Plan; Alaska Health Workforce Development Plan; Building Alaska's Construction Workforce Development Plan; Alaska Transportation Industry Workforce Development Plan; Alaska Maritime Workforce Development Plan; Alaska Mining Workforce Development Plan; and Alaska Core Competencies for Direct Care Workers in Health and Human Services.

Another example of joint planning and coordination is determining the state's Effectiveness in Serving Employers performance indicators. After multiple discussions among the WIOA core

and required partners, Alaska uses, and is committed to improving, its Employer Penetration and Retention Rates. Our approach to serving employers emphasizes proactive, staff-initiated outreach designed to meet the current and future employment and training needs of Alaska employers. This focus will continue to facilitate long-term business relationships built on confidence and trust between Alaska employers and well-trained job center staff.

## V. Common Assurances (For All Core Programs)

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include assurances that:

The State Plan must include	
1. The State has established a policy identifying circumstances that may present a conflict of interest for a State Board or local board member, or the entity or class of officials that the member represents, and procedures to resolve such conflicts;	Yes
2. The State has established a policy to provide to the public (including individuals with disabilities) access to meetings of State Boards and local boards, and information regarding activities of State Boards and local boards, such as data on board membership and minutes;	Yes
3. The lead State agencies with optimal policy-making authority and responsibility for the administration of core programs reviewed and commented on the appropriate operational planning elements of the Unified or Combined State Plan, and approved the elements as serving the needs of the populations served by such programs;	Yes
4. (a) The State obtained input into the development of the Unified or Combined State Plan and provided an opportunity for comment on the plan by representatives of local boards and chief elected officials, businesses, labor organizations, institutions of higher education, the entities responsible for planning or administrating the core programs, required one-stop partners and the other Combined Plan programs (if included in the State Plan), other primary stakeholders, including other organizations that provide services to individuals with barriers to employment, and the general public, and that the Unified or Combined State Plan is available and accessible to the general public; (b) The State provided an opportunity for review and comment on the plan by the State Board, including State agency official(s) for the Unemployment Insurance Agency if such official(s) is a member of the State Board;	Yes
5. The State has established, in accordance with WIOA section 116(i), fiscal control and fund accounting procedures that may be necessary to ensure the proper disbursement of, and accounting for, funds paid to the State through allotments made for the core programs to carry out workforce development activities;	Yes
6. The State has taken appropriate action to secure compliance with uniform administrative requirements in this Act, including that the State will annually monitor local areas to ensure compliance and otherwise take appropriate action to secure compliance with the uniform administrative requirements under WIOA section 184(a)(3);	Yes
7. The State has taken the appropriate action to be in compliance with WIOA section 188, Nondiscrimination, as applicable;	Yes
8. The Federal funds received to carry out a core program will not be expended for any purpose other than for activities authorized with respect to such funds under that core program;	Yes
9. The State will pay an appropriate share (as defined by the State board) of the costs of carrying out section 116, from funds made available through each of the core programs;	Yes
10. The State has a one-stop certification policy that ensures the physical and programmatic accessibility of all one-stop centers with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA);	Yes
11. Service providers have a referral process in place for directing Veterans with Significant Barriers to Employment (SBE) to DVOP services, when appropriate; and	Yes
12. Priority of service for veterans and eligible spouses is provided in accordance with 38 USC 4215 in all workforce preparation, development or delivery of programs or services funded directly, in whole or in part, by the Department of Labor.	Yes

## VI. Program-Specific Requirements for Core Programs

The State must address all program-specific requirements in this section for the WIOA core programs regardless of whether the State submits either a Unified or Combined State Plan.

### Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth Activities under Title I-B

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include the following with respect to activities carried out under subtitle B—

#### a. General Requirements

##### 1. Regions and Local Workforce Development Areas

###### A. Identify the regions and the local workforce development areas designated in the State

The current waiver to allow the State Board to also carry out the functions of a Local Board expires in June 2020. Alaska is again requesting a waiver in Plan Section VI (E): Waiver Request to Allow the State Board to Carry out the Roles of a Local Board.

Under WIOA definitions, a single “local area” cannot contain more than one “region.” Alaska is a single workforce area state, so in many aspects we operate like a single planning area. However, operationally, the state bases planning and labor market analysis on the six existing state-defined “economic regions,” – Southeast, Southwest, Anchorage/Mat-Su, Interior, Northern, and Gulf Coast – as each one has different economic and workforce needs.

AWIB members come from a variety of industries and represent all geographic and economic regions of the state. They bring the voice of employers, educational institutions, Alaska Native regional corporations, and other workforce partners in their respective regions. The AWIB focuses on employer engagement, connecting education and training strategies through building career pathways; supporting work-based learning; and improving career results for all job seekers and employers alike, based on the demographics and needs of each economic region. The AWIB will continue to successfully carry out the functions of both a state board and a local board, as it has for over a decade.

B. Describe the process used for designating local areas, including procedures for determining whether the local area met the criteria for “performed successfully” and “sustained fiscal integrity” in accordance with 106(b)(2) and (3) of WIOA. Describe the process used for identifying regions and planning regions under section 106(a) of WIOA. This must include a description of how the State consulted with the local boards and chief elected officials in identifying the regions

The AWIB developed policy and procedures for Local Workforce Area Designation under WIOA, which allow a local governing board to request such designation. Should an application be submitted, it would be reviewed by the AWIB, and then a recommendation for approval or denial would be forwarded to the governor. An applicant would need to demonstrate that the proposed area:

- Is consistent with local labor market areas;
- Has a common economic development area;

- Has the federal and non-federal resources, including appropriate education and training institutions, to administer activities under the Youth, Adult, and Dislocated Worker formula programs under WIOA Title I- B; and
- Has the fiscal, administrative, and reporting capacity and systems in place to report on participant outcomes as required by WIOA and the Alaska WIOA Combined Plan.

To determine whether a local area meets the criteria for “performed successfully” and “sustained fiscal integrity” in accordance with Section 106(b)(2) and (3) of WIOA, the AWIB will annually monitor the performance measure outcomes and fiscal records and reporting systems of the local area.

### **Input from local officials**

The Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development (DOLWD) solicited input on the Combined WIOA Plan from stakeholders across the state. DOLWD received no response to the draft local area designation, waiver, and appeals process, and there have been no requests received for designation as a local area.

The AWIB will continue to solicit feedback from local officials and employers in two ways: 1) outreach by individual Board members to their local officials; and 2) opportunities for input at each Board meeting, which are held at various locations around the state. The AWIB will focus on statewide strategies and their linkage to regional economic and workforce development resources and needs.

### [C. Provide the appeals process referred to in section 106\(b\)\(5\) of WIOA relating to designation of local areas](#)

The policy sets out the procedure for appeals as follows:

- The governor may approve or deny the request for designation. In either case, DOLWD will notify the applicant in writing. If the request is denied, the written notification will include the reasons for the denial;
- If the request for local area designation is denied, the applicant may appeal;
- Appeals must be made to the AWIB and must address each issue cited in the denial notification; and
- If a decision on the appeal is not made within 60 days or if the appeal to the AWIB does not result in designation of the local area, the applicant may request a review by the Secretary of Labor in accordance with 20 CFR Section 683.640 of the WIOA statute.

### [D. Provide the appeals process referred to in section 121\(h\)\(2\)\(E\) of WIOA relating to determinations for infrastructure funding](#)

The lead agencies of the core programs worked together and with the AWIB on an infrastructure funding process that is included as a required part of the partner Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). The Infrastructure Funding Agreement is inherent to the MOU and therefore is subject to Section VI (a):

## VI. GENERAL PROVISIONS

1. PARTNER IMPASSE RESOLUTION - Should any dispute or disagreements between partners regarding this MOU require discussion and resolution, applicable steps as required by WIOA and other applicable authorizing Acts and laws shall be followed. Parties shall continue with their responsibilities under this MOU during any period of dispute or disagreement. Disputes shall be resolved in a timely manner.

i. Informal Dispute Resolution Process - The AJCN partners agree to communicate openly and directly to resolve any problems or disputes related to provision of services in a cooperative manner and at the lowest level of intervention possible. In the event of an impasse between any AJCN partner and another AJCN Partner or the One Stop Operator, an attempt to resolve the impasse shall first be made within five business days from when the first impasse occurred between the two parties involved in the disagreement.

ii. Local Dispute Resolution Process - If the impasse cannot be resolved through informal efforts, each party agrees to separately submit a written explanation within 15 business days from when the first impasse occurred to the One Stop Operator describing the nature of the dispute, steps taken to resolve differences, and recommend solution(s) to the impasse. The One Stop Operator or his/her designee will confer with each partners' operational authority when attempting to resolve the impasse. The decision of the One Stop Operator will be issued in writing within 15 business days from receipt of the written explanation.

iii. Alaska Workforce Investment Board Dispute Resolution Process – to appeal the decision of the One Stop Operator, a party shall submit information regarding the impasse in writing to the AWIB Executive Director. The Executive Director will collect information from all parties and the One Stop Operator and coordinate with the Executive Committee for final resolution. Following consideration of provided materials, the AWIB Executive Committee shall issue a decision. If the impasse is between an AJCN partner and the One Stop Operator, and cannot be resolved by an informal dispute resolution process, the AJCN partner and One Stop Operator will directly engage in the AWIB dispute resolution process.

### 2. Statewide Activities

#### A. Provide State policies or guidance for the statewide workforce development system and for use of State funds for workforce investment activities

Alaska follows the requirements set out in 20 CFR Part 682.200 for the use of State funds, and these activities are supported by various policies. Annually, the amount of State funds needed is identified and may be shifted between activities as necessary.

State funds will be used for (1) carrying out the provision of rapid response; (2) the ongoing maintenance and dissemination of the eligible training provider list; (3) conducting program evaluations; (4) providing technical assistance to job center staff and partners; (5) staff development; (6) addressing obstacles for individuals with barriers to employment; (7) regional planning efforts; (8) the development of industry and sector partnerships; (9) addressing performance deficiencies; (10) conducting monitoring and oversight; (11) providing additional assistance to local areas that have a high concentration of eligible youth; and (12) operating a fiscal and management information system.

Additionally, state funds will support the state strategic vision and goals outlined in Section II (b) State Strategic Vision and Goals of this Combined Plan. This includes actively engaging at-risk

youth; expanding Registered Apprenticeships; prioritizing services to target populations; making data driven decisions to promote job creation; leveraging resources; and streamlining processes including the coordination and alignment of data systems.

Policies that support statewide activities include:

- Co-enrollment Policy 07-505.1
- Eligible Training Provider List Policy 07-501.2
- Equal Opportunity Discrimination Complaint Policy 07-506.4
- High Concentration of Eligible Youth Policy 07-503.2
- Job Center Universal Access Policy 07-516
- Military Veteran Priority of Service Policy 07-509
- Monitoring and Single Audit Policy 07-523.2
- Priority Populations – Adult Populations Policy 07-517
- Quality Pre-Apprenticeship Policy 07-525.1
- Self Sufficiency Policy 07-514
- Supportive Services Policy 07-521

[B. Describe how the State intends to use Governor’s set aside funding. Describe how the State will utilize Rapid Response funds to respond to layoffs and plant closings and coordinate services to quickly aid companies and their affected workers. States also should describe any layoff aversion strategies they have implemented to address at risk companies and workers](#)

The state intends to use the governor’s set-aside funds to purchase and implement a Software-As-A-Service Virtual OneStop (VOS) System to replace the WIOA Title IB, II, III, and Trade Adjustment Assistance systems; the Work Opportunity Tax Credit system; and Electronic Grants Administration and Management System. This new robust system will connect with Alaska’s Unemployment Insurance system to offer a common front door for employers, training providers, UI customers, job seekers, and workers. Additionally, VOS will allow for streamlined services to customers, prevent duplication of data entry, leverage program resources, and ensure complete and accurate common PIRL reporting. The VOS implementation date is scheduled for July 1, 2020.

A priority of WIOA and the State of Alaska is to further address the needs of at-risk youth. The governor’s set aside funds will be used to support the following youth focused projects and initiatives:

- **Alaska’s At- Risk Youth Initiative** complements the WIOA Youth program to ensure all Alaska youth have an opportunity to participate in services and activities leading to credential attainment or unsubsidized employment. The At-Risk Youth Initiative will primarily target youth exiting the foster care system, a treatment facility, or detention facility to ensure a successful transition. However, any Alaska youth identified as needing employment-related support and who is not currently working with a WIOA Youth

provider, will be assessed to determine the best track within the available service structure. The At-Risk Youth Initiative also includes maintaining and assessing data to ensure the efficiency and effectiveness of the available service structure.

- **The Youth Homelessness Demonstration Project** is led by the Alaska Coalition to End Homelessness, with Covenant House Alaska serving as the lead agency. A Youth Task Force made up of a diverse group of youth and young adults, the majority of whom have experienced homelessness, will target the most critical areas needing support: youth who identify as LGBTQ, pregnant & parenting youth, victims of trafficking and or domestic violence, youth who have been involved with the child protection, foster care, and juvenile justice systems, and those with specific behavioral health or substance abuse needs. YHDP activities will focus on finding host homes when foster care is untenable, permanent supportive housing to assist youth with more serious needs such as mental health issues, rapid re-housing into home environments instead of shelters, and a permanency navigator team to alleviate being shuffled between case managers when moving from one system, organization, or program to another.

Addressing the needs of transitioning military members is also supported by the governor's set aside funds. Alaska's Helmets to Hardhats (H2H) program connects transitioning service members with employment opportunities within the construction industry. This program is the first in the nation to provide actual hands-on training in multiple trades. H2H has been a positive investment for Alaska's large transitioning service member population.

### **Rapid Response**

Alaska views Rapid Response (RR) as a primary gateway to the workforce system for employers and workers who have been impacted by economic dislocations, industry declines, and natural disasters. The goal is to ensure communities, employers, and workers have the support and resources needed while in transition. RR acts as both a provider of direct reemployment services and as a facilitator of additional services and resources.

Funds are used to respond to dislocation events quickly while ensuring maintenance of RR quality principles: (1) timeliness; (2) convenience; (3) customer choice; (4) consistent and accurate information; (5) resource leveraging; (6) seamless service delivery; (7) active promotion; (8) layoff aversion; (9) performance measurements; and (10) partnerships.

Alaska's statewide rapid response coordinator leads a team of specialists housed in job centers throughout the state. This team works together to quickly address layoffs and business closures. Notification of layoffs or business closures are received through a variety of means including workers filing unemployment insurance claims, direct contact from impacted employers and workers, media announcements, fluctuations in employer tax contributions, and occasionally WARN notices.

Rapid response meetings are tailored to each dislocation, and may include information on unemployment insurance, job search and placement assistance, labor market information, on-the-job training, classroom training, and referral to basic and remedial education. Depending on the demographics of the worker group, partners may present services available through their organizations, interpreters may be provided to address ESL needs, and mental health support may be made available.

Alaska's rapid response program is proactive and layoff aversion is a priority. Ongoing engagement, partnership, and relationship-building with employers are essential to ensuring they understand how these services can help during all stages of the business cycle. Early intervention is critical for a layoff aversion effort to succeed. There must be enough time to identify strategies to address the potential layoff and organize an effective response. Rapid response has the ability to: coordinate multiple agencies and provide assistance with prefeasibility studies to determine if it is feasible to save a struggling business and to identify what resources are needed to help; explore employee stock ownership plans; upgrade worker skills in order for workers to maintain their employment in a growing or changing company; analyze business planning, new product development, and market options; and coordinate with economic development and other partners.

**C. In addition, describe the State policies and procedures to provide Rapid Responses in cases of natural disasters including coordination with FEMA and other entities**

In the event of a natural disasters, rapid response is coordinated with appropriate federal, state, and local agencies to ensure impacted communities, first responders, businesses and workers receive the support and services needed. Each response is tailored to the unique characteristics of the event and Alaska has a proven history of responding in both urban and rural areas to storm damage, floods, wildfires, and earthquakes. Coordination with local, state and federal emergency management agencies is necessary to ensure robust and non-duplication of services.

Depending on the type of event, the RR coordinator works with the Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management, the Bureau of Land Management, Alaska Interagency Coordination Center, FEMA, and local community partners to develop a response. In cases of a FEMA declared disaster, the Rapid Response coordinator assesses the need and makes recommendations for application of a National Dislocated Worker Grant to support temporary jobs for clean-up and recovery efforts, humanitarian assistance for disaster victims, or training and support for workers who lost their jobs due to the disaster. Formal rapid response meetings may be held for groups of impacted individuals and/or information provided at a booth or table set up in the community to answer questions and provide information on and referrals to unemployment insurance, disaster unemployment insurance, temporary jobs, public assistance, community based resources, small business development centers, and job center services.

**D. Describe how the State provides early intervention (e.g., Rapid Response) to worker groups on whose behalf a Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) petition has been filed. (Section 134(a)(2)(A).) This description must include how the State disseminates benefit information to provide trade-affected workers in the groups identified in the TAA petitions with an accurate understanding of the provision of TAA benefits and services in such a way that they are transparent to the trade-affected dislocated worker applying for them (Trade Act Sec. 221(a)(2)(A) and Sec. 225; Governor-Secretary Agreement). Describe how the State will use funds that have been reserved for Rapid Response to provide services for every worker group that files a TAA petition.**

Alaska maintains a statewide TAA coordinator and a comprehensive TAA website that lists all trade certified companies, detailed informational materials and links for employers, benefit information, forms, and layoff resources for workers. <https://jobs.alaska.gov/taa/> The statewide TAA and RR coordinators consult on all dislocation events to determine the potential of trade impact, and if likely, the TAA coordinator assists the employer with filing a petition or files a petition on behalf of the employer or worker group.

Early intervention is provided by Alaska's rapid response (RR) team, and the TAA coordinator is a lead member of the RR team when layoffs are trade related. The RR team coordinates with the employer to schedule worker informational meetings prior to the layoff event. This ensures the workers are provided the information and resources needed for a smooth transition into employment and training services.

When a TAA petition is certified, the TAA coordinator immediately obtains a list of impacted workers from the employer and notifies each worker of TAA eligibility via a formal letter. The TAA notification packet also contains detailed information on TAA benefits and timelines to apply, and an application for the eligibility determination. Additionally, specific information on TAA is presented to workers during on-site RR informational meetings.

TAA-certified workers are served through the Career Support and Training Services located in the job centers. These participants are also co-enrolled in the WIOA dislocated worker program to leverage resources and ensure their employment, training and follow-up services needs are met.

## b. Adult and Dislocated Workers Program Requirements

### 1. Work-Based Training Models

If the State is utilizing work-based training models (e.g. on-the-job training, incumbent worker training, transitional jobs, and customized training) as part of its training strategy and these strategies are not already discussed in other sections of the plan, describe the State's strategies for how these models ensure high quality training for both the participant and the employer.

The state utilizes on-the-job training and incumbent worker training models and is in the process of exploring customized training options.

Oftentimes the best candidate for a job is not necessarily the most qualified. Sometimes the best candidate has a positive attitude but lacks specific skills needed for the job. Employers frequently interview job seekers who would be good hires if training were available to better prepare them.

On the Job Training (OJT) gives employers the opportunity to tap into a pool of workers who are good candidates for a job but may need some training to be qualified. OJT is actively marketed through the AJCs, and formal contracts between the state and employer are utilized to ensure OJT's are legal and lead to high quality training.

AJC staff take an active role to ensure OJT's are successful and provide ongoing monitoring of OJT participant progress. Studies of unsuccessful OJT's indicate that most of them fail shortly after they begin, often within the first few weeks. Thorough screening of individuals and employers before referral is the best way to prevent this, but regular updates of status from both the employer and the trainee are also important. Staff initiate contact with the employee and the employer prior to the end of the first two weeks of the OJT. at the OJT worksite at least once during the term of the agreement.

A percentage of local formula adult and dislocated worker funds is utilized for incumbent worker training (IWT). The annual amount identified for IWT fluctuates depending on employer needs and does not exceed 20 percent of local funds. Alaska's IWT program is designed to increase the competitiveness of the business and incumbent workers by ensuring they acquire the skills necessary to retain employment, advance within the business or to provide the worker skills necessary to avert a layoff.

Alaska recognizes and understands the needs of employers to have a skilled workforce and the multiple benefits that OJT, incumbent worker training, and customized training provide, and plans to dedicate additional resources to focus on these work base training models. Employer awareness and outreach will be increased to identify and respond to employer's unique workforce development needs.

## 2. Registered Apprenticeship

Describe how the State will incorporate Registered Apprenticeship into its strategy for service design and delivery (e.g., job center staff taking applications and conducting assessments).

DOLWD's Apprenticeship Coordinator works with employers and the U.S. Office of Apprenticeship in Anchorage to expand Registered Apprenticeship (RA) programs in the state.

The state is developing a strategic plan for expanding Registered Apprenticeship, which includes these proposed objectives and action steps:

1. Implement state policies to support registered apprenticeship
  - a. Designate a statewide registered apprenticeship advisory group to provide overall direction and policy recommendations for a statewide comprehensive registered apprenticeship system.
  - b. Identify current state policies that support registered apprenticeship and recommend others that could be revised or created, such as tax credits, training vouchers, utilization requirements, etc.
  - c. Prioritize registered apprenticeship as a workforce development model in DOLWD and align resources as needed in support of it.
  - d. Coordinate with other state agencies to incorporate registered apprenticeship into all state HR and hiring practices.
  - e. Identify opportunities to leverage and align existing systems and resources to support registered apprenticeship, such as WIOA, STEP, other workforce training programs, DVR, Returning Citizens, etc.
2. Expand employer and sponsor participation
  - a. Develop and maintain consistent branding, messaging, strategies, and materials, including electronic and print, for effective outreach and marketing.
  - b. Develop partnerships with employers and industry organizations to increase employer engagement.
  - c. Provide technical assistance to employers and sponsors on the details and requirements of Registered Apprenticeship.
  - d. Develop innovative approaches to suit the capacity and needs of employers, including development of multi-employer sponsors when feasible.
  - e. Expand Registered Apprenticeship programs to non-traditional industry sectors.

3. Expand apprentice participation to underserved populations and regions
  - a. Establish additional rural-focused apprenticeships in occupations such as teacher aide, water and wastewater operators and technicians, health care workers, and mining to increase registered apprenticeship opportunities for those living in villages and hub communities.
  - b. Partner with groups, agencies, and programs, including Job Corps, Alaska Native organizations, DVR, SNAP/TANF, STEP, DOC, and HSS, to expand apprenticeship programs to improve recruitment and retention for Alaska Natives and other minorities, veterans, people with disabilities, women, individuals experiencing long-term unemployment, and those with other barriers to training and employment.
  - c. Develop best practices to implement U.S. Department of Labor guidance for apprenticeship practitioners and equal opportunity programs and policies.
4. Expand pre-apprenticeship, school-to-apprenticeship, and postsecondary registered apprenticeship programs
  - a. Train and support high school career and technical education programs in developing School-To-Apprenticeship programs and leveraging resources such as federal Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education funding.
  - b. Expand outreach to other secondary programs such as Job Corps, Alaska Military Youth Academy, and charter or alternative schools.
  - c. Expand the use of American Council of Education (ACE)-accredited programs to provide RTI for registered apprenticeship in multiple industries.
  - d. Provide technical assistance to University of Alaska, Alaska Pacific University, regional training centers, and other postsecondary programs in aligning/articulating apprenticeship programs with college credit and degree programs.
  - e. Work with apprenticeship intermediaries to create quality pre-apprenticeship programs tailored to the needs of employers and prospective sponsors.

### 3. Training Provider Eligibility Procedure

Provide the procedure, eligibility criteria, and information requirements for determining training provider initial and continued eligibility, including Registered Apprenticeship programs (WIOA Section 122).

Alaska's ETPL is a comprehensive list of training providers' programs that maintain performance levels identified by the Alaska Workforce Investment Board (AWIB).

Alaska's ETPL policy 07-501.1, forms, applications and operating guidance are in revision to incorporate ETP information and guidance recently issued in TEGL 8-19. Additionally, the state is implementing a new AlaskaJobs system that will house ETP information and performance in an easy to read and understand format for the public. The state is testing system capabilities and functionality to ensure the data requirements needed for ETP eligibility are met. It is anticipated

all policy and procedural updates and levels of review and approval will be completed in the first quarter of fiscal year 2021, shortly after the launch of the new AlaskaJobs system.

Program performance is reviewed annually and the ETPL updated on an ongoing basis. Alaska ETPL policy, applications, and operating guide is located at <http://labor.alaska.gov/dets/etpl.htm> and are currently under revision.

All training providers must have a status (authorized or exempt) with the Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education (ACPE) per Alaska Statute 14.48.20 Authorization and Permits Required to be considered for the ETPL. ACPE's authorization is designed to ensure postsecondary education providers and training programs meet the standards as outlined in law. ACPE determines if a postsecondary institution meets the minimum standards regarding institutional soundness, quality of education, ethical business practices and fiscal responsibility. Any institution offering postsecondary programs, courses, vocational training, or an educational credential, including distance education, must be authorized, or determined exempt from authorization.

In addition to the ACPE requirement, new providers and services requiring initial approval must: complete an application, provide three years of student data, provide details on the program, demonstrate efficiency, and commit to collect and provide annual performance data. New programs are added to the ETPL as they apply, and initial eligibility remains in effect at least one (1) year.

Continued eligibility is determined on an annual basis and predicated on the program's performance.

Training program performance is determined by using student data provided by the training provider and UI wage records, then utilizes the following methodology:

**Employment Rate 2nd Quarter after Exit:** The number of students who have completed and exited the training program during the reporting period who are employed during the second quarter after exit (numerator) divided by the number of students who have exited during the reporting period (denominator), multiplied by 100, and reported as a percentage.

**Employment Rate 4th Quarter after Exit:** The number of students who completed the training program and have exited the training program during the reporting period who are employed during the fourth quarter after exit (numerator) divided by the number of students who have exited during the reporting period (denominator), multiplied by 100, and reported as a percentage.

**Median Earnings Rate:** The median earnings of students who are in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit from the program. Students' quarterly earnings will be obtained from UI wage records. The median earning amount reflects the wage at the midpoint between the highest and lowest wage earned in the second quarter after exit.

**Credential Attainment Rate:** The number of students who obtain a recognized postsecondary credential during participation or within one year after exit (numerator) divided by the total number of students exiting the program (denominator), multiplied by 100, and reported as a percentage.

**Completion Rate:** The number of participants who completed their training program (numerator) divided by the total number of students exiting the program (denominator), multiplied by 100, and reported as a percentage.

The following are specific to the training provider and program and are used for either initial or continued eligibility, or both.

**Industry Recognized Credential:** The training program leads to a recognized postsecondary credential.

*Performance goal:* Credentials offered by the provider are regionally, and/or nationally recognized, stackable and portable, or specific to an in-demand industry or occupation. (initial eligibility)

**Information reported to state agencies on federal and state training programs other than WIOA Title 1-B programs:** the state is currently determining how additional information obtained through state funded training and partner programs e.g. Adult Education, Vocational Rehabilitation, Trade Adjustment Assistance, the State Training and Employment Program, Alaska Construction Academies, Technical and Vocational Education Program, etc. will be incorporated into the methodology to determine continued eligibility. This will be included in the revised policy and operational guide.

**In-demand Occupation/Industry:** The degree to which training program relates to in-demand industry sectors and occupations in the State. A list of Alaska's in-demand industry sectors and occupations can be located on the AWIB website <http://labor.alaska.gov/awib/>.

*Performance Goal:* The training program relates to occupations located on the in-demand industry and priority occupation list. If the training is not associated with these occupations, an exemption may be provided if the program is used to address participants who possess a barrier to employment, specialized occupations, or unique employer requests (both initial and continued eligibility).

**Partnership with Business:** This may be done by providing letters of support from business or other documentation showing a partnership between the training provider and business. Additionally, the Division may review training participant wages data to establish that participants are able to secure employment with the training received.

*Performance Goal:* Training participants can secure employment with the training and credentials received from the training provider. (initial eligibility)

**State Accessibility and Distance Delivery:** The ability of the training program to be accessed throughout the state, including rural areas using technology.

*Performance goal:* The training program is available via distance learning, if applicable, or deliverable in rural locations (initial eligibility).

**Completer Data:** Timely and accurate student completer data is submitted annually as required by WIOA.

*Performance Goal:* training providers submit complete and accurate completer data by August 31st each year (continued eligibility).

### Performance Levels for Initial ETPL Eligibility of Existing Training Programs

Rate and Earnings	Point Value
Employment Rate 2nd Quarter after Exit must meet 60 percent	15
Employment Rate 4th Quarter after Exit must meet 60 percent	15
Median Earnings 2nd Quarter after Exit must meet \$5,025	15
Credential Attainment Rate must meet 65 percent	7.5
Program Completion Rate must meet 35 percent	7.5
Industry Recognized Credential	20
Partnership with Business	5
Accessible Throughout the State by Web Based Learning	5
In Demand Industry/Occupation	10
Total Points Available	100

Note: Initial eligibility for existing training program(s) must score at least 75 points to qualify

### Performance Levels for Initial ETPL Eligibility of New Training Programs

Rate and Earnings	Point Value
New Program – No Completer Data Available	N/A
Industry Recognized Credential	20
Partnership with Business	5
Accessible Throughout the State by Web Based Learning	5
Industry Recognized Credential	10
Total Points Available	40

Note: Initial eligibility for new training program(s) must score 30 points to qualify

### Performance Levels for Continued Eligibility

Rate and Earnings	Point Value
Employment Rate 2nd Quarter after Exit must meet 60 percent	20
Employment Rate 4th Quarter after Exit must meet 60 percent	20
Median Earnings 2nd Quarter after Exit must meet \$5,025	20
Credential Attainment Rate must meet 65 percent	10
Program Completion Rate must meet 35 Percent	10
In Demand Industry/Occupation	20
Total Points Available	100

Note: The training program must score at least 80 points to qualify for continued eligibility.

Registered Apprenticeship (RA) programs registered under the National Apprenticeship Act are eligible to be included on the ETPL and not subject to ETPL data reporting and performance related requirements, as RAs go through a detailed application and vetting process at the US DOL in order to become a RA program sponsor. The apprenticeship programs are monitored on a regular basis by US DOL apprenticeship staff.

The US DOL apprenticeship office provides the Division with a quarterly report of new RA programs and RA programs that have been cancelled. The Division or the USDOL will contact RA sponsors to ask if they want their program listed on the ETPL. RA sponsors who wish to be included on the ETPL must notify the Division and provide information specific to their RA program.

For proper identification and reporting purposes, the title of the ETPL training program must match what is specified within the apprenticeship standards.

Registered apprenticeship programs will remain on the ETPL until they are deregistered; or the RA program notifies the State that it no longer wants to be included on the ETPL; or until the registered apprenticeship program is determined to have intentionally supplied inaccurate information or to have substantially violated any provision of title I of WIOA or the WIOA regulations, including 29 CFR part 38.

Deregistered apprenticeships will be reclassified as a non-registered apprenticeship and their exemption status removed. If the registered apprenticeship was listed on the ETPL at the time of their removal from the national apprenticeship registry, the training provider will be held accountable to the same rules, regulations, and performance criteria as a regular training provider.

A registered apprenticeship program whose eligibility is terminated for intentionally supplying inaccurate information will be terminated for not less than 2 years and is liable to repay all youth, adult, and dislocated worker training funds it received during the period of noncompliance.

When a Registered Apprenticeship program is using a third-party vendor for related technical instruction, the vendor providing the instruction may receive funds under WIOA without the related technical instruction program being listed on the ETPL.

[4. Describe how the State will implement and monitor the priority for public assistance recipients, other low-income individuals, and individuals who are basic skills deficient in accordance with the requirements of WIOA sec. 134\(c\)\(3\)\(E\), which applies to individualized career services and training services funded by the Adult Formula program](#)

Alaska's Policy 07-517 supports the adult priority populations. Staff responsible for the delivery of WIOA Title I-B funds must adhere to this policy and give priority to individuals for the provision of individualized career services and training services. Alaska's policy is currently being updated to reflect TEGL 19-16 and should be implemented by the end of the current program year.

Veterans and eligible spouses continue to receive Priority of Service (POS) for all DOLWD-funded job training programs. However, as described in TEGL 19-16, when programs are statutorily required to provide priority for a group of individuals, such as the WIOA Adult program priority population described above, priority must be provided in the following order: first, to veterans and eligible spouses who are also included in the groups given statutory priority for WIOA adult formula funds, meaning that veterans and eligible spouses who are recipients of public assistance, low-income, or basic skills deficient would receive first priority for services provided with WIOA adult formula funds; second, to non-covered persons, meaning individuals who are not veterans or eligible spouses, who are included in the groups given priority for WIOA adult formula funds; third, to veterans and eligible spouses who are not included in WIOA adult program's priority groups; and last, to non-covered persons outside the groups given priority under the WIOA adult program.

Alaska job centers receive monitoring annually and this includes monitoring for priority of service for public assistance recipients, other low-income individuals, and individuals who are basic skills deficient. Monitoring includes review and evaluation of physical documentation and participant files in the case management system. Characteristics and statistics are examined to

compare priority subpopulations to the population as a whole. This information is used to inform outreach, partnering, and awareness strategies for program enrollment. Alaska policy states that WIOA Adults who receive individualized career and training services must have documentation justifying the priority population designation. State policy outlines the Priority of Service for Title 1 Adults and the only way someone can receive individualized career or training services is through meeting one of the categories for priority of service.

#### 5. Describe the State's criteria regarding local area transfer of funds between the adult and dislocated worker programs

Alaska's WIOA Title IB Within State Funding Allocations Policy 07-518.2 provides for transfer authority of up to 100 percent of funds between Adult and Dislocated Worker. The Alaska Workforce Investment Board resolution 16-06 provides this authority to the DETS Director or designee. The transferring of funds to or from the Youth Program is not allowed.

Transferring funds between the Adult and Dislocated Worker program or among economic regions is necessary to address the area's economic needs. Reasons may include large layoffs leading to additional employment and training services for workers, military base realignments, incumbent worker training to address automation or a changing business practice, capital improvement projects, rapid growth or decline in population, etc. Quarterly expenditure evaluations are conducted to identify a need for fund transfers when a service area is under- or over-expending.

#### c. With respect to youth workforce investment activities authorized in section 129 of WIOA—

With respect to youth workforce investment activities authorized in section 129 of WIOA—

1. Identify the State-developed criteria to be used by local boards in awarding grants or contracts for youth workforce investment activities and describe how the local boards will take into consideration the ability of the providers to meet performance accountability measures based on primary indicators of performance for the youth program as described in section 116(b)(2)(A)(ii) of WIOA in awarding such grants or contracts.<sup>10</sup>

Grants are awarded through a competitive grant solicitation process using DOLWD's online grants management system; grant opportunities are posted on the state's online public notice website at <https://aws.state.ak.us/OnlinePublicNotices/>. The state is also developing additional approaches such as radio and social media to advertise grant solicitations to reach a broader pool of applicants.

The solicitation for program operators occurs annually with oversight by the AWIB. Program performance is reviewed annually and may be renewed up to a year without having to reapply for a grant. The additional-year grant cycle ensures project time frames are adequate to meet long term youth services and career pathway needs.

The AWIB manages the grant solicitation process which includes all stages from application announcement through application review and making recommendations to the Labor Commissioner. The Labor Commissioner is the final arbiter for approving or denying grant awards.

#### **Award Criteria**

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<sup>10</sup> Sec. 102(b)(2)(D)(i)(V)

Applicants seeking renewal of a WIOA Youth grant are evaluated on their historical success in meeting and, based on any changes to their infrastructure, project resources, partnerships, or program model, their continued ability to meet, the WIOA Youth performance measures delineated in 116(b)(2)(A)(i) and (ii) of WIOA.

Applicants without previous experience managing a WIOA Youth program are evaluated on their ability to meet the WIOA Youth performance measures delineated in 116(b)(2)(A)(i) and (ii) of WIOA based on their infrastructure, project resources, partnerships, and program model. Experience and success in managing non-WIOA Youth programs are also evaluated, as are the nature and location of the target population to be served.

2. Describe the strategies the State will use to achieve improved outcomes for out-of-school youth as described in 129(a)(1)(B), including how it will leverage and align the core programs, any Combined State Plan partner programs included in this Plan, required and optional one-stop partner programs, and any other resources available.

To guide and support services to out-of-school youth, projects focusing at least 75 percent of grant funds on serving this demographic are given priority during the competitive solicitation process.

The state continues to develop comprehensive and integrated service delivery systems targeting out-of-school youth. The most recent strategy implementation is the addition of an auxiliary At-Risk Youth (ARY) project coordinator. This project will identify youth-service gaps existing in the existing core programs and will develop innovative strategies and partnerships to mitigate or eliminate deficiencies in service delivery. In doing so, this project will complement WIOA Youth services for high at-risk youth populations including out-of-school youth, youth aging out of the foster care system, and youth exiting the justice system.

The state holds monthly program status meetings with all project operators to provide ongoing technical assistance, announce policy updates, review and assess service strategies, and share best practices across programs.

Intentional and collaborative referral processes are being developed between core programs, businesses, and community partners, which continues to be a primary strategy to improve service delivery and participant outcomes. Additionally, the competitive solicitation and award process is making improvements to maintain adequate grant operational time frames allowing providers to serve participants for enough time to ensure success in postsecondary education or unsubsidized employment.

A budding partnership is in place with the Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education (ACPE) and the Department's At-Risk Youth initiative, which requires each youth served to be enrolled in ACPE's web-based Alaska Career Information System (AKCIS), which is provided at no charge to all Alaskans. In AKCIS, participants develop a career and learning plan that focuses on career exploration and guidance, postsecondary educational attainment, and pathway opportunities for skills training in in-demand industries and occupations. While developed initially in consultation with a case manager, the individual learning plan will be independently accessible and updateable by the participant at any time. The state will also utilize this partnership to develop and maintain a network of core service providers, local youth resources, and other youth serving entities that will be available to youth within AKCIS. This information will provide youth with instruction on how to navigate the system and identify which services and entities best fit their need based on their desired career path.

To improve youth attainment of degrees or industry-recognized credentials to meet labor market demands, the state continues to require grant applicants to identify and partner with occupational training providers, pre-apprenticeship programs, and apprenticeship programs. Specific strategies to increase outcomes include:

1. creating a system-wide awareness of available services within the state WIOA core programs to foster co-enrollment of participants and leveraging of resources;
2. ensuring project operators provide assessments that address youth employment and academic service needs; identify auxiliary resources through appropriate partners; address support service needs; and develop an advancement plan for postsecondary education or employment outcomes;
3. partnering with occupational skills training centers to enroll youth in in-demand training opportunities that lead to industry-recognized credentials; and
4. co-enrolling youth, as appropriate, with one or more of the following programs for advanced training along a career pathway:
  - a. Registered Apprenticeship programs
  - b. Job Corp
  - c. One-Stop partners
  - d. Vocational Rehabilitation
  - e. Adult and Dislocated Worker program

3. Describe how the state will ensure that all 14 program elements described in WIOA section 129(c)(2) are made available and effectively implemented, including quality pre-apprenticeship programs under the work experience program element.<sup>11</sup>

The state ensures that all 14 basic elements are made available and effectively implemented using a variety of means through all stages of the grant cycle. During the solicitation process, all applicants must demonstrate the ability to deliver all 14 basic program elements either in-house or through a partner agency. Applicants must, in writing, describe how each service will be delivered from planning to implementation, and what resources, entities, curriculum, and strategies will be used to ensure effective delivery. If a program partner is utilized to carry out a basic element service, a detailed description of the partner must be provided along with the type of agreement that is in place, such as a letter of support, memorandum of agreement, contract, etc.

The grant agreement includes the approved text used in the application to describe the delivery approach for each of the 14 basic elements, and clearly defines the expectations for programs to make available each element to youth participants. The state requires each program allot 20 percent of their operating budget for work experience services and development or participation in quality pre-apprenticeship programs.

The grant awards negotiation process between AWIB grant staff and the sub-award recipient reviews and ensures the terms of the grant deliverables, including adequate provision of the

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<sup>11</sup> Sec. 102(b)(2)(D)(i)(I)

WIOA Youth 14 basic elements, are understood before approval by the DOLWD Commissioner.

Grant Monitoring Policy 07-523 ensures monitoring is conducted annually by the AWIB to ensure sound financial management, Equal Employment Opportunity laws are adhered to, and program activities are in line with statute and regulatory language. Monitoring ensures all 14 Youth program services are made available to all eligible youth and:

- provision of support activities to ensure program quality and performance goals are achieved;
- demonstrated alignment with the Youth program design components or requirements outlined in legislation;
- demonstrated alignment with policies, guidance, and advisories issued to support program performance; and
- implementation of appropriate program practices and procedures, including participant eligibility, assessment, planning, service delivery, and other agreed upon activities and outcomes defined in the negotiated grant award.

The state continues to require grant applicants to identify and partner with occupational training providers, pre-apprenticeship programs, and apprenticeship programs.

4. Provide the language contained in the State policy for “requiring additional assistance to enter or complete an educational program, or to secure and hold employment” criterion for out-of-school youth specified in WIOA section 129(a)(1)(B)(iii)(VIII) and for “requiring additional assistance to complete an education program, or to secure and hold employment” criterion for in-school youth specified in WIOA section 129(a)(1)(C)(iv)(VII). If the state does not have a policy, describe how the state will ensure that local areas will have a policy for these criteria.

The definition of “requires additional assistance to complete an educational program, or to secure and hold employment” for in-school and out-of-school youth is outlined in WIOA Youth Program Eligibility Policy 07-502 and means any youth who:

- lacks the employability skills to obtain or retain employment; or
- lacks access to training opportunities due to geographic challenges; or
- requires special accommodations for education or employment due to a disability; or
- has cultural dissonance; or
- is a migrant youth; or
- is currently attending an educational program and
  - has previously dropped out of an educational program; or
  - has poor attendance patterns in an educational program during the last 12 calendar months; and
  - has below average grades; or

- is not attending an educational program and
  - has no vocational or employment goal; and
  - has a poor work history (including no work history), or as been fired from a job in the last six calendar months; or
- has completed full high school attendance and
  - failed comprehensive high school graduation tests; and
  - was denied a high school diploma; and
  - requests and requires intensive tutoring or remedial education to prepare for and retake the comprehensive examinations or the General Education Development (GED) examination.

5. Include the State definition, as defined in law, for not attending school and attending school as specified in WIOA Section 129(a)(1)(B)(i) and Section 129(a)(1)(C)(i). If State law does not define “not attending school” or “attending school,” indicate that is the case and provide the state policy for determining whether a youth is attending or not attending school.

State law does not define “attending school” and “not attending school,” but Alaska Statute 14.30.010(a) states: “Every child between seven and 16 years of age shall attend school at the public school in the district in which the child resides during each school term.” The state defines dropout in 4 AAC 06.895(k)(3) as:

"dropout" means an individual who was enrolled in the district at some time during the school year whose enrollment terminated; "dropout" does not include an individual who:

- graduated from high school or completed a state- or district-approved education program, as evidenced by receipt of a secondary school diploma from school authorities;
- transferred to another public-school district, private school, or state- or district-approved education program that terminates in a regular diploma;
- is temporarily absent due to suspension;
- is temporarily absent due to an illness or a medical condition; or
- died.

6. If using the basic skills deficient definition contained in WIOA Section 3(5)(B), include the State definition which must further define how to determine if an individual is unable to compute or solve problems, or read, write, or speak English, at a level necessary to function on the job, in the individual’s family, or in society. If not using the portion of the definition contained in WIOA Section 3(5)(B), indicate that is the case.

The State is using the ACT WorkKeys Curriculum Placement Quiz or WorkKeys Skill assessment to determine computing and problem solving basic skill levels. A score of level 4 or below in either assessment is considered basic skills deficient. Likewise, the state considers individuals assessed by the Alaska Adult Education Program and determined to be in need of English Literacy and Civics Education Programming to be basic skills deficient in the areas of

reading, writing, or speaking English at a level necessary to function on the job, in the individual's family, or in society.

#### d. Single-area State Requirements

In States where there is only one local workforce investment area, the governor serves as both the State and local chief elected official. In such cases, the State must submit any information required in the local plan (WIOA section 106(d)(2)). States with a single workforce area must include—

1. Any comments from the public comment period that represent disagreement with the Plan. (WIOA section 108(d)(3).)
2. The entity responsible for the disbursement of grant funds, as determined by the governor, if different from that for the State. (WIOA section 108(b)(15).)
3. A description of the type and availability of WIOA title I Youth activities and successful models, including for youth with disabilities. (WIOA section 108(b)(9).)

#### **1. Public comment**

Alaskans had the opportunity to comment on the draft state plan through public meetings of the Alaska Workforce Investment Board and a dedicated email address, which was posted on the DOLWD and AWIB webpages and sent out via the state's online public notice system. The plan was public noticed for 30 days. There were no comments that represented disagreement with the plan.

#### **2. Entity responsible for grant fund disbursement**

State of Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development is responsible for disbursement of grant funds.

#### **3. WIOA title I Youth activities and successful models**

Youth project operators are secured from the six economic regions of the state via a competitive solicitation process. Project operators provide academic, employment, and training services to eligible in-school and out-of-school youth ages 14-24. The project operators offer a comprehensive workforce development program that prepares youth for postsecondary education, employment, career development, and provides accommodations and support services for youth with disabilities.

Project operators work closely with Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) counselors to leverage resources between programs. The Department has also implemented an At-Risk Youth (ARY) project that coordinates and leverages efforts and services between WIOA Youth, DVR, and ARY, ensuring a comprehensive suite of programs and services are available to all youth in need; project operators will also be tied into this collaboration.

Each project operator offers unique service delivery models based on their location, area served, and target population. A best practice for programs statewide is the development of youth-operated businesses that offer a nurturing environment for skill development, community connection and support, and a consistent work experience opportunity through which to rotate youth.

The state makes available the WIOA Youth 14 basic program elements, and ensures all project operators demonstrate within their proposals the resource capacity to provide an objective assessment and an individual service strategy that includes development of a career pathway using the Alaska Career Information System (AKCIS) for each participant. Project operators provide services for each of the WIOA Youth elements based on the federally prescribed services identified in WIOA Section 129(c)(2), Program Elements and expanded on below:

1. tutoring, study skills training and instruction leading to high school completion, including dropout prevention strategies;
2. alternative high school services which offer specialized, structured curriculum inside or outside of the public-school system;
3. summer youth employment that takes place between May 15th and September 30th and consists of employment for which youth are paid a wage and results in occupational learning that leads to an employment goal;
4. paid and unpaid work experiences including internships and job shadowing, are short-term, planned, structured learning experiences that occur in a workplace and are focused on career exploration and the development of work readiness skills;
5. occupational skills training that lead to the attainment of a certificate or credential; including participation in Job Corps, apprenticeship programs, and training programs that provide skills necessary to enter or advance in a specific occupation;
6. leadership development opportunities including community service and peer-centered activities that encourage responsibility, employability, and other positive social behaviors;
7. adult mentoring in a one-to-one supportive relationship between an adult and a youth that is based on trust and lasts for duration of at least 12 months;
8. supportive services to enable an individual to participate in program activities such as housing, meals, medical care, daycare, transportation, school related supplies, and training related supplies;
9. follow-up services to monitor the success of youth during their transition to employment or education and help as needed for a successful transition;
10. comprehensive guidance and counseling to help youth make and implement informed educational, occupational, and life choices;
11. financial literacy education to gain skills needed to create household budgets, initiate savings plans, and make informed financial decisions about education, retirement, home ownership, wealth building, and other savings goals;
12. entrepreneurial skills training using a curriculum based training module that teach youth the value of being skilled and applying those skills to meet a consumer need or demand, to think creatively and critically, to problem solve; how to recognize opportunities, and other skills related to entrepreneurialism;
13. career awareness, career counseling, and career exploration using labor market and employment information on in-demand industry sectors or occupations available in the local area; and

14. activities that help youth prepare for and transition to postsecondary education and training including exposure to postsecondary education options, assisting youth with placement into postsecondary education, and placement into training opportunities such as apprenticeships and occupational training.

#### 4. A description of the roles and resource contributions of the one-stop partners.

One-stop Partner roles and resource contributions are identified in the Alaska One Stop Operator Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). MOU Section IV(b) details the partner roles, attachment A explains partner provided services in detail and attachment C provides the Infrastructure Funding. The Alaska One Stop Operator MOU can be found at: [https://awib.alaska.gov/forms/OperatorMOU\\_2018.pdf](https://awib.alaska.gov/forms/OperatorMOU_2018.pdf)

In accordance with the Alaska WIOA One-Stop Operator MOU and Section 121(b), the partners will be responsible to provide available career services in a non-discriminatory and universally accessible manner, provide referrals to system partners, serve populations with multiple barriers to employment, support the cross training of partner agency staff to ensure familiarity with and representation of all programs, participate as a member of the Alaska Job Center Network Advisory Council, and share in the equitable and proportionate share of job center operational costs that benefit their program(s) participants.

#### 5. The competitive process used to award the subgrants and contracts for title I activities.

The Title I Adult and Dislocated Worker funding is distributed through the Alaska Job Centers and not issued through sub-awards.

Youth program project operators are distributed across Alaska's six economic regions through a competitive solicitation. A full solicitation is conducted every other year from February through April, with sub-awards issued at the beginning of the state fiscal year in July. In alternate years, project operators in good standing have their grants continued for a second year, based on funding availability. A limited solicitation is conducted if a project operator is not renewed and a replacement operator in that locality is sought. This solicitation schedule allows for new project operators to be secured as needed and high performing project operators to continue uninterrupted operations in support of participants.

The AWIB, in coordination with department leadership, is responsible for identifying program focus areas, currently pre-apprenticeship opportunities, apprenticeship opportunities, and suicide prevention awareness. Additionally, the AWIB Executive Committee reviews and approves solicitation documents. AWIB grant committees review all sub-recipient project proposals and provide recommendations for funding to the Commissioner.

#### 6. How training services outlined in section 134 will be provided through individual training accounts and/or through contracts, and how such training approaches will be coordinated. Describe how the State will meet informed customer choice requirements regardless of training approach.

Alaska currently utilizes both Individual Training Accounts (ITA) and Incumbent Worker Training (IWT). ITA service delivery is coordinated through Alaska's Job Center case management staff who work one-on-one with each participant in the development of Individual Employment Plans (IEP). The IEP ensures participant engagement and commitment. The process of career exploration and assessment provides the individual with various options of

career entry, career path, and (if needed) training provider selection through the state's Eligible Training Provider List; ensuring informed customer choice at each stage leading to the ITA.

Alaska's IWT is focused upon training needed by incumbent workers to retain or succeed in their current occupation or career ladder, providing increased skills that will ensure their employment and provide increased productivity or competitiveness to the employer.

7. How the State Board, in fulfilling Local Board functions, will coordinate title I activities with those activities under title II. Describe how the State Board will carry out the review of local applications submitted under title II consistent with WIOA secs. 107(d)(11)(A) and (B)(i) and WIOA sec. 232.

Title I activities are delivered through the Alaska job centers except for the youth program, which is delivered through a variety of project operators, procured through a competitive sub-grant process, and located throughout the 6 economic regions. Alaska Adult Education (AAE), Title II, is also procured through a competitive, three-year sub-grant process to fifteen (15) eligible providers of adult education located throughout the 13 economic regions.

Activities between Title I and Title II are coordinated through a referral system. Individuals utilizing adult and dislocated worker services through job centers, who need adult education or need to complete their GED or English as second language courses, are referred to the AAE providers. AAE providers refer participants to the adult, dislocated worker, or youth programs for services they are unable to provide including case management, individualized and support services or postsecondary training services.

8. Copies of executed cooperative agreements which define how all local service providers will carry out the requirements for integration of and access to the entire set of services available in the one-stop delivery system, including cooperative agreements with entities administering Rehabilitation Act programs and services.

The AWIB finalized the One-Stop Operator MOU and included Infrastructure Funding Agreement with required partners effective to June 30, 2020. The full document is available at [https://awib.alaska.gov/forms/OperatorMOU\\_2018.pdf](https://awib.alaska.gov/forms/OperatorMOU_2018.pdf). The provisions and terms of the MOU will be evaluated by all partners for execution of a 2<sup>nd</sup> term, beginning July 1, 2020.

#### e. Waiver Requests (optional)

States wanting to request waivers as part of their title I-B Operational Plan must include a waiver plan that includes the following information for each waiver requested:

1. Identifies the statutory or regulatory requirements for which a waiver is requested and the goals that the State or local area, as appropriate, intends to achieve as a result of the waiver and how those goals relate to the Unified or Combined State Plan;
2. Describes the actions that the State or local area, as appropriate, has undertaken to remove State or local statutory or regulatory barriers;
3. Describes the goals of the waiver and the expected programmatic outcomes if the request is granted;
4. Describes how the waiver will align with the Department's policy priorities, such as:

- A. Supporting employer engagement;
- B. Connecting education and training strategies;
- C. Supporting work-based learning;
- D. Improving job and career results, and
- E. Other guidance issued by the department.

5. Describes the individuals affected by the waiver, including how the waiver will impact services for disadvantaged populations or individuals with multiple barriers to employment; and

6. Describes the processes used to:

- A. Monitor the progress in implementing the waiver;
- B. Provide notice to any local board affected by the waiver;
- C. Provide any local board affected by the waiver an opportunity to comment on the request;
- D. Ensure meaningful public comment, including comment by business and organized labor, on the waiver.
- E. Collect and report information about waiver outcomes in the State's WIOA Annual Report.

7. The Secretary may require that States provide the most recent data available about the outcomes of the existing waiver in cases where the State seeks renewal of a previously approved waiver.

### **(1) Statutory or regulatory requirements and goals**

Statutory requirements: 20 CFR 661.300(f).

Goals

- Streamline Alaska's governance and reporting structure;
- Streamline the process and timeliness of awarding grants by the elimination of multiple layers of administrative entities;
- Establish consistent eligibility standards across the state; and
- Improve accountability of workforce programs.

One of the main goals of this Combined Plan is to improve the efficiency and performance of Alaska's workforce system. Allowing the Alaska Workforce Investment Board (AWIB) to also carry out the roles of a local board for the state will streamline the governance structure at the state level by having one board overseeing the workforce investments across the state. The AWIB includes a diverse geographic representation, and members bring their local/regional perspectives to the table as they oversee workforce investments and advise the governor on workforce issues for the state. In response to a condition placed on the existing waiver arrived by ETA under WIOA Sec. 189(i)(3)(A)(i), the Governor has appointed to chief local elected officials from Alaskan communities to the AWIB to ensure a local perspective in board activities.

By allowing AWIB to act as the local board, the state will be able to continue to report as a single workforce area (Local Area Reporting Number 2025).

## **(2) Actions to remove State or local statutory or regulatory barriers**

The governor has designated Alaska as a statewide area and workforce region for WIOA purposes. There are no state or local barriers to implementation of this waiver.

## **(3) Goals and expected programmatic outcomes**

The waiver will continue to streamline Alaska's governance structure and make it responsive to the uniqueness of the state's economy and geography, especially given current fiscal challenges.

The waiver will also streamline the process for awarding grants by eliminating multiple layers of administrative entities and processes. The AWIB, functioning as both the local and the state board, and housed under the Commissioner of Labor, will work closely with DOLWD in determining grant criteria, reviewing grant applications, and evaluating sub-recipients.

The waiver will allow DOLWD to continue implementing consistent standards across the state, instead of having multiple boards with a variety of eligibility and performance standards in different parts of the state.

The waiver will result in improved accountability of workforce investment programs, as one board will oversee all workforce programs for consistency in the evaluation and oversight process. DOLWD will be able to continue to report as a single area.

## **(4) How the waiver will align with department priorities**

- (A) supporting employer engagement;
- (B) connecting education and training strategies;
- (C) supporting work-based learning;
- (D) improving job and career results; and
- (E) other guidance issued by the Department.

Most AWIB members are representatives of business and the private sector. Board members come from a variety of industries throughout the state and are committed to bringing the voice of employers to the table and reaching out to others to engage them in the workforce system. In response to feedback from ETA, two chief local elected officials have been appointed to the board. The AWIB will continue to focus not only on employer engagement but on connecting education and training strategies through building career pathways, supporting work-based learning; and improving career results for all job seekers and employers alike.

## **(5) Individuals affected and impact on services**

All WIOA-eligible participants, including disadvantaged populations and those with multiple barriers to employment, as well as employers, are positively impacted by this waiver. Participants and employers need not look to a different local area in the hopes of finding more resources, because the state functions and reports as a single statewide designation.

## **(6) Processes to**

- (A) Monitor the progress in implementing the waiver;
- (B) Provide notice to any local board affected by the waiver;
- (C) Provide any local board affected by the waiver an opportunity to comment on the request;
- (D) Ensure meaningful public comment, including comment by business and organized labor, on the waiver.
- (E) Collect and report information about waiver outcomes in the State's WIOA Annual Report.

DOLWD solicited input on this waiver from local officials and employers across the state as a part of the plan development process. There were no local officials who requested designation as a local area, and DOLWD received no comments on the draft local area designation and waiver process.

The AWIB will continue to solicit feedback from local officials and employers in 2 ways: 1) outreach by individual AWIB members to their local officials; and 2) opportunities for input at each meeting, which are held at various locations around the state. The AWIB will be focusing on statewide strategies and their linkage to the state's regional economic and workforce development needs.

The process by which a local area designation may be requested is described below and referenced in Section VI Program Specific requirements for Core Programs of the Alaska WIOA Combined Plan.

### **Policy and Procedure**

The outline of the policy and procedure to request designation as a local area is:

#### **Policies**

The chief elected official and local governing board from any unit of general local government or combination of units may submit a request for designation as a workforce development area. The AWIB, in consultation with DOLWD staff, will review the request and recommend approval or denial to the governor.

Designation as a new local area will be based on the extent to which the proposed area demonstrates that it:

- Is consistent with local labor market areas; and
- Has a common economic development area; and
- Has the federal and non-federal resources, including appropriate education and training institutions, to administer activities under the Youth, Adult, and Dislocated Worker formula programs under WIOA Title I-B; and
- Has the fiscal, administrative, and reporting capacity and systems in place to report on participant outcomes as required by WIOA and the Alaska WIOA Combined Plan.

The governor may approve or deny the request for designation. In either case, DOLWD will notify the applicant in writing. If the request is denied, the written notification will include the reasons for the denial. If the request for local area designation is denied, the applicant may appeal. Appeals must be made to the AWIB and must address each issue cited in the denial notification. If a decision on the appeal is not made within 60 days or if the appeal to the AWIB does not result in designation of the local area, the applicant may request a review by the Secretary of Labor in accordance with 20 CFR Section 683.640 of the WIOA statute.

#### **Procedures**

A request for local area designation must be made on a form supplied by DOLWD. A completed and signed request must be submitted by 5:00 p.m. on May 1 of the year preceding the Program Year for which the request is being made.

Any local area wishing to appeal the decision by the governor must be made in accordance with the appeal procedures described in Policies Section above. Incomplete or unsigned requests will be returned; review of the application will be delayed.

The governor will monitor the progress of this waiver by reviewing information provided by DOLWD and the AWIB on costs, processes for awarding grants, eligibility standards, and performance on accountability measures. This information will also be used to report about the waiver outcomes in the state’s annual WIOA reports.

**(7) The Secretary may require that States provide the most recent data available about the outcomes of the existing waiver in cases where the State seeks renewal of a previously approved waiver.**

The state understands that Secretary may require us to provide the most recent data available about the outcomes of the waiver.

**Title I-B Assurances. The State Plan must include assurances that:**

<b>The State Plan must include</b>	
1. The State has implemented a policy to ensure Adult program funds provide a priority in the delivery of training services and individualized career services to individuals who are low income, public assistance recipients and basic skills deficient;	Yes
2. The State has implemented a policy to ensure local areas have a process in place for referring veterans with significant barriers to employment to career services provided by the JVSG program’s Disabled Veterans’ Outreach Program (DVOP) specialist;	Yes
3. The State established a written policy and procedure that set forth criteria to be used by chief elected officials for the appointment of local workforce investment board members;	Yes
4. The State established written policy and procedures to ensure local workforce investment boards are certified by the governor every two years in accordance with WIOA section 107(c)(2);	Yes
5. Where an alternative entity takes the place of a State Board, the State has written policy and procedures to ensure the alternative entity meets the definition under WIOA section 101(e) and the legal requirements for membership;	Yes
6. The State established a written policy and procedure for how the individuals and entities represented on the State Workforce Development Board help to determine the methods and factors of distribution, and how the State consults with chief elected officials in local areas throughout the State in determining the distributions;	Yes
7. The State will not use funds received under WIOA Title I to assist, promote, or deter union organizing in accordance with WIOA section 181(b)(7);	Yes
8. The State distributes adult and youth funds received under WIOA equitably throughout the State, and no local area suffers significant shifts in funding from year-to-year during the period covered by this plan;	Yes
9. If a State Workforce Development Board, department, or agency administers State laws for vocational rehabilitation of persons with disabilities, that board, department, or agency cooperates with the agency that administers Wagner-Peyser services, Adult and Dislocated Worker programs and Youth Programs under Title I;	Yes
10. The State agrees to report on the impact and outcomes of its approved waivers in its WIOA Annual Report.	Yes
11. The State has taken appropriate action to secure compliance with the Uniform Guidance at 2 CFR 200 and 2 CFR 2900, including that the State will annually monitor local areas to ensure compliance and otherwise take appropriate action to secure compliance with the Uniform Guidance under section WIOA 184(a)(3);	Yes

## Performance Goals for the Core Programs

Each state submitting a Unified or Combined State Plan is required to identify expected levels of performance for each of the primary indicators of performance for the first two years covered by the plan. The state is required to reach agreement with the Secretary of Labor, in conjunction with the Secretary of Education, on state-negotiated levels of performance for the indicators for each of the first two years of the plan.

For Program Year (PY) 2016-2019 plans, the Departments used the transition authority under section 503(a) of WIOA to designate certain primary indicators of performance as “baseline” indicators to ensure an orderly transition from the requirements of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 to those under WIOA. A “baseline” indicator was one for which states did not propose an expected level of performance and did not come to agreement with the Departments on negotiated levels of performance because sufficient data was not available to establish such performance levels. As a result, “baseline” indicators were not used in the end of the year adjustment of performance levels and were not used to determine failure to meet adjusted levels of performance for purposes of sanctions. The Departments designated indicators as “baseline” based on the likelihood of a State having insufficient data with which to make a reasonable determination of an expected level of performance.

For PYs 2020-2023 Plans, Title I programs (Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth) and the Title II program (Adult Education and Family Literacy Act) will have two full years of data available to make reasonable determinations of expected levels of performance for the following indicators for PY 2020 and PY 2021:

- Employment (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit);
- Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Credential Attainment Rate; and
- Measurable Skill Gains

The Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service program, authorized under the Wagner-Peyser Act, as amended by title III of WIOA, will have two full years of data available to make a reasonable determination of expected levels of performance for the following indicators for PY 2020 and PY 2021:

- Employment (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit); and
- Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit)

The Credential Attainment Rate and Measurable Skill Gains indicators do not apply to the Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service program; therefore, this program will not submit expected levels of performance for these indicators.

For the first two years of PYs 2020-2023 Plans, the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program, authorized under title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by title IV of WIOA, will have two full years of data available for the Measurable Skill Gains indicator only. Therefore, the Departments will designate the following indicators as “baseline” for the VR program for PY 2020 and PY 2021:

- Employment (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit);
- Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit); and
- Credential Attainment Rate

VR agencies must continue to collect and report on all indicators, including those that have been designated as “baseline, pursuant to section 116(d) of WIOA.” The actual performance data reported by these programs for indicators designated as “baseline” for PY 2020 and PY 2021 will serve as baseline data in future years. The Departments will require VR agencies to submit expected levels of performance for these indicators for PY 2022 and PY 2023.

The Departments determined that the Effectiveness in Serving Employers indicator will be measured as a shared outcome across all six core programs within each state to ensure a holistic approach to serving employers. The Departments will continue piloting approaches for measuring this indicator for the first two years of PY 2020-2023 plans. Therefore, states are not required to submit an expected level of performance for the Effectiveness in Serving Employers indicator for PY 2020 and PY 2021. However, core programs are expected to collect data and report on this indicator for PY 2020 and PY 2021 as they did for PYs 2016-2019 plans.

Each core program must submit an expected level of performance for all of the other indicators, as applicable, with the exception of the four indicators designated as “baseline” for the VR program in PY 2020 and PY 2021. The Departments will work with states during the negotiation process to establish negotiated levels of performance for each of the primary indicators for the core programs not listed as “baseline.” Each state must update its plan to include the agreed-upon negotiated levels of performance before the Departments approve a state’s plan.

States may identify additional indicators in the plan, including additional approaches to measuring Effectiveness in Serving Employers, and may establish levels of performance for each of the state indicators. Please identify any such state indicators under Additional Indicators of Performance.

### Adult Program Performance Indicators

Performance Indicators	PY 2020 Expected Level	PY 2020 Negotiated Level	PY 2021 Expected Level	PY 2021 Negotiated Level
Employment (Second Quarter After Exit)	75.0%	77.5%	76.0%	77.5%
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)	72.0%	76.5%	73.0%	76.5%
Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit)	\$7,600.00	\$7,700.00	\$7,650.00	\$7,700.00
Credential Attainment Rate	63.5%	63.5%	64.0%	63.5%
Measurable Skill Gains	79.0%	79.0%	80.0%	79.0%
Effectiveness in Serving Employers	NA <sup>1</sup>	NA <sup>1</sup>	NA <sup>1</sup>	NA <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>“Effectiveness in Serving Employers” is still being piloted and this data will not be entered for 2020 State Plans.

## Dislocated Program Performance Indicators

Performance Indicators	PY 2020 Expected Level	PY 2020 Negotiated Level	PY 2021 Expected Level	PY 2021 Negotiated Level
Employment (Second Quarter After Exit)	77.0%	81.9%	78.0%	81.9%
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)	79.0%	75.0%	80.0%	75.0%
Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit)	\$9,500.00	\$10,800.00	\$10,000.00	\$10,800.00
Credential Attainment Rate	50.0%	50.0%	50.0%	50.0%
Measurable Skill Gains	65.0%	65.0%	65.0%	65.0%
Effectiveness in Serving Employers	NA <sup>1</sup>	NA <sup>1</sup>	NA <sup>1</sup>	NA <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>“Effectiveness in Serving Employers” is still being piloted and this data will not be entered for 2020 State Plans.

## Youth Program Performance Indicators

Performance Indicators	PY 2020 Expected Level	PY 2020 Negotiated Level	PY 2021 Expected Level	PY 2021 Negotiated Level
Employment (Second Quarter After Exit)	52.0%	54.0%	52.0%	54.0%
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)	52.0%	52.0%	52.0%	52.0%
Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit)	\$2,500.00	\$2,700.00	\$2,600.00	\$2,700.00
Credential Attainment Rate	48.0%	50.0%	48.0%	50.0%
Measurable Skill Gains	66.0%	66.0%	67.0%	66.0%
Effectiveness in Serving Employers	NA <sup>1</sup>	NA <sup>1</sup>	NA <sup>1</sup>	NA <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>“Effectiveness in Serving Employers” is still being piloted and this data will not be entered for 2020 State Plans.

## Wagner-Peyser Program (Employment Services)

All Program-Specific Requirements provided for the WIOA core programs in this section must be addressed for either a Unified or Combined State Plan.

### a. Employment Service Staff

1. Describe how the State will staff the provision of labor exchange services under the Wagner-Peyser Act, such as through State employees, including but not limited to state merit staff employees, staff of a subrecipient, or some combination thereof.

State merit staff provide labor exchange services under the Wagner-Peyser Act.

## 2. Describe how the State will utilize professional development activities for Employment Service staff to ensure staff is able to provide high quality services to both jobseekers and employers

Employment Service (ES) staff receive comprehensive professional development training during their first year of employment and refresher training on an ongoing basis to ensure they are prepared to provide high-quality employment and training services to job seekers, workers, and employers.

All ES staff participate in the Alaska Foundations of Workforce Professional Certification program. These are professional competency courses that mirror the National Association for Workforce Development Professionals core competency defined areas.

Staff training includes overviews of policies and procedures that guide their work; information on Partners' employment and training programs and services; Rapid Response, Fidelity Bonding, Work Opportunity Tax Credit, Veterans programs and Priority of Service, state and federally funded training programs, Equal Employment Opportunity, disability awareness, etc. Additionally, ES staff also receive training on customer service skills, conducting a job search, and how to use the state labor exchange and case management system to assist both job seekers and employers.

Staff performance is monitored closely, and additional training is provided to correct areas of deficiency. Such training is provided through classroom instruction, webinars, and one-on-one sessions.

## 3. Describe strategies developed to support training and awareness across core programs and the Unemployment Insurance (UI) program and the training provided for Employment Services and WIOA staff on identification of UI eligibility issues and referral to UI staff for adjudication

Alaska uses several strategies to ensure that core program staff understand the UI program, can make referrals to UI for claim filing and recognize and assist in responding to UI eligibility issues.

All ES and WIOA staff have a working knowledge and awareness of the UI requirement that claimants must register for work in the state labor exchange system, maintain an online resume, and conduct weekly work searches. UI policy, procedure, and instructional manuals are also available to all ES staff. Staff located in the AJC's guide UI claimants toward understanding and satisfying the UI requirements and assist them to contact the UI Claim Center for in-depth answers regarding eligibility. UI staff routinely provide UI eligibility issue training to ensure ES staff can recognize barriers and forward potential issues for investigation through a dedicated email address. Only UI staff are authorized to make determinations on UI issues.

The Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) team is led by a combination of UI and ES staff who work together to develop strategies that ensure UI claimants, particularly veterans and those deemed most likely to exhaust UI benefits, receive a combination of meaningful financial and job-search support while they are in transition. Development of these strategies necessitates a sound level of understanding of both programs.

b. Explain how the State will provide information and meaningful assistance to individuals requesting assistance in filing a claim for unemployment compensation through one-stop centers, as required by WIOA as a career service

UI claimants and employers are priority customers at Alaska's AJCs. All AJCs have phone banks specifically identified for UI purposes. UI customers who use the phone banks at the AJC's have a dedicated queue and their calls are given priority and are answered immediately by knowledgeable UI claim center staff. ES staff promptly assist claimants and employers to meet filing requirements for UI purposes and provide dedicated resources such as computers, telephones, facsimile machines, and printed materials regarding eligibility requirements and filing for UI benefits. ES staff have general knowledge and awareness of UI eligibility requirements and report potential issues to UI staff for follow-up.

c. Describe the State's strategy for providing reemployment assistance to UI claimants and other unemployed individuals

UI claimants are a priority population and AJC staff are charged with improving claimants' services, training options, and support programs. One of the state's top priorities is the RESEA program. The goal is to reduce the number of UI benefit weeks paid to claimants by fast-tracking them into the right combination of reemployment services, resources, and opportunities designed to promote rapid reemployment. RESEA is offered in Alaska's six largest AJCs, which also have the highest percentage of UI claimants: Anchorage-Midtown, Mat-Su, Juneau, Fairbanks, Kenai, and Ketchikan. RESEA focuses on targeted assistance to two types of UI claimants - recently separated veterans and the most-likely to-exhaust UI benefits. For selection criteria, UI uses wage data and a USDOL ETA-approved statistical model that uses claimant characteristics and economic indicators to assess the likelihood of a claimant exhausting UI benefits.

Formal and on-going training is provided to staff in all AJCs participating in RESEA. As a best practice, AJC staff who have conducted past reemployment service programs participate in the development of new staff training materials, particularly during the transition period from one reemployment services version to another. Their input is crucial, as they are the experts at eliciting and reading the reemployment needs of the claimants they interview.

The UI office mails notifications weekly to selected claimants who have received a first payment of mandatory participation in RESEA and advises self-registration and completion of requirements immediately to ensure continued eligibility for UI benefits. In addition, to alert AJC RESEA staff, UI auto-transmits RESEA selection data to ALEXsys. To ensure that all selected claimants receive notification of the mandatory participation, AJC RESEA staff also receive an electronic list with the contact information of selected claimants. Staff then personally call all claimants to remind them of their responsibility to participate in the program to promote rapid reemployment. These calls also help to facilitate immediate registration into the mandatory in-person workshop to ensure all RESEA obligations are fulfilled timely. Extensive outreach will use the media, press releases, reminder postcards, and booklets strategically placed in military installation resource rooms.

Each claimant selected for RESEA is required to participate in a 90-minute, in-person, reemployment services and eligibility assessment workshop with RESEA staff. Based on the eligibility assessment, the orientation to AJC resources, the claimant's work search efforts combined with real-time labor market information, and the assessment of the unique

reemployment needs of each claimant, an Individual Reemployment Plan is developed with the claimant. The claimant actively participates in the development of the Individual Reemployment Plan, lending credence to the likelihood it will be completed. Recommended services are explored and at least one service is provided during the 90-minute session, while others may be referred for completion later using other reemployment and training resources including those funded under Wagner-Peyser, Dislocated Worker, Adult, and Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JVSG).

A large percentage of claimants selected for RESEA will be military veterans, a group who are always a top priority in Alaska. Some of the veterans will be recently separated from the military and others will be veterans who meet the criteria associated with the most likely to exhaust UI benefits. The latter are veterans who are homeless, disabled, or have other significant barriers to reemployment. In the three RESEA AJCs with on-site Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) staff, a personal introduction and referral to the DVOP will be the norm. In other AJCs, RESEA staff will telephonically introduce the RESEA participant to the DVOPs who serve veterans itinerantly for that region.

All the resources offered to claimants selected for RESEA are also available to other UI claimants including those funded under Wagner-Peyser, Dislocated Worker, Adult, and JVSG. Service strategies include awareness through UI and ES outreach and reemployment assistance through comprehensive, readily available resources. All claimants receive notification from the UI program that reemployment services are offered from statewide job centers to help them find work. The notification is standard to all UI claimants and is viewable on the UI website from which claimants file claims, on mailed documents generated at the point of filing, and during telephonic interviews with UI claims-takers. All claimants are advised to register for work in ALEXsys. Upon registration, the menu of our many reemployment services is readily viewable by claimants and includes a link to the online Alaska Job Center Orientation (also available by ES workshop) which describes the in-person and online reemployment and training resources available through Alaska Job Centers. Job seekers self-identify as UI claimants upon registration in ALEXsys and when entering a job center. Job center walk-in claimants are greeted by frontline staff and asked to complete an assessment form describing their circumstances and reemployment needs. ES staff are trained to guide claimants through the reemployment process which includes registration, online resume, and job search requirements. All Alaska Job Centers have clearly marked, dedicated telephones in the resource rooms for use by UI claimants. In addition, awareness of employment and training resources is enhanced by information posted in resource rooms and on our public website. Large stand-up banners located at the entrances of the participating RESEA job centers describe how UI claimants can take advantage of reemployment and training resources.

d. Describe how the State will use W-P funds to support UI claimants, and the communication between W-P and UI, as appropriate including the following:

1. Coordination of and provision of labor exchange services for UI claimants as required by the Wagner-Peyser Act;

UI benefits serve to not only bridge the economic gap for the individual worker, but also as a stabilizing influence on local economies, especially with the seasonal nature of much of the state's workforce. Workers who have become unemployed or are working less than fulltime are encouraged to apply for UI benefits as soon as possible and provided labor exchange services. Required labor exchange services assist UI claimants with their job search efforts are provided

through the on-line labor exchange system and through resource rooms at AJC's. Job seekers can access to state and local jobs advertised by Alaska employers through the on-line labor exchange system and obtain help with resume development, additional job seeking methods, applications for employment, interviewing workshops, and more from AJC staff. Unless specifically exempted by UI, all claimants must actively be seeking work, be physically able and available to accept suitable, fulltime work.

## 2. Registration of UI claimants with the State's employment service if required by State law;

In Alaska, unless specifically exempted by UI, claimants filing for benefits are responsible for registering for work and posting at least one online resume in the Alaska Labor Exchange System (ALEXsys) within seven days of filing a new or reopened claim for UI benefits. Claimants must maintain the online resume and ensure it is current and accessible to employers by regularly checking that it is in online status. The registration and resume stay active while the claimant is actively engaged in job search and referral activities in ALEXsys and while receiving reemployment services from AJC staff. Instructions for registering in ALEXsys are provided to all claimants in the UI Claimant Handbook. The online UI Filing Guide also provides registration instructions and includes a live link to ALEXsys.

## 3. Administration of the work test for the State unemployment compensation system, including making eligibility assessments (for referral to UI adjudication, if needed), and providing job finding and placement services for UI claimants; and

Claimants required to register and post an online resume in ALEXsys are also required to perform work search contacts for each week they claim UI benefits. For the claimant and UI staff, applications for jobs posted on ALEXsys serve as an easily verifiable record of the number of job searches being conducted each week. The record also provides ES and RESEA staff with a way to ascertain the suitability and validity of claimant work searches. This information is one component that helps build the foundation for a solid reemployment plan. Work search efforts can be recorded and accepted on any template if the record is verifiable; however, both UI and ES provide a formal Work Search Log with clear instructions, and they encourage claimants to use it. If it becomes apparent to ES or RESEA staff that a claimant is not seeking work or has refused suitable work, ES staff will promptly notify their UI counterparts to alert them of the potential issue. In addition, all UI staff are trained to maneuver through ALEXsys to verify that a claimant is registered, has an online resume, and is conducting work searches.

## 4. Provision of referrals to and application assistance for training and education programs and resources.

UI claimants are provided information on training and education programs and resources through a variety of means. Referrals to typically originate in the AJC's from ES and RESEA staff, however UI staff may refer to these services when working with a UI claimant over the telephone. Referrals may also come from core partners such Adult Education and Vocational Rehabilitation.

e. Agricultural Outreach Plan (AOP). Each State agency must develop an AOP every four years as part of the Unified or Combined State Plan required under sections 102 or 103 of WIOA. The AOP must include an assessment of need. An assessment need describes the unique needs of farmworkers in the area based on past and projected agricultural and farmworker activity in the State. Such needs may include but are not limited to employment, training, and housing.

1. Assessment of Need. Provide an assessment of the unique needs of farmworkers in the area based on past and projected agricultural and farmworker activity in the State. Such needs may include but are not limited to employment, training, and housing.

The geography and expense of traveling to Alaska limits influx of Migrant Seasonal Farm Workers (MSFW), and within Alaska, few workers travel to participate in various types of agriculture, aquaculture, and timber employment that fall under the definition of MSFW.

As of September 1, 2019, there were 126 individuals who self-identified as MSFW during both the peak and low seasons. According to the 2017 Census of Agriculture, 93 percent of producers are white and in discussion with employers, the same demographic appears to be true of employees. Alaska's farms are family owned and operated with little outside employment. Outside the family, hiring is usually restricted to intensive short-term employment of two weeks or less. Sometimes, college or high school students on summer break meet these needs and do not meet the definition of MSFW.

As the population of MSFW is very limited, Alaska does not have National Farmworker Jobs Program grantees. However, public and private community service agencies and groups for coordination of services for employment, training and housing is available to Migrant Seasonal Farm Workers as needed.

2. An assessment of the agricultural activity in the State means: 1) Identifying the top five labor-intensive crops, the months of heavy activity, and the geographic area of prime activity; 2) Summarize the agricultural employers' needs in the State (i.e. are they predominantly hiring local or foreign workers, are they expressing that there is a scarcity in the agricultural workforce); and 3) Identifying any economic, natural, or other factors that are affecting agriculture in the State or any projected factors that will affect agriculture in the State

Alaska's Agriculture Outreach Plan includes traditional agriculture, aquaculture, and timber activities.

**Agricultural Overview:** Most of Alaska's traditional agricultural activities, however limited, are located in the richest soils in the state: the Anchorage area, Matanuska-Susitna Valley (Mat-Su), Kenai Peninsula, Fairbanks, and Delta Junction. According to the USDA Economic Research Service, Alaska's top five labor-intensive crops include bedding plants and flowers grown in greenhouses and nurseries, hay, barley, and vegetables.

A large number of Alaska's farms are located in the Anchorage/Mat-Su area. Here, the agricultural season extends from April through October, from planting during April and May, to growing season from May through August, and harvesting season from June through October. Timeframes across the state and within this area of fertile farmland differ depending on the crop, farming methods, location, and weather patterns. For outdoor planting, the average last frost date dictates when crops are planted and ranges from May 1<sup>st</sup> in the Anchorage/Mat-Su Valley to June 1<sup>st</sup> on the Kenai Peninsula and Fairbanks. Greenhouse operations generally start in mid-February and operate through late October. However, some greenhouse operations are year-round. Some farms similarly use hoop houses to cover patches of ground or raised beds with a series of hoops made of pipes covered with plastic. Hoop houses are another means to extend the farming season from April through October. Hydroponic farms are also growing in number. While they enable year-round production, hydroponic farms are still small-scale businesses in Alaska. For example, at its peak, the largest hydroponic farm in Alaska employs 125 workers.

Alaska continues to increase its number of in-state agricultural businesses and thereby enhance Alaskan food security. However, because many communities are not connected by a road system, it remains expensive to bring goods to market. Small farms that can focus on serving local markets are increasing at a greater rate than in other states. Farm size is also impacted by a small labor pool, which faces competition from larger seasonal industries such as seafood processing and tourism. Economy of scale means that Alaska's farms are family owned and operated with little outside employment.

Outside the family, hiring is usually restricted to intensive short-term employment of two weeks or less. Sometimes, college or high school students on summer break meet these needs and do not meet the definition of Migrant Season Farmworker (MSFW). All 125 workers at Alaska's largest hydroponic farm, for example, are typically high school students. Other employees are local and do not meet the definition of MSFW, as they live close enough to travel to and from work each day (within 55 road miles as defined by Alaska Unemployment Insurance definition).

To receive H-2A visas, an employer is required to demonstrate a lack of available U.S. workers resulting from positive U.S. worker recruitment. Based on recent history, an average of three Alaskan agricultural employers pursue H-2A visas each year. These employers cite the lack of skills in nursery and hydroponic work in the U.S. applicant, and they look for foreign workers to meet these needs. After unsuccessful U.S. recruitment, the employer can gain certification of H-2A visas. Many of Alaska's agricultural employers continue to use word of mouth, placement of job orders in Alaska's online labor exchange system – ALEXsys - or other methods of public recruitment to pursue workers.

**Aquaculture Overview:** Regional distribution of aquatic farm products includes 47 percent from Kachemak Bay, 36 percent from Southern Southeast Alaska, 12 percent from Prince William Sound, four percent from Northern Southeast Alaska, and one percent from Kodiak Island. The shellfish products being cultured and sold in the state are Pacific oyster, blue mussel, and Pacific geoduck. The aquatic plant products being cultured and sold are sugar kelp, bullwhip kelp, and ribbon kelp from hatchery-reared kelp seed starts.

Although permitting of aquatic farms has been going on since 1989 with oversight from state and federal agencies, and occasionally local municipalities, most aquatic farms in Alaska remain small, and it continues to be a nascent industry. A 2015 status report by Alaska Department of Fish and Gamey found that the state's 68 aquatic farm operations averaged five acres per farm with a total work force of 161. Two seafood processors have applied for larger operations, which may lead the way to increased private investment and growth in this industry. According to a 2017 study by McDowell Group, Alaskan aquaculture has the potential to grow into a \$100 million industry in 20 years, providing growth and resulting economic stability in a new sector of the economy.

**Timber Industry Overview:** commercial harvests occur on private, Alaska Native Corporation, federal, and state lands, including the Mental Health Trust Authority and University Trust properties. Harvesting and timber processing activities occur throughout the state with distinctly different industry sectors represented in the three main geographic regions: Southeast, Southcentral, and Interior Alaska. Since the 1990s, this sector of the economy has been in decline in Southeast, while activity in Southcentral is cyclic and responds to market demand and price. The industry is in the bottom of this cycle currently, so little commercial activity is occurring now. The Interior has experienced modest growth in this sector over the same period.

With changes in federal timber management policy in the Tongass National Forest and most second growth forests not at a harvest age, the Southeast region supports a few companies that are mid-sized, with the majority being small owner/operator businesses. Workers in these smaller operations work within the vicinity of their home and do not migrate. In the southern part of Southeast Alaska, a small workforce migrates to Prince of Wales Island to conduct timber harvest for five medium-sized companies. A medium-sized sawmill also processes harvested logs into a variety of products and depends on a local workforce. Due to geographical variables within the forest and timber stands of various ages and natural productivity, there is often the need for remote work sites for operations to occur where the timber is located. Businesses respond with remote bunkhouses, bunkhouses on barges, or other remote camp adaptations, and workers need to translocate during seasonal operations.

The season varies depending on weather and temperature. Depending on demand, logging can occur year-round. Seasonally, work can begin as soon as March and go through November, while some years the timeframe is shorter. The timber industry is cyclic depending on natural forest growth and demand. Tree pre-commercial thinning activities are constant year-to-year with land managers setting goals of thinning/treating up to 10,000 acres per year.

Interior and Southcentral Alaska utilize a local workforce both in timber harvest and processing activities with occasional need for specific skilled labor from outside the region in the timber harvesting sector. These workers typically come from Pacific Northwest states. Timber harvest often peaks in winter months, due to the use of snow roads and ice bridges to access areas that are inaccessible during the warmer months.

3. An assessment of the unique needs of farmworkers means summarizing Migrant and Seasonal Farm Worker (MSFW) characteristics (including if they are predominantly from certain countries, what language(s) they speak, the approximate number of MSFWs in the State during peak season and during low season, and whether they tend to be migrant, seasonal, or year-round farmworkers). This information must take into account data supplied by WIOA Section 167 National Farmworker Jobs Program (NFJP) grantees, other MSFW organizations, employer organizations, and State and/or Federal agency data sources such as the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) Employment and Training Administration

The geography and expense of traveling to Alaska limits influx of MSFW, except for the timber industry, which often tries to recruit workers from both outside and within Alaska. Within Alaska, few workers travel to participate in various types of agriculture and aquaculture employment that fall under the definition of MSFW.

As of September 1, 2019, there were 126 individuals who self-identified as MSFW during both the peak and low seasons. According to the 2017 Census of Agriculture, 93 percent of producers are white, and in discussion with employers, the same demographic is true of employees. Workers hired through H-2A visas migrate from Mexico. Based on discussions with job center staff and employers, most farm work is done by farm owners/operators, with additional work done by employees during the planting and harvests for short, two-week time periods. Temporary workers often reside in an area they can travel to and from daily.

These English-speaking, white workers are often high school or college students (non-MSFW by definition.) The Alaska Job Center Network staff work with individuals from many ethnic backgrounds and can assist job seekers and workers who need language support, including MSFW. In the Mat-Su Valley, the primary language other than English is Russian, while on the

Kenai Peninsula, Spanish is the most common. The Anchorage School District has students who speak 110 different languages, but the most common are Spanish, Hmong, Samoan, and Filipino.

The forest management industry workers, including planners and silviculturists, loggers, equipment operators, and mill workers, are primarily Caucasian with five to ten percent Alaska Native. Longshoremen who load timber export vessels are predominantly Alaska Native. Tree thinners and planters are almost exclusively migrant workers from Mexico and Central American countries, except for Interior Alaska, where local labor participates in reforestation (planting) activities. These workers are critical to the long-term success of the Alaska timber industry for long-term stand productivity as the economically harvestable productive old growth stands are used up and the industry transitions to young growth wood products. In the past three years, Alaska has received one H-2B case for 35 forestry worker positions to plant and thin trees.

#### 4. Outreach Activities

The local offices outreach activities must be designed to meet the needs of MSFWs in the State and to locate and contact MSFWs who are not being reached through normal intake activities. Describe the State agency's proposed strategies for:

Sections A, B, C, D, and E below provide DOLWD's strategies under each heading.

##### A. Contacting farmworkers who are not being reached by the normal intake activities conducted by the employment service offices

The State Monitor Advocate will utilize the following technology to contact farmworkers not connected with the employment service offices.

1. GovDelivery Listserv to send MSFW an overview of the Alaska Job Center Network locations and brief description of opportunities for education, training, and support services that will prepare those workers for employment in high-demand occupations that will result in steady, full-time, year-round employment. The Listserv has identified MSFW subscribers.
2. GovDelivery Listserv to send MSFW information on high paying jobs, including H-2A (agricultural) and H-2B (non-agricultural) positions.
3. The State Monitor Advocate will travel once a year to Anchorage/Mat-Su, the Kenai Peninsula to provide H-2A housing inspections and train employment services staff to conduct outreach to farmworkers not connected with Alaska's Job Centers. Outreach to MSFW will be increased during the agricultural season at farms and gathering spots such as local churches.

B. Providing technical assistance to outreach staff. Technical assistance must include trainings, conferences, additional resources, and increased collaboration with other organizations on topics such as one-stop center services (i.e. availability of referrals to training, supportive services, and career services, as well as specific employment opportunities), the Employment Service and Employment-Related Law Complaint System ("Complaint System" described at 20 CFR 658 Subpart E), information on the other organizations serving MSFWs in the area, and a basic summary of farmworker rights, including their rights with respect to the terms and conditions of employment.

Alaska is a non-significant state with a part-time SMA, as approved by USDOL Employment & Training Administration Region 6, and utilizes job center employment service staff to conduct outreach. The SMA trains employment services staff on the complaint system, identification and understanding of why MSFW are afforded special rights under the Judge Richey court order, and how to work with customers whose first language is not English, to ensure that equivalent and proportional services are offered to both MSFW and non-MSFW under Wagner-Peyser. The SMA receives guidance and support from the National Monitor Advocate Region 6 Coordinator in addition to guidance from SMAs in other states.

#### C. Increasing outreach worker training and awareness across core programs including the Unemployment Insurance (UI) program and the training on identification of UI eligibility issues

One-stop academies are conducted annually to create awareness of core employment and training programs, including unemployment insurance, for one-stop staff and partners.

#### D. Providing State merit staff outreach workers professional development activities to ensure they are able to provide high quality services to both jobseekers and employers

Alaska's employment service merit staff are provided professional development opportunities upon hire and throughout their tenure to ensure high quality services are provided to jobseekers and employers. Professional development training and activities consists of:

- IntraLearn New Hire Modules
- Alaska Foundations of Workforce Professional Certification (Dynamic Institute)
- Apprenticeship Foundation Training (if applicable)
- De-escalation & Workplace Violence
- Disability Resource Coordinator I
- National Veterans Training Institute (NVTI): Day in the Life of Jobs for Veterans State Grant staff in an American Job Center
- State of Alaska, Respectful Workplace
- State of Alaska, Valuing Diversity
- Business Connection/Employer Services
- Career Ready 101/WorkKeys Curriculum
- Career Support and Training Services
- Employment After Incarceration
- Interviewing for Employment
- Introduction to Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)
- Resume Writing
- Reemployment & Eligibility Assessment Interview

- Seafood Orientation
- TABE Testing Observation
- Veteran Services
- Workplace Alaska
- WorkKeys Testing

E. Coordinating outreach efforts with NFJP grantees as well as with public and private community service agencies and MSFW groups

Alaska does not have NFJP grantees, although public and private community service agencies and groups for coordination of services with employment services staff located in the region where MSFW activity occurs, have been identified. However, due to the small MSFW population (126 self-identified), most of these organizations assist individuals interested in farming with business guidance and marketing support, rather than helping farmworkers, both migrant and non-migrant.

5. Services provided to farmworkers and agricultural employers through the one-stop delivery system

Describe the State agency's proposed strategies for:

A. Providing the full range of employment and training services to the agricultural community, both farmworkers and agricultural employers, through the one-stop delivery system. This includes:

i. How career and training services required under WIOA Title I will be provided to MSFWs through the one-stop centers

ii. How the State serves agricultural employers and how it intends to improve such services

i. How career and training services required under WIOA Title I will be provided to MSFWs through the one-stop centers

Alaska adheres to the principals of the Judge Richey court order, which states that services to MSFW should be equitable and proportionate to those received by non-MSFW. Alaska acknowledges and prioritizes services to target populations. With the goals of enhancing and improving opportunities for all Alaskans for high skill, high wage jobs and careers by promoting the dignity of work and the value of employment, a full-range of employment and training services are provided to both MSFW and non-MSFW to define a clear route to meet career objectives and/or to obtain employment. Initial career services are provided to job seekers by job center resource room staff. Additional training and support through WIOA Title Ib programs are provided by Career Support and Training Services staff, who work with participants to develop comprehensive individual employment plans that identify goals and associated training and support service needs. Additionally, individuals who are English Language Learners and need basic skill development to obtain a GED, enter postsecondary education, or employment are referred and assisted by WIOA Title II Alaska Adult Education program. These programs ensure workers receive the individualized support needed to identify career pathways leading to high-demand occupations that pay family-sustaining wages.

ii. How the State serves agricultural employers and how it intends to improve such services

The job center Business Connection staff assist agricultural employers to find qualified applicants to meet their unique business needs. To ensure quality job seeker referrals, trained Business Connection staff work one on one with employers to understand the worker skill requirements, process job orders and match applications from local, state, and national labor pools. Customized recruitment and hiring events conducted at job centers ensure a professional atmosphere for employers.

#### B. Marketing the employment service complaint system to farmworkers and other farmworker advocacy groups

Each Alaska job center has a prominently displayed poster outlining the complaint system. All job center staff are trained in handling both employment service and employment law-related complaints to ensure workers have a safe, non-discriminatory work environment required under federal and state regulations as well as complaint provisions of WIOA Section 188. Training includes the special provisions for MSFW including additional time for information requests, handling employment law-related complaints, and the potential involvement of the SMA in complaint resolutions. The job center manager provides oversight, and the system is under the purview of the Complaint System Coordinator. Additional marketing may be conducted through the DOLWD's social media venues including Facebook posts and Twitter.

#### C. Marketing the Agricultural Recruitment System for U.S. Workers (ARS) to agricultural employers and how it intends to improve such publicity.

Due to the geographical separation between Alaska and the nearest state, Washington, the Agriculture Recruitment System is of limited value to agricultural employers. However, employment service staff explain and offer businesses the opportunity to place job orders in the National Labor Exchange. U.S. DOL lists H-2A and H-2B job orders on the <https://seasonaljobs.dol.gov/> website.

### 6. Other Requirements

#### A. Collaboration

Describe any collaborative agreements the state workforce agency (SWA) has with other MSFW service providers including NFJP grantees and other service providers. Describe how the SWA intends to build upon/increase collaboration with existing partners and in establishing new partners over the next four years (including any approximate timelines for establishing agreements or building upon existing agreements).

The state appointed part-time SMA works with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Alaska Department of Natural Resources, and the DOLWD Research & Analysis Section to identify MSFW and provide services to them. DOLWD will also work with those agencies to capture data on agricultural employees and MSFW in the state. The SMA will continue outreach to the 14 Alaska job centers to obtain information on employers and MSFW to expand knowledge of this population to better serve them with outreach and Wagner-Peyser services.

This knowledge will lead to development of creating career pathways in agriculture and aquaculture, especially for target populations. Expanding business opportunities in the state will enhance Alaska's food security and promote multiple pathways for statewide economic stability and job growth.

## B. Review and Public Comment

In developing the AOP, the SWA must solicit information and suggestions from NFJP grantees, other appropriate MSFW groups, public agencies, agricultural employer organizations, and other interested organizations. In addition, at least 45 calendar days before submitting its final AOP, the SWA must provide a proposed plan to NFJP grantees, public agencies, agricultural employer organizations, and other organizations expressing an interest and allow at least 30 days for review and comment. The SWA must: 1) Consider any comments received in formulating its final proposed AOP; 2) Inform all commenting parties in writing whether their comments have been incorporated and, if not, the reasons therefore; and 3) Transmit the comments and recommendations received and its responses with the submission of the AOP.

The AOP must include a statement confirming NFJP grantees, other appropriate MSFW groups, public agencies, agricultural employer organizations and other interested employer organizations have been given an opportunity to comment on the AOP. Include the list of organizations from which information and suggestions were solicited, any comments received, and responses to those comments.

In addition to the statewide outreach for public comment on the state plan as a whole, the draft Alaska AOP was sent to the following groups representing appropriate MSFW groups, public agencies, agricultural employer organizations, and other interested organizations on 1/16/20 for 30 days. Alaska does not have a National Farmworkers Jobs Program (NFJP).

### **Agriculture:**

- U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Field Service Local Office
- Alaska Department of Natural Resources, Division of Agriculture
- Matanuska Experimental Farm
- USDA Farm Service Agency

### **Aquaculture:**

- Aquaculture Section/Commercial Fisheries Division/Alaska Fish and Game (ADFG)
- Department of Natural Resources, Aquatic Farm Program
- Department of Environmental Conservation Seafood Program
- Alaska Fisheries Development Foundation
- Alaska Shellfish Growers Association

### **Forestry:**

- Alaska Division of Forestry
- U.S. Forest Service, Northern Southeast Alaska Region
- U.S. Forest Service, Southern Southeast Alaska Region

### **Other vested organizations:**

- Alaska Institute for Justice
- Alaska Legal Services

Comments were received from the following:

- David W. Schade M.P.A., Director, Alaska Department of Natural Resources

- Cynthia Pring-Ham, Aquatic Farming Coordinator, Aquaculture Section/Commercial Fisheries Division, Alaska Department of Fish and Game
- Chris Maisch, State Forester and Director, Division of Forestry, Department of Natural Resources

Comments were incorporated into the document with minor revisions and the edited document was returned to Schade, Pring-Ham, and Maisch for further review. Pring-Ham and Schade responded and accepted the changes. No additional response was received.

Below are the public comments received, along with the responses:

- Cynthia Pring-Ham, Aquatic Farming Coordinator, Aquaculture Section/Commercial Fisheries Division, Alaska Department of Fish and Game, email sent 1/28/2020

**Aquaculture Overview:** Regional distribution of aquatic farm products includes 47 percent from Kachemak Bay, **36 percent from Southern Southeast Alaska (COMMENT FROM PRING-HAM: “I realized I made a mistake translated this from my graph to the graph in the PowerPoint presentation I did for Kodiak. The NE and SE % needed to be switched.”)**, 12 percent from Prince William Sound, **4 percent from Northern Southeast Alaska, (COMMENT FROM PRING-HAM: “Same as above. I switched them.”)** and 1 percent from Kodiak Island. The shellfish products being culture and sold in the state are Pacific oyster, blue mussel, and Pacific geoduck. The aquatic plant products being culture and sold are sugar kelp, bullwhip kelp and ribbon kelp from hatchery-reared kelp seed starts.

Although permitting of aquatic farms has been going on since 1989 with oversight from state, federal, agencies, and occasionally local municipalities, most aquatic farms **(COMMENT FROM PRING-HAM: “Aquatic farms is the term we use in regulations.”)** Alaska remain small and it continues to be a nascent industry. **(COMMENT FROM PRING-HAM: “It has been newly emerging since we started the program in 1989. Suggested wording. Keep or modify back if you want. It just didn’t sound accurate.”)** **(COMMENT FROM PRING-HAM: “Not always.”)** **(COMMENT FROM PRING-HAM: “I would recommend citing our 2015 status report at <http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/FedAidPDFs/FMR16-23.pdf>. This report is where this data came from.** ) A 2015 status report by Alaska Department of Alaska Fish and Game found that the state’s 68 aquatic farm operations averaged 5 acres per farm with a total work force for the industry of 161. Two seafood processors have applied for larger operations, which may lead the way to more private investment and growth in this industry. According to a 2017 study by the MacDowell Group, Alaskan aquaculture has the potential to grow into a \$100 million industry in 20 years, providing growth in a new sector of the economy and resulting economic stability.

- Chris Maisch, State Forester and Director, Division of Forestry, Department of Natural Resources, email dated 2/13/20
- David W. Schade M.P.A., Director, Alaska Department of Natural Resources

These two comments were included in one document, as shown in the text of the email below.

Hi Corinne,

Please find enclosed a track changes document that provides comments by the Division of Forestry (blue and purple) on Alaska’s Agricultural Outreach Plan for Migrant Seasonal

Farmworkers. I think Dave's prior comments (red) are also included in this version, but he had previously sent you his comments. I did some outreach to one of our southeast Alaska partner organizations that has specific knowledge and expertise in the pre-commercial tree thinning (PCT) topic. The Division of Forestry is kicking off a workgroup that includes the major land managers in southeast to discuss recent challenges in finding labor and contractors for the PCT program. If you are interested in being added to the mail list and/or participating in the working group, please let me know. This is a critical issue for management of the southeast forest types and the goal is to draft specific recommendations for policy makers to help address the issue.

Thanks for considering our edits and comments to the document and let me know if you have any questions on the forestry items.

Chris Maisch

State Forester and Director

The section of the AOP that they commented on:

**Agricultural Overview:** Most of Alaska's traditional agricultural activities, however limited, are located in the richest soils in the state: the Anchorage area, Matanuska-Susitna Valley (Mat-Su), Kenai Peninsula, Fairbanks, and Delta Junction. According to USDA Economic Research Service, Alaska's top five labor-intensive crops include bedding plants and flowers grown in greenhouses and nurseries, hay, barley, and vegetables.

A large number of Alaska's farms are located in the Anchorage/Mat-Su area. Here, the agricultural season extends from April through October, from planting during April and May, to growing season from May through August, and harvesting season from June through October. Timeframes across the state and within this area of fertile farmland differ depending on the crop, farming methods, location, and weather patterns. For outdoor planting, the average last frost date dictates when crops are planted and ranges from May 1<sup>st</sup> in the Anchorage/Mat-Su Valley to June 1<sup>st</sup> on the Kenai Peninsula and Fairbanks. Greenhouse operations generally start in mid-February and operate through late October. However, some greenhouse operations are year-round. Some farms similarly use hoop houses to cover patches of ground or raised beds with a series of hoops made of pipes covered with plastic. Hoop houses are another means to extend the farming season from April through October. Hydroponic farms are also growing in number. While they enable year-round production, hydroponic farms are still small-scale businesses in Alaska. For example, at its peak, the largest hydroponic farm in Alaska employs 125 workers.

Alaska continues to increase its number of in-state agricultural businesses and thereby enhance Alaskan food security. However, because many communities are not connected by a road system it remains expensive to bring goods to market. Small farms which can focus on serving local markets are increasing at a greater rate than in other states. Farm size is also impacted by a small labor pool which faces competition from larger seasonal industries such as seafood processing and tourism. Economy of scale means that Alaska's farms are family owned and operated with little outside employment.

Outside the family, hiring is usually restricted to intensive short-term employment of two weeks or less. Sometimes, college or high school students on summer break meet these needs and do not meet the definition of Migrant Season Farmworker (MSFW). All 125 workers at Alaska's largest hydroponic farm, for example, are typically high school students. Other employees are

local and do not meet the definition of MSFW as they live close enough to travel to and from work each day (within 55 road miles as defined by Alaska Unemployment Insurance definition).

**Timber Industry Overview:** Commercial harvests occur on private, Alaska Native Corporation, federal, and state lands, including the Mental Health Trust and University Trust properties. Harvesting and timber processing activities occur throughout the state with distinctly different industry sectors represented in the three main geographic regions: Southeast, Southcentral, and Interior. Since the 1990s, this sector of the economy has been in decline in southeast, while activity in Southcentral is cyclic and responds to market demand and price. The industry is in the bottom of this cycle currently, so little commercial activity is occurring at present. The Interior has experienced modest growth in this sector over the same time period.

With changes in federal timber management policy in the Tongass National Forest and most second growth forests not at a harvest age, the Southeast region supports a few companies that are mid-sized with the majority being small owner/operator businesses. Workers in these smaller operations work within the vicinity of their home and do not migrate. In the southern part of Southeast Alaska, a small workforce migrates to Prince of Wales Island to conduct timber harvest for five medium-sized companies. A medium sized sawmill also processes harvested logs into a variety of products and depends on a local workforce. Because of the geographical variabilities within the forest and timber stands of various ages and natural productivity, there is often the need for remote work sites for operations to occur where the timber is located. Businesses respond with remote bunkhouses, bunkhouses on barges, or other remote camp adaptations and workers will need to translocate during seasonal operations. **COMMENT: “I’m thinking about the camps on Kos, Zarembo, etc. as YG comes online, it will be distributed patchily also. The ability of workers to be able to be “away from home” for extended periods of time has limited workforce availability.”**

The season varies depending on weather and temperature. Depending on demand, logging can occur year-round. Seasonally, work can begin as soon as March and go through November while other years the timeframe is shorter. The timber industry is cyclic depending on natural forest growth and demand. Tree pre-commercial thinning (PCT) activities are constant year-to-year with land managers setting goals of thinning/treating up to 10,000/acres per year.

Interior and Southcentral Alaska utilizes a local workforce both in timber harvest and processing activities with occasional need for specific skilled labor from outside the region in the timber harvesting sector. These workers typically come from Pacific Northwest states. Timber harvest often peaks in winter months, due to the use of snow roads and ice bridges to access areas that are inaccessible during the warmer months.

(B) An assessment of the unique needs of farmworkers means summarizing Migrant and Seasonal Farm Worker (MSFW) characteristics (including if they are predominantly from certain countries, what language(s) they speak, the approximate number of MSFWs in the State during peak season and during low season, and whether they tend to be migrant, seasonal, or year-round farmworkers). This information must take into account data supplied by WIOA Section 167 National Farmworker Jobs Program (NFJP) grantees, other MSFW organizations, employer organizations, and State and/or Federal agency data sources such as the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) Employment and Training Administration.

The geography and expense of traveling to Alaska limits influx of MSFW with the exception of the timber industry, which often tries to recruit workers from both outside and within Alaska. Within Alaska, few workers travel to participate in various types of agriculture and aquaculture employment that fall under the definition of MSFW.

As of September 1, 2019, there were 126 individuals who self-identified as MSFW during both the peak and low seasons. According to the 2017 Census of Agriculture, 93 percent of producers are white and in discussion with employers, the same demographic appears to be true of employees. Workers hired through H-2A visas migrate from Mexico. Based on discussions with job center staff and employers, most farm work is done by farm owner/operators, with additional work done by employees during the planting and harvests for short, two-week time periods. Temporary workers often reside in an area they can travel to and from on a daily basis.

These English-speaking, white workers are often high school or college students (non-MSFW by definition.) The Alaska Job Center Network staff work with individuals from many ethnic backgrounds and are able to assist job seekers and workers who need language support, including MSFW. In the Mat-Su Valley, the primary language other than English is Russian while on the Kenai Peninsula, Spanish is the most common language. The Anchorage School District has students that speak 110 different languages, but the most common are Spanish, Hmong, Samoan and Filipino.

The forest management industry workers include planners and silviculturalists, loggers and equipment operators that harvest trees, mill workers, and tree planters and thinners that conduct management activities on managed stands. Silviculturalists, loggers, equipment operators, and mill workers are primarily Caucasian with 5 to 10 percent Alaska Native. Longshoremen who load timber export vessels are predominantly Native Alaskan. Tree thinners and planters are almost exclusively migrant workers from Mexico and Central American countries, with the exception of Interior Alaska, where local labor participates in reforestation (planting) activities. These workers are critical to the long-term success of the Alaska timber industry for long-term stand productivity as the economically harvestable productive old growth stands are used up and the industry transitions to young growth wood products. In the past three years, Alaska has received one H-2B case for 35 forestry worker positions to plant and thin trees. **COMMENT: "I'm pulling this from the paragraph below. I'm not sure that this is the case for the past three years. There are issues on how the employers pick the visa recipients (lotteries or recruitment), if the workers can operate in Alaska, WA, and OR just in WA/OR, etc.)"** This has NOT been enough to meet the thinning demand and difficulties in the administration/management of the visa process, workplace regulation interpretation, and uncertainty in the visa process has made it difficult for migrant workers to take positions and conduct the work. There are serious problems in this process and as a result, critical forest management work is not being conducted and the returns from timber stands has been diminished as a result. Employers need help navigating the changing nature of federal visa systems for migrant forest workers and employees need certainty on ability to work in remote locations.

Timber industry workers are Caucasian, with between 5 and 10 percent Alaska Native. It is likely that workers travel from out of state to conduct this work. The timber industry hires tree thinners and planters, most of whom are from Mexico and other Central American countries. In the past three years, Alaska has received one H-2B case for 35 forestry worker positions to plant and thin trees.

## **Alaska DOLWD incorporation of comments**

Comments were incorporated into the document with minor revisions and the edited document was sent back to Schade, Pring-Ham, and Maisch with a request for comments about any revisions by the end of the business day 2/20/20. Pring-Ham responded and accepted the changes; clarifying the language. No response from Maisch with one attempt to reach him by phone on 2/21/20. Schade called and stated that the changes we had made were acceptable. He noted that the one exclusion made by DOLWD was suggested language by Chris Maisch.

### **C. Data Assessment**

Review the previous four years Wagner-Peyser data reports on performance. Note whether the State has been meeting its goals to provide MSFWs quantitatively proportionate services as compared to non-MSFWs. If it has not met these goals, explain why the State believes such goals were not met and how the State intends to improve its provision of services in order to meet such goals.

With the revision of the labor exchange profile in early 2019, Alaska has an accurate MSFW count. Since that time, Alaska has met or exceeded federal compliance goals to provide both quantitative and equivalent services to MSFW in proportion to non-MSFW.

### **D. Assessment of Progress**

The plan must include an explanation of what was achieved based on the previous AOP, what was not achieved and an explanation as to why the State believes the goals were not achieved, and how the State intends to remedy the gaps of achievement in the coming year.

Alaska met the expectations listed in the July 2017 to June 2020 AOP including increasing awareness of the agriculture, aquaculture and timber industries; redefining the labor exchange profile to accurately identify MSFW; and developed training for staff on both working with English Language Learners and the Employment Service Complaint System, which included information on identifying MSFW.

### **E. State Monitor Advocate**

The plan must contain a statement confirming the State Monitor Advocate has reviewed and approved the AOP.

The State Monitor Advocate reviewed and approved the AOP, which covers the period from July 1, 2020 to June 30, 2023.

**Wagner-Peyser Assurances - The State Plan must include assurances that:**

The State Plan must include	
1. The Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service is co-located with one-stop centers or a plan and timeline has been developed to comply with this requirement within a reasonable amount of time (sec 121(e)(3));	Yes
2. If the State has significant MSFW one-stop centers, the State agency is complying with the requirements under 20 CFR 653.111, State Workforce Agency staffing requirements;	Yes
3. If a State Workforce Development Board, department, or agency administers State laws for vocational rehabilitation of persons with disabilities, that board, department, or agency cooperates with the agency that administers Wagner-Peyser Act services, Adult and Dislocated Worker programs and Youth Programs under Title I; and	Yes
4. SWA officials: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Initiate the discontinuation of services;</li> <li>2) Make the determination that services need to be discontinued;</li> <li>3) Make the determination to reinstate services after the services have been discontinued;</li> <li>4) Approve corrective action plans;</li> <li>5) Approve the removal of an employer's clearance orders from interstate or intrastate clearance if the employer was granted conditional access to ARS and did not come into compliance within 5 calendar days;</li> <li>6) Enter into agreements with State and Federal enforcement agencies for enforcement-agency staff to conduct field checks on the SWAs' behalf (if the SWA so chooses); and</li> <li>7) Decide whether to consent to the withdrawal of complaints if a party who requested a hearing wishes to withdraw its request for hearing in writing before the hearing.</li> </ol>	Yes

**Wagner Peyser Program Performance Indicators**

Performance Indicators	PY 2020 Expected Level	PY 2020 Negotiated Level	PY 2021 Expected Level	PY 2021 Negotiated Level
Employment (Second Quarter After Exit)	56.0%	58.0%	56.0%	58.0%
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)	55.0%	57.2%	56.0%	57.2%
Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit)	\$5,400.00	\$5,650.00	\$5,500.00	\$5,650.00
Credential Attainment Rate	NA	NA	NA	NA
Measurable Skill Gains	NA	NA	NA	NA
Effectiveness in Serving Employers	NA <sup>1</sup>	NA <sup>1</sup>	NA <sup>1</sup>	NA <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>“Effectiveness in Serving Employers” is still being piloted and this data will not be entered for 2020 State Plans.

## Adult Education and Family Literacy Act Programs

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include a description of the following as it pertains to adult education and literacy programs and activities under title II of WIOA, the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA).

### a. Aligning of Content Standards

Describe how the eligible agency has aligned its content standards for adult education with State-adopted challenging academic content standards, as adopted under section 1111(b)(1) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended (20 U.S.C. 6311(b)(1)).

The Alaska Adult Education (AAE) Program has adopted and implemented College and Career Readiness (CCR) standards for reading and mathematics. The AAE CCR standards align with Alaska's K-12 academic standards.

### Adult Education Standards

- In 2012, the Alaska State Board of Education & Early Development adopted new K–12 academic standards for content areas including English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, History, and Citizenship. The Alaska K-12 academic standards reflect the growing need to prepare students for postsecondary education and careers. The English language arts and mathematics standards are currently under review and up for public comment. After finalization, the AAE office will determine if adjustments to the CCR standards are needed to align with any changes to the Alaska K-12 academic standards.
- The AAE office reviewed the CCR standards to ensure alignment with Alaska's K-12 standards. After a comprehensive review and research process, it was determined CCR standards provide benchmark alignment with the state standards and provide standardized academic content.
- The establishment of standards has increased the complexity of skill development in reading comprehension and mathematical computation. The CCR standards are used to prepare students for the rigor of college level classes, technical training programs, entry into employment and citizenship classes. Eligible providers implemented standards beginning in 2017. Professional development has been interwoven into past and present conferences to ensure CCR standards are being consistently.
- The CCR standards used by AAE's regional programs scaffold student learning, building common knowledge, and explore workforce development skills. The standardization of content has allowed programs to understand common foundational knowledge and build learning communities. CCR standards related to English language learners (ELL) will be review for content and alignment. The AAE office will implement standards to maximize effective instruction and student preparedness for ELL transitioning students.

### b. Local Activities

Describe how the State will, using the considerations specified in section 231(e) of WIOA, fund each eligible provider to establish or operate programs that provide any of the following adult education and literacy activities identified in section 203 of WIOA, including programs that provide such activities concurrently. The Unified or Combined State Plan must include at a minimum the scope, content, and organization of these local activities.

## Adult Education and Literacy Activities (Section 203 of WIOA)

- Adult education;
- Literacy;
- Workplace adult education and literacy activities;
- Family literacy activities;
- English language acquisition activities;
- Integrated English literacy and civics education;
- Workforce preparation activities; or
- Integrated education and training that—
  1. Provides adult education and literacy activities, concurrently and contextually with both, workforce preparation activities, and workforce training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster, and
  2. Is for the purpose of educational and career advancement.

**Special Rule.** Each eligible agency awarding a grant or contract under this section shall not use any funds made available under this title for adult education and literacy activities for the purpose of supporting or providing programs, services, or activities for individuals who are under the age of 16 and are enrolled or required to be enrolled in secondary school under State law, except that such agency may use such funds for such purpose if such programs, services, or activities are related to family literacy activities. In providing family literacy activities under this title, an eligible provider shall attempt to coordinate with programs and services that are not assisted under this title prior to using funds for adult education and literacy activities under this title for activities other than activities for eligible individuals.

The Alaska Adult Education (AAE) program is a statewide instructional program for adults seeking to enhance their postsecondary education skills to transition into employment. The AAE Program has been an institution in Alaska for over 45 years. Housed within the Department of Labor and Workforce Development (DOLWD), Division of Employment and Training Services (DETS), the AAE office will provide grant management for Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) funds. AAE will oversee the distribution of funds to eligible providers to offer adult education and literacy activities that fall within the scope of services required under state and federal policies and laws.

The mission of the AAE Program is to provide instruction in the skills of reading, writing, and mathematics to adult learners to better prepare them for transitioning into the labor market, collegiate level academe, or vocational training. Due to limited funding, AAE programs rely heavily on partnerships and blending and braiding funds to successfully provide students the educational advantages they need.

### Eligible Providers

An applicant for AEFLA funding must be considered an eligible provider to be a recipient of adult education funds. According to federal definition, an “eligible provider” is an organization

that has demonstrated effectiveness in providing adult education and literacy activities. Eligible providers may include, but are not limited to:

- local educational agency;
- community-based organization or faith-based organization;
- volunteer literacy organization;
- institution of higher education;
- public or private nonprofit agency;
- library;
- public housing authority;
- nonprofit institution that is not described in any of paragraphs (a) through (g) of this section and can provide adult education and literacy activities to eligible individuals;
- consortium or coalition of the agencies, organizations, institutions, libraries, or authorities described in any of paragraphs (a) through (h) of this section; and
- partnership between an employer and an entity described in any of paragraphs (a) through (i) of this section. (WIOA, Title II, Section 203[5]; 34 CFR 463.23)

### **Request for Grant Application (RGA) Process**

The request for grant application (RGA) process establishes a mechanism for the AAE office to determine suitable eligible providers of grant funds based on federal and state mandate policies. DOLWD awards three-year federal and state grant funding to regional eligible providers to support the delivery of adult education activities.

The AAE office will ensure direct and equitable access of AEFLA funds by continuing to conduct a competitive process that provides nondiscriminatory access. Grant publications will be made available to a broad range of potential applications through expansion of outreach. The AAE office will utilize traditional and non-traditional publications, such as websites, press releases, and social media to inform current and potential eligible providers of the process. Technical assistance will be provided to assist with the grant applicants during the process. Frequently asked questions will be compiled and posted on the AAE website. Organizations not previously funded are given fair and equitable opportunity to apply for funding without hindrance.

In FY2021, Alaska will award new competitive, three-year AEFLA grants to fifteen (15) eligible providers of adult education. The AAE office will ensure, through the RGA process, regional adult education programs, Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education (IELCE) grant, and Department of Corrections (DOC) programs are represented throughout the thirteen geographic regions of Alaska.

Funding amounts are based on the following criteria:

- The Alaska Department of Education's Area Cost Factor Differentials, used for the state's distribution to public school districts;

- Census area information provided from the American Community Survey; and
- Total population based on region;

Continuing grants are also funded based on:

- Program performance during previous grant cycle; and
- Maintained compliance with programmatic, state, and federal policies and regulations.

In addition to regional and basic information, the AAE RGA will require regional program applicants to describe their intended scope of work related to adult education and literacy activities. Applicants will be required to submit their location and regional outreach plan, proposed budget, and agencies policies and programmatic information related to grant management. In addition, applications will be required to outline their capacity for instituting the thirteen considerations identified in Section 231 and other expectations as mandated in state and federal statute and regulations. Additionally, substantial consideration will be given to programs who integrated the following into their application:

- Comprehensive understanding of Alaska Adult Education Standards, how they are related to current K-12 content standards, and the capability to implement academic content standards for all learners.
- Innovation in adult education practices or supportive activities that facilitate knowledge and skill development, secondary credential attainment, postsecondary credential attainment, and/or employment.
- Ability to describe intention to provide concurrent and contextual integrated education and training (IET). The service approach must detail the requirements and definitions set forth in 34 CFR § 463.37 and outline the overlap in services between adult education and literacy activities, workforce preparation activities, and workforce training.

Eligible providers will be mandated to describe their curriculum and instructional materials in their RFP. Curricula must align with current Alaska adopted CCR standards.

Annual grant applications are required for subsequent funding and renewals are contingent on the grantees ability to successfully implement the terms of the grant, meet performance expectations, and provide quality regional adult education and literacy activities. Each grantee is required to submit a one-year renewal application at the start of the fiscal year. Grantees must revise program and contact information, projected budget narrative, job descriptions for all position funded under the grant, and program income rational, if applicable. The renewal application also requires programs to outline steps taken to ensure equal access to education compliance with the principles of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA). Finally, grantees are mandated to inform the AAE office of any proposed change in service, negotiated administrative limitations, and re-sign program assurances.

### **Alaska Adult Education Activities (Section 203)**

As mandated by federal regulations, eligible providers may receive AEFLLA funding for the delivery of adult education and literacy activities. AAE regional programs will be funded according to their capacity to conduct the following activities:

- Adult education,
- Literacy,
- Workplace adult education and literacy activities,
- Family literacy activities,
- English language acquisition activities,
- Integrated English literacy and civics education,
- Workforce preparation activities, or
- Integrated education and training.

### **Special Funding Rule**

The AAE office will not award grant funding for adult education and literacy activities for the purpose of supporting or providing programs, services, or activities for individuals who are under the age of sixteen (16) and are enrolled or required to be enrolled in secondary school under State law. Programs may use AEFLA funds for individuals under the age of sixteen (16) if providing programs, services, or activities related to family literacy activities. In providing family literacy activities under this title, the AAE office shall attempt to coordinate with programs and services that are not assisted under this title prior to using funds for adult education and literacy activities under this title for activities other than activities for eligible individuals.

### **c. Corrections Education and other Education of Institutionalized Individuals**

Describe how the State will establish and operate programs under section 225 of WIOA for corrections education and education of other institutionalized individuals, including how it will fund, in accordance with the requirements of title II subtitle C, any of the following academic programs for:

- Adult education and literacy activities;
- Special education, as determined by the eligible agency;
- Secondary school credit;
- Integrated education and training;
- Career pathways;
- Concurrent enrollment;
- Peer tutoring; and
- Transition to re-entry initiatives and other post release services with the goal of reducing recidivism.

Each eligible agency using funds provided under Programs for Corrections Education and Other Institutionalized Individuals to carry out a program for criminal offenders within a correctional institution must give priority to serving individuals who are likely to leave the correctional institution within 5 years of participation in the program. Using the criteria outlined in the

Request for Grant Application (RGA) process above, Alaska Adult Education (AAE) will award section 225 grant funds for correctional education and other institutionalized individuals. A competitive, three-year grant cycle is required, and eligible providers will be subject to the same considerations as adult education regional grants.

Alaska issues one RGA for all Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) funded grants, which includes the grant which will serve AAE students in Alaska Correctional Centers. No more than 20 percent of the 82.5 percent of the state grant allotted is awarded statewide to service correctional education and institutionalized individuals. Historically, due to limited funding, the Alaska Department of Corrections (DOC) has partnered with AAE to offer educational services in all fifteen (15) state correctional facilities.

The corrections narrative will focus on how adult education and literacy activities will be delivered throughout an integrated correctional system or within Alaska correctional institutions. The term correctional institution refers to prison; jail; reformatory; work farm; detention center; or halfway house, community-based rehabilitation center, or any other similar institution designed for the confinement or rehabilitation of criminal offenders.

Priorities for AAE students in correctional centers are increasing the number of incarcerated adults completing the Tests of General Education Development (GED<sup>®</sup>) and increasing the number transitioning into the postsecondary education and training provided in the various individual correctional centers. Non-AEFLA funded programs in the correctional centers address other academic programs listed below. In some cases, AAE teachers may concurrently teach basic reading, writing, math, and ESL to students participating in one of the other programs.

The funds shall be used for the cost of educational programs for criminal offenders in correctional institutions, and for other institutionalized individuals, including academic programs for—

- Adult education and literacy activities;
- Special education, as determined by the eligible agency;
- Secondary school credit, GED<sup>®</sup>;
- Integrated education and training,
- Career pathways,
- Concurrent enrollment
- Peer tutoring, and
- Transition to re-entry initiatives and other post release services with the goal of reducing recidivism

Individuals likely to leave a correctional institution within 5 years of participation in the program are eligible for priority services in adult education.

#### d. Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education Program

Describe how the State will establish and operate Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education programs under Section 243 of WIOA, for English language learners who are adults, including professionals with degrees and credentials in their native countries, including how the Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education program under section 243(a) of WIOA will be delivered in combination with integrated education and training activities.

Describe how the State will fund, in accordance with the requirements of title II, subtitle C, an Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education program and how the funds will be used for the program.

Describe how the Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education program under section 243(a) of WIOA will be designed to prepare adults who are English language learners for, and place such adults in, unsubsidized employment in in-demand industries and occupations that lead to economic self-sufficiency.

Describe how the Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education program under section 243(a) of WIOA will be designed to integrate with the local workforce development system and its functions to carry out the activities of the program.

According to the guidelines outlined in Section 243, Alaska's Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education (IELCE) program receives funding to prepare adults who are English language learners for employment and assist in the transition to unsubsidized employment in an in-demand occupation that will lead to economic self-sufficiency. One IECLE grant is funded to provide statewide supports and activities related to Section 243. The Alaska Adult Education (AAE) program who receives IELCE funding is required to work with the local workforce development system to carry out the activities of the program. The Grant Application must clearly establish a detailed description of supports and services available for the integration of concurrent and contextual English language acquisition activities and civics education.

The IELCE program must provide education services to English language learners, including professionals with degrees and credentials in their native countries, to enable them to achieve competency in the English language. Instruction is designed to assist with the acquisition of basic and more advanced skills needed to function effectively as parents, workers, and citizens in the United States. Alaska requires instruction in literacy and English language acquisition, the rights and responsibilities of citizenship, civic participation, and workforce training.

The Eligible provider receiving funds through the IELCE program must provide services that:

- Include instruction in literacy and English language acquisition and instruction on the rights and responsibilities of citizenship and civic participation; and
- Are designed to:
  - Prepare adults who are English language learners for, and place such adults in, unsubsidized employment in in-demand industries and occupations that lead to economic self-sufficiency; and
  - Integrate with the local workforce development system and its functions to carry out the activities of the program.

Alaska issues one RGA for all Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) funded grants. Eligible providers wishing to incorporate IELCE services must demonstrate an ability to deliver to assist English language learners and immigrants:

- To become literate and obtain the knowledge and skills necessary for employment and economic self-sufficiency;
- Who are parents or family members, to obtain the education and skills that are necessary to becoming full partners in the educational development of their children and lead to sustainable improvements in the economic opportunities for their family;
- In attaining a secondary school diploma and in the transition to postsecondary education and training, including through career pathways; and
- Improving their reading, writing, speaking, and comprehension skills in English and mathematics skills; and
- Acquiring an understanding of the American system of Government, individual freedom, and the responsibilities of citizenship.

Eligible providers are also required to demonstrate the method in which they will incorporate integrated education and training activities.

Eligible providers are required to design a program that integrates with the local workforce development system and its functions to carry out the activities of the program. Co-enrollment in Alaska is designed for the student to receive services concurrently to build supportive services and wrap-around case management for the student's benefit. Partnering with the Alaska Job Center Network (AJCN), Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, and Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP), for example, enables the IELCE program to develop stronger career advancement opportunities within their community. English language learners can access services such as career counseling, job placement, training opportunities, and apprenticeships. Teachers work with the AJCN to develop a plan for employment and economic stability.

As part of the Alaska workforce development system, and to meet the needs of ESL learners, the IELCE program is required to provide Integrated Education and Training (IET) courses concurrently and contextually with workforce preparation activities and workforce training as outlined in 34 CFR Part 463 Subpart D. During the RGA process eligible providers seeking IELCE funds must identify occupational clusters in Alaska and the potential for growth in these occupations. Utilization of this data and partnering with workforce development services will provide students career pathways and employability skills while building on their English proficiency. The IELCE program will work with the AJCN, employers, and Alaska apprenticeship programs to build curriculum to support ELL students. Additionally, eligible providers seeking and receiving IELCE funding will be required to provide general information regarding their program to the AAE office. Program information will need to be kept up to date and submitted with the RGA and additional grant awards. Information must include the following:

- Courses offered, including objectives and schedule of when available;
- Attendance requirements and program income fee structure, if applicable;

- Description of the integration of the components of the IET program and partnerships created to build successful career pathways, including:
  - ESL activities;
  - Workforce preparation activities; and
  - Workforce training;
- Identified postsecondary education or credentialing opportunities available to participants, ways to access them, and organizations who administer them;

The AAE office will continue to provide technical assistance and professional development to support efforts administered under Section 243.

#### e. State Leadership

##### 1. Describe how the State will use the funds to carry out the required State Leadership activities under section 223 of WIOA

Alaska Adult Education (AAE) utilizes State Leadership funds to enhance existing and develop innovative programming to prepare students for transition into postsecondary education, employment, or training. No more than 12.5 percent of the total grant funds will be expended to carry out the permissible activities as directed in Section 223 of WIOA.

#### **Alignment of Adult Education and Literacy Activities**

The alignment of adult education and literacy activities with other core programs and one-stop partners, including eligible providers, including the development of career pathways to provide access to employment and training services for individuals in adult education and literacy activities.

The AAE program is housed in the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development. The integration of all WIOA titles under one department has enriched partnership and provided a deeper comprehension of each title. Local providers and state representatives can align adult education and literacy with other WIOA core programs, including the Alaska Job Center Network (AJCN).

Through aligning adult education with core partners, Alaska has integrated career pathways with student learning. This model includes adult education as a vital entry point for Alaskans seeking to improve their basic academic skills. Alaska will continue to identify career pathway opportunities, professional development activities, and best practice approaches to increase career pathways for students that lead to sustainable employment.

At the state level, collaboration with senior management plays a vital role in alignment of core partners. The AAE office participates in WIOA strategic planning, division meetings, and WIOA specific meetings to work in partnership on building a common career pathway vision. The AAE office provides professional development to key stakeholders on Title II specific approaches, promising practices, and the integration of adult education into the workforce system. Furthermore, these meetings provide contextual knowledge of core partners to build professional development for regional programs related to topic such as in-demand jobs, available supports and services, regional contacts, and current employment trends.

Over the course of the next year, AAE will align adult education with WIOA partners through the integration of a single log-on management system. Grantees will be able to access information, reports, co-enrollment, and student information quickly and easily. Programmers are in the process of modifying the adult education section to match current federally mandated reporting requirements and state specific needs. The system integration will move Alaska forward in collaboration efforts.

### **Professional Development**

The establishment or operation of high quality professional development programs to improve the instruction, including instruction incorporating the essential components of reading instruction as such components relate to adults, instruction related to the specific needs of adult learners, instruction provided by volunteers or by personnel of a State or outlying area, and dissemination of information about models and promising practices related to such programs.

Alaska has an established and ever-growing professional development system that ensures training for all staff, including Program Coordinators, data entry clerks, teachers, and support personnel, is relevant to the growth of adult education.

Alaska will continue to hold two annual meetings in Anchorage, where staff from AAE programs receive training. Adult education staff will have an opportunity to participate in a statewide conference highlighting best practices and Alaska specific needs. The AAE office will partner with the Alaska Adult Education Association to help coordinate the conference. The second meeting will be held for AAE management and program coordinators. These meetings will focus on the dissemination of information about models and proven promising practices in overseeing regional programs.

Alaska will increase professional development through state and federal specific trainings. The AAE office will be focused on providing improved instruction, establishment of career pathways, and expansion of Integrated Education and Training programs. Currently, teachers are participating in trainings offered by Center for Applied Linguistics, GEDTS<sup>®</sup>, and the Alaska Career Information System.

### **Technical Assistance**

The provision of technical assistance to eligible providers of adult education and literacy activities receiving funds under this title, including the development and dissemination of instructional and programmatic; the role of eligible providers as a one-stop partner; and assistance in the use of technology.

Technical assistance is available to eligible providers to effectively enhance their program and fulfill the grant requirements. Technical assistance is initiated by the eligible provider; findings associated with monitoring or evaluations; or information distributed from state or federal programs. Monthly meetings with the regional programs have been established to disseminate instructional and programmatic information through the Program Coordinators.

Technical assistance topics include the following:

- Data management
- National Reporting System requirements
- Recruitment and intake

- Testing requirements and policies
- Updated federal and state policies
- Career pathways and transitioning to postsecondary education
- Use of technology

Providing technical assistance to the local programs is an ongoing activity. Assistance is provided through professional development presentations and webinar; phone assistance; teleconferences; on-site trainings; conferences; and one-on-one counseling. Technical assistance will be provided until no longer required.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

The monitoring and evaluation of the quality of, and the improvement in, adult education and literacy activities and the dissemination of information about models and proven or promising practices within the State.

Monitoring procedures are thorough and well established in adult education. AAE will continue to monitor sites using a formal monitoring procedure. In addition, programs' statistics are monitored on a regular basis and desk audits of student records are conducted. AAE will continue to provide data monitoring, on-site visits and reviews, and desk monitors.

Quality improvement and monitoring goals:

- Monitoring Schedules: The AAE office will create a monitoring schedule at the beginning of each fiscal year to assess onsite visits and reviews; desk monitoring and data reviews; and self-assessment checks.
- Onsite Visits and Review: The AAE office will work with the program on site review protocols. Evaluators will observe classroom instruction, tour the facility, stakeholders, and meet program staff and Coordinators. Onsite reviews will also consist of programmatic and/or financial monitoring. Monitoring will include assessment of instruction, instructional materials, and College and Career Readiness (CCR) Standards; evaluation of policies and procedures; quality of program administration; review of overall adherence to grant requirements; and financial data audit.
- Desk Monitor and Data Review: The AAE office will work with programs to review data entered into the management information system (MIS) to promote program improvement. Desk monitoring will consist of a review of data collect from students, teachers, and program information.
- Self-Assessments: At the end of each fiscal year, Program Coordinators will be given a self-assessment form to complete. Based on their ratings, technical assistance or professional development will be provided. Self-assessments will not trigger on onsite or desk monitor. The assessment is used to help programs with performance, self-awareness, and to guide state decisions for assistance.

2. Describe how the State will use the funds to carry out permissible State Leadership Activities under section 223 of WIOA, if applicable

### **Other Permissible State Leadership Activities**

Other examples of potential leadership activities that are permissible include development and implementation of technology applications and assisting eligible providers in developing and implementing programs that achieve the objectives of Title II.

The AAE office reserves the right to utilize funding available under WIOA section 222(a)(2) for other permissible State leadership activities outlined in section 223 (such as: the support of State or regional networks of literacy resource centers; the development and implementation of technology applications; the development and dissemination of curricula, including curricula incorporating the essential components of reading instruction; the development of content and models for integrated education and training and career pathways; integration of literacy and English language instruction with occupational skill training; activities to promote workplace adult education and literacy activities; or the development and piloting of strategies for improving teacher quality and retention).

#### **f. Assessing Quality**

Describe how the eligible agency will assess the quality of providers of adult education and literacy activities under title II and take actions to improve such quality, including providing the activities described in section 223(a)(1)(B) of WIOA.

The Alaska Adult Education (AAE) office will assess the quality of each eligible provide based on their individual goals and outcome provided in the Request for Grant Application (RGA).

### **Monitoring**

Desk Monitoring: The completeness and quality of student data submitted by programs will be assessed through ongoing desk monitoring. The State AAE office will review monthly samples of student data from the management information system (MIS) for accuracy and completeness. Programs will also be put on an annual schedule for more intensive desk monitoring. In addition to a review of the MIS, desk monitoring will consist of a review of data collect from students, teachers, and program information in alignment with their hard copy files.

Onsite Visits and Review: Each year, at least 20 percent of programs will be selected to receive and onside visit and review. A formal review schedule is set at the beginning of the fiscal year. The AAE office will work with the program on site review protocols. Evaluators will observe classroom instruction, tour the facility, stakeholders, and meet program staff and Coordinators. Onsite reviews will also consist of programmatic and/or financial monitoring. Monitoring will include assessment of instruction, instructional materials, and College and Career Readiness (CCR) Standards; evaluation of policies and procedures; quality of program administration; review of overall adherence to grant requirements; and financial data audit.

Financial Review: The comprehensiveness of financial data will be review upon request for payment reimbursement. Expenditure reports and backup documentation must be complete and thorough. In conjunction with onsite monitoring, financial data audits will be completed at the same time.

Self-Assessments: At the end of each fiscal year Program Coordinators will be given a self-assessment form to complete. Data collected from these tools will be used to drive technical assistance or professional development. Self-assessments will not trigger on onsite or desk monitor. The assessment is used to help programs with performance, self-awareness, and to guide state decisions for assistance.

Statistical Data Review: In addition to more formal monitoring, the AAE office will determine the quality of eligible provider's recruitment processes. Statistical data will be collected through enrollment goals. Providers are required to submit goals at the beginning of the fiscal year. Through weekly monitoring, technical assistance or observed for best practices in teaching is determined.

Recruitment and Partnership Evaluation: Eligible providers are also monitored on recruitment activities and partnerships based on the overall success of their program and alignment with the outcomes provided in their RSA. Types of local partnerships developed (e.g., One-Stop Centers, career and technical education training centers, Health and Human Services offices) to facilitate successful transition into postsecondary education, training, or employment are examined. Recruitment activities are also observed and have the possibility of triggering a technical assistant plan.

## **Professional Development**

Intake and Orientation: Effectiveness of Regional Program's intake and orientation processes will be evaluated by the AAE office during desk monitoring and onsite reviews. Attendance data will be used to determine the percentage of students who attend 12 or fewer hours.

Assessment and Placement Protocol: Timeliness of the administration of the TABE and BEST pre-test assessments as measured by the test date compared to the intake form date. The AAE office will review the processes used by AAE programs in orientation and placement in the biannual review of the AAE Program Improvement Report and through observations and interviews that are conducted during site visits. Professional development and technical assistance will be planned based on the findings.

Instruction: Benefits of instruction to the student will be assessed during a review of student's average attendance, post-test rate, educational functional level gain, and GED® completion, at least quarterly. Furthermore, postsecondary education outcomes and job attainment or advancement will be assessed annually based on National Reporting System (NRS) data. Observation of instruction and review of program materials during site visits will be noted during onsite visit tours, interviews, and material review. The AAE office will also assess the quality of professional development programs designed by eligible providers and presenters to improve instruction in the essential components of reading instruction; specific needs of adult learners; volunteers or paid personnel; and dissemination of information about models and promising practices.

Annual Conference and Program Coordinator Training: Alaska will continue to hold two annual meetings in Anchorage where staff will receive training. The annual conference will be open to Adult education staff and will highlight best practices, instructional requirements, and Alaska specific needs. The secondary meeting will be held for AAE management and program coordinators. These meetings will focus on the dissemination of information about models and proven promising practices in overseeing regional programs. The management team meetings will allow for networking and focus on holistic program change.

New Program Coordinator Training: This training will target new Program Coordinators and will focus on federal and state policies, the NRS tables and data collection, and resources needed to run effective programs. This training will take place annually in Anchorage.

### **Improvement of Programs**

Based on monitoring, data review, and observations the AAE office will determine the course of action needed to address programmatic deficiencies.

Monthly Program Coordinator Teleconference: To maintain program improvements, the AAE office will continue monthly technical assistance teleconference with Regional Program Coordinators to inform them of program changes, deliver training opportunities, and provide question and answer sessions.

Weekly Announcement Emails: To keep programs up to date with information from the AAE office, weekly announcement emails are sent out to Program Coordinators and staff. Announcements keep the team abreast of changes that may need to happen quickly. The announcements also inform them of current graduation rates and full-time student data.

Corrective Action Plan (CAP): If non-compliance issues are identified, a CAP may be warranted. CAPs identify issues that need to be resolved and timelines for compliance. CAPs are issued for programs that are not in compliance with state and/or federal regulations. Failure to comply or improve findings may result in additional monitoring, decline in grant funding, removal from grant or exclusion from future grant solicitations. A final monitoring report will be issued.

Suspension or Termination: If an eligible provider violates or fails to comply with the terms and conditions of the grant agreement and they are in noncompliance with the CAP suspension or termination is possible. Eligible providers must be unable to substantiate full compliance and pursue other remedies that are legally available. Eligible providers who are facing suspension or termination of the grant in whole or in part will be notified 15 calendar days prior to the action.

Program Improvement Plan (PIP): To support ongoing program improvement in program operations and student outcomes, the AAE office review process continually identifies matters needing attention or improvement. Based on the results of the findings, AAE programs will be given an audit report, and low-performing programs will be asked to submit a program improvement plan.

### **Adult Education and Family Literacy Act Program Certifications**

**States must provide written and signed certifications that:**

<b>The State Plan must include</b>	
1. The plan is submitted by the State agency that is eligible to submit the plan;	Yes
2. The State agency has authority under State law to perform the functions of the State under the program;	Yes
3. The State legally may carry out each provision of the plan;	Yes
4. All provisions of the plan are consistent with State law;	Yes
5. A State officer, specified by title in the certification, has authority under State law to receive, hold, and disburse Federal funds made available under the plan;	Yes
6. The State officer who is submitting the plan, specified by the title in the certification, has authority to submit the plan;	Yes
7. The agency that is submitting the plan has adopted or otherwise formally approved the plan; and	Yes
8. The plan is the basis for State operation and administration of the program;	Yes

## Adult Education and Family Literacy Act Program Assurances

The State Plan must include assurances that:

The State Plan must include	
1. The eligible agency will expend funds appropriated to carry out title II of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) only in a manner consistent with fiscal requirements under section 241(a) of WIOA (regarding the supplement-not-supplant requirement);	Yes
2. The eligible agency will ensure that there is at least one eligible provider serving each local area, as defined in section 3(32) of WIOA;	Yes
3. The eligible agency will not use any funds made available under title II of WIOA for the purpose of supporting or providing programs, services, or activities for individuals who are not "eligible individuals" within the meaning of section 203(4) of WIOA, unless it is providing programs, services or activities related to family literacy activities, as defined in section 203(9) of WIOA;	Yes
4. Using funds made available under title II of WIOA to carry out a program for criminal offenders within a correctional institution, the eligible agency will give priority to serving individuals who are likely to leave the correctional institution within five years of participation in the program.	Yes
5. The eligible agency agrees that in expending funds made available under Title II of WIOA, the eligible agency will comply with sections 8301 through 8303 of the Buy American Act (41 U.S.C. 8301-8303).	Yes

### Authorizing or Certifying Representative

#### CERTIFICATION REGARDING LOBBYING

Certification for Contracts, Grants, Loans, and Cooperative Agreements

The undersigned certifies, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:

(1) No Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid, by or on behalf of the undersigned, to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of an agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with the awarding of any Federal contract, the making of any Federal grant, the making of any Federal loan, the entering into of any cooperative agreement, and the extension, continuation, renewal, amendment, or modification of any Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement.

(2) If any funds other than Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," in accordance with its instructions.

(3) The undersigned shall require that the language of this certification be included in the award documents for all subawards at all tiers (including subcontracts, subgrants, and contracts under grants, loans, and cooperative agreements) and that all subrecipients shall certify and disclose

accordingly. This certification is a material representation of fact upon which reliance was placed when this transaction was made or entered into. Submission of this certification is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required certification shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than \$10,000 and not more than \$100,000 for each such failure.

Statement for Loan Guarantees and Loan Insurance

The undersigned states, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:

If any funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this commitment providing for the United States to insure or guarantee a loan, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," in accordance with its instructions. Submission of this statement is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required statement shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than \$10,000 and not more than \$100,000 for each such failure.

Please download and sign the forms below. Please scan and return the forms to [wioa@ed.gov](mailto:wioa@ed.gov) at the same time you submit your State Plan via the portal.

1. SF424B - Assurances – Non-Construction Programs  
(<http://www2.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/appforms.html>)
2. Grants.gov - Certification Regarding Lobbying  
(<http://www2.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/appforms.html>)
3. SF LLL Form – Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (required, only if applicable)  
(<http://www2.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/appforms.html>)

<b>APPLICANT'S ORGANIZATION</b>	<b>Enter information in this column</b>
Applicant's Organization	Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development
<b>PRINTED NAME AND TITLE OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE</b>	
First Name	Dr. Tamika L.
Last Name	Ledbetter
Title	Commissioner
Email	Commissioner.Labor@Alaska.Gov

Section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA)

Describe the steps the applicant proposes to take to ensure equitable access to, and participation in, its Federally-assisted program for students, teachers, and other program beneficiaries with special needs provide the information to meet the requirements of Section 427 of the General

Education Provisions Act (GEPA), consistent with the following instructions posted at <https://www2.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/gepa427.doc>.

The Department of Labor and Workforce Development ensures equal opportunity for students, teacher, and eligible providers that participant in any project or program administered through the AAE office. All grantees funded either in whole or part through AEFLA monies are required to comply with General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) section 427. Eligible providers are required to comply with Federal statutes and regulations on nondiscrimination outlined in 34 CFR § 76.500,

Alaska issues one Request for Grant Application (RGA) for all Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) funded grants. The RGA includes information regarding the Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education (IELCE) program and providing adult education services to correctional centers. Notice of availability of funds for Title II is published on the State of Alaska Public On-line Notice System.

As part of the initial RGA process and annual renewal application, eligible providers must complete a form indicating in what manner they program complies with General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) section 427. The form provides the Act for reference and allows the provider to describe the steps taken to ensure equitable access to, and participation in, Federally assisted Alaska Adult Education (AAE) Programs. Providers must describe equitable access to and equitable participation in the project or activity to be conducted by addressing the access needs of students, teachers, and other program beneficiaries to overcome barriers to equitable participation, including barriers based on gender, race, color, national origin, disability and age. Based on local circumstances, the provider will determine whether these or other barriers may prevent students, teachers, etc., from such access or participation in the federally funded program.

The State AAE office ensures equitable access and compliance through technical assistance, monitoring, and professional development activities.

### Adult Education and Literacy Program Performance Indicators

Performance Indicators	PY 2020 Expected Level	PY 2020 Negotiated Level	PY 2021 Expected Level	PY 2021 Negotiated Level
Employment (Second Quarter After Exit)	30.0%	28.0%	35.0%	30.0%
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)	30.0%	28.0%	35.0%	30.0%
Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit)	4,000.00	4,100.00	4,000.00	4,200.00
Credential Attainment Rate	40.0%	28.0%	50.0%	30.0%
Measurable Skill Gains	50.0%	28.0%	50.0%	30.0%
Effectiveness in Serving Employers	NA <sup>1</sup>	NA <sup>1</sup>	NA <sup>1</sup>	NA <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> “Effectiveness in Serving Employers” is still being piloted and this data will not be entered for 2020 State Plans.

## Vocational Rehabilitation (Combined or General)

The Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Services Portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan<sup>12</sup> must include the following descriptions and estimates, as required by section 101(a) of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by title IV of WIOA:

### a. Input of State Rehabilitation Council

All agencies, except for those that are independent consumer-controlled commissions, must describe the following:

1. Input provided by the State Rehabilitation Council, including input and recommendations on the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, recommendations from the Council's report, the review and analysis of consumer satisfaction, and other Council reports that may have been developed as part of the Council's functions;

- The State Vocational Rehabilitation Committee (SVRC) serves as the State Rehabilitation Council. In 2019, several vacant positions on the SVRC have been filled by the State of Alaska Boards & Commissions Office. Of the 18 board positions, which also includes the Director for Vocational Rehabilitation, there are currently two vacancies. The SVRC conducts four meetings a year; three, one-day meetings using video/audio technology and one face-to-face, three-day meeting in Anchorage, Alaska. SVRC quarterly meetings continue to focus on different regions whereby DVR's Regional Managers report out on overall performance, outcomes, and initiatives unique to their regions.
- SVRC members continue to hear from regional partners, employers, agencies, and the public on effective practices applied to include input on what DVR can do to enhance overall performance. This knowledge and information will continue to play a key role in assisting DVR with the goal of delivering high quality services.
- At the meetings, reports were given by the DVR Director, Duane Mayes; Chief of Vocational Rehabilitation Services, Mariah Krueger; DVR Rehabilitation Manager(s); and partner reports from Tribal Vocational Rehabilitation; the Alaska Workforce Investment Board (AWIB); the Client Assistance Program (CAP); the Governor's Council on Disabilities and Special Education (GCDSE); and the parent training organization "Stone Soup Group." The committee also heard from the following guest speakers:
- Business Community:
  - Fairbanks Memorial Hospital Talent Development Coordinator, Karen Lapp
- Tribal Vocational Rehabilitation (TVR) Directors:
  - Inupiat Community of the Arctic Slope TVR Director, Dallas-Lee Brower;
  - Tanana Chiefs TVR Director, Amanda Race;
  - Tlingit and Haida TVR Director, Teresa Sarabia;

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<sup>12</sup> Sec. 102(b)(2)(D)(iii) of WIOA

- Maniilaq TVR Director, Tom Cyrus.
- Community Agencies:
  - Rural Cap Community Services Director, Patrick Anderson;
  - Southeast Independent Living Center Assistant Director, Sierra Jimenez;
  - Re-entry Coalition Case Manager, Marsha Oss.
- State Agencies:
  - Statewide Suicide Prevention Council, Acting Executive Director, Beverly Schoonover;
  - Alaska Mental Health Trust, Program Officer, Jimael Johnson;
  - Governor’s Council on Disabilities and Special Education, Executive Director, Kristin Vandagriff.
- In addition, the Committee:
  - Collaborated with DVR to finalize the triennial Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment analysis;
  - Collaborated with DVR to provide input into the three-year strategic plan for 2020 – 2023;
  - Conducted outreach efforts to recruit new members for the SVRC, including updating recruitment flyers, enlisting partner agency assistance and, for the first time, using social media sites like Facebook;
  - Implemented several strategies to improve member knowledge and effectiveness including improving member orientation materials, developing Subcommittee Chair desk manuals, and developing a mentorship for new members.
  - Dedicated one full day of the Anchorage meeting to the Assistive Technology (AT) Act and the SVRC’s role as Alaska’s AT Council;
  - With DVR, developed a plan to better use AT Guaranteed Loan resources to improve access to Assistive Technology for people with disabilities.
  - Held quarterly meetings in Anchorage, Fairbanks, Juneau, and Kenai and solicited information from partner agencies on their experience in working with their local DVR office;
  - Heard presentations from local business and economic development representatives; and,
  - Held public forums where consumers shared their experiences with DVR services.
  - Identified the Alaska Commercial store as winner of the committee’s Business Recognition Award, for their notable efforts to employ people with disabilities.

## SVRC Recommendations:

After reviewing the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment results, the SVRC suggested that DVR prioritize at least four of the following five topics:

- People who need supported employment and are not being adequately served;
- Training and recruiting of Community Rehabilitation Providers;
- Help the rapidly increasing seniors with disabilities population, who need and/or want to work;
- Focus on the increase in DVR eligible youth/student population, including but not limited to:
  - Better use of apprenticeships and similar programs through AVTEC and other Department of Labor and Workforce Development programs so employers do not have to go out of state;
  - At-risk-youth exiting foster care through Office of Children Services to the street, without needed services.
- Prioritize working with partners to achieve these numerous goals; and
- Review the current State Provisional Hire program for improvement.

### 2. The designated State unit's response to the Council's input and recommendations; and

DVR incorporated four of the recommendations into the 2020-2023 Strategic Plan and will report back to the SVRC on accomplishments in those areas. The DVR Director also explained several strategies DVR uses to facilitate improved usage of Provisional Hire within the State system. The Evaluation Chair had suggested this priority and was pleased with DVR's plan.

### 3. The designated State unit's explanations for rejecting any of the Council's input or recommendations.

Alaska DVR did not reject any of the SVRC's input or recommendations.

#### b. Request for Waiver of Statewideness

When requesting a waiver of the statewideness requirement, the designated State unit must identify the types of services to be provided by the program on a non-statewide basis. The waiver request must also include written assurances that:

1. A local public agency will provide the non-Federal share of costs associated with the services to be provided in accordance with the waiver request;

DVR will not be requesting a waiver of Statewideness.

2. The designated State unit will approve each proposed service before it is put into effect; and

Not Applicable.

3. Requirements of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan will apply to the services approved under the waiver.

Not Applicable.

c. Cooperative Agreements with Agencies Not Carrying Out Activities Under the Statewide Workforce Development System

Describe interagency cooperation with and utilization of the services and facilities of agencies and programs that are not carrying out activities through the statewide workforce development system with respect to:

1. Federal, State, and local agencies and programs;

DVR works with the Department of Corrections, Division of Probation and Parole to provide vocational rehabilitation services to individuals with disabilities exiting the corrections system. Additionally, DVR works with individuals who are assigned to the Anchorage Mental Health or Wellness Court. Mental Health and Wellness Courts are designed to divert people with psychiatric or addiction related disabilities, who are charged with misdemeanor or felony offenses, from incarceration and into community treatment and services such as mental health counseling and vocational rehabilitation, as appropriate. DVR field offices informally work with re-entry initiatives implemented in Juneau, Fairbanks, Anchorage, and the Mat-Su Borough, as well as the statewide re-entry committee. These efforts are intended to improve the transition of inmates returning to their community-of-tie and focus on finding and retaining good employment. The intention is to prevent recidivism and promote socioeconomic health. Although there are no official cooperative agreements in place, the collaboration and coordination efforts still occur in each region. Additionally, DVR, along with other DOLWD programs and the Office of Children's Services, have created a task force to address the needs of at-risk youth exiting the foster care and juvenile justice systems. DVR will take a lead role in ensuring vocational rehabilitation services are provided to youth who experience disabilities to increase the likelihood of success and independence through employment.

DVR is a partner of the Alaska Tribal Vocational Rehabilitation (TVR) Consortium, composed of the 10 American Indian Vocational Rehabilitation Services (AIVRS) grant recipients. There is a current MOU in place which includes outlining coordinated services and shared resources, joint planning and evaluation, technical assistance, and staff development. ADVR and the AIVRS programs also have a Contingency Plan in place; both the MOU and Contingency Plan will be revisited in 2020. Additionally, a representative from the TVR Consortium serves on the SVRC.

DVR actively participates and has a cooperative agreement with the Alaska Integrated Employment Initiative (AIEI), which consists of a consortium of agencies committed to working together to improve employment outcomes for youth and young adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) and the Employment First Initiative. The cooperative agreement outlines the goals and collaboration needed to successfully achieve increased employment outcomes for youth with I/DD.

DVR continues to work with Access Alaska, an Independent Living partner, in Anchorage and Fairbanks to coordinate case management services for individuals who experience Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI). DVR also works with the Alaska Brain Injury Network (ABIN) to achieve the most successful employment outcomes possible for individuals with TBI. There is no MOU

in place; however, DVR provides a letter of support outlining the anticipated coordination of services to Access Alaska to secure the TBI grant.

DVR maintains working partnerships with a variety of community providers and partner agencies throughout Alaska, such as the Division of Behavioral Health (DBH) and the Division of Senior and Disabilities Services (SDS), Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (I/DD) Unit. These partnerships enhance coordination, the number of referrals, and the quality of services provided to individuals receiving Supported Employment (SE) services, independent living, and other waiver-based services. Cooperative agreements with both SDS and DBH have been finalized, which outline the philosophy, points of collaboration, methods of service provision, and responsibilities of each agency to increase employment outcomes for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. DVR and SDS have created a taskforce that meets quarterly to discuss employment issues impacting individuals who experience I/DD. Additionally, the taskforce developed a DVR/SDS crosswalk to ensure field staff from both agencies have a better understanding of terminology and service delivery of each other's programs. DVR and DBH are piloting the Individual Placement and Support model to determine if rapid placement can positively impact the employment outcomes of individuals experiencing mental health disabilities.

DVR continues to work with the Department of Administration, Division of Personnel and Labor Relations, and the Governor's Council on Disabilities and Special Education to revamp the State of Alaska as a Model Employer (SAME) for Individuals with Disabilities Initiative. DVR continues to see considerable progress in expanding and improving Alaska's Provisional Hire program as part of this effort. Provisional hire allows for a State of Alaska hiring manager to bypass the typical recruitment process and immediately hire an individual who is eligible for DVR and experiences a significant disability, in provisional status for up to four months. The DVR counselor is responsible for ensuring the individual meets minimum qualifications of the position, and the counselor is available to support both the needs of the individual as well as the hiring manager. DVR recently hired an Employment First Coordinator who is responsible for working directly with businesses to expand employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities across Alaska, including expanding DVR's Provisional Hire Program. Additionally, the State of Alaska has a full time ADA Coordinator to ensure accessibility for all employees.

DVR has an Interagency Agreement in place with the Department of Veterans Affairs Vocational Rehabilitation & Education (VR&E) to cooperate, coordinate, and collaborate to increase vocational opportunities for veterans of the United States military service, regardless of the level of disability. By including DVR as a partner in a comprehensive system of case management, both DVR and VR&E can maximize benefits to veterans to better ensure the likelihood of employment outcomes. DVR has assigned a VRC to attend monthly meetings with VR&E to strengthen collaboration and coordination of services for this population.

## 2. State programs carried out under section 4 of the Assistive Technology Act of 1998;

DVR continues to maintain a Collaborative Agreement with the Assistive Technologies of Alaska (ATLA) to carry out the required activities of the Assistive Technology Act of 1998; this agreement will be updated within the coming year.

As the AT Act lead agency, DVR performs administrative functions for ATLA, which is the AT Act implementing agency.

As part of its administrative role, DVR facilitates an AT Advisory Council, which is required by the AT Act. DVR staff hold a teleconference every two months, attended by DVR, AT Council members and ATLA's director. DVR staff also facilitate a face-to-face meeting of the full AT Council and the ATLA director once a year. The purpose of these meetings is to provide consumer input and oversight of ATLA's AT Act activities.

### 3. Programs carried out by the Under Secretary for Rural Development of the Department of Agriculture;

DVR does not coordinate with any programs carried out by the Under Secretary for Rural Development of the Department of Agriculture as many of these programs support home loans, community facilities, and energy assistance.

### 4. Non-educational agencies serving out-of-school youth; and

DVR coordinates with other DOLWD programs, the Division of Juvenile Justice (DJJ), and the Office of Children's Services (OCS) through the "At-Risk Youth" taskforce primarily aimed at improving employment outcomes of youth exiting the DJJ and foster care systems. Although there is not a written cooperative agreement in place, current roles and responsibilities are being determined by the taskforce along with benchmarks to determine success.

### 5. State use contracting programs.

DVR does not have any state use contracting programs.

#### d. Coordination with Education Officials

Describe:

#### 1. The designated State unit's plans, policies, and procedures for coordination with education officials to facilitate the transition of students with disabilities from school to the receipt of VR services, including pre-employment transition services, as well as procedures for the timely development and approval of individualized plans for employment for the students

DVR has a Transition Services policy in place outlining services to be provided to students transitioning from education to employment. DVR also has a Pre-Employment Transition Services policy; however, this will be revised to include additional flexibilities for enhanced service delivery once guidance is provided by Rehabilitation Services Administration. Staff have been provided training on delivery of pre-employment transition services. DVR is coordinating with state and local education officials to facilitate the transition of students with disabilities from education services to provision of VR services, including having completely revamped the referral process from education agencies to DVR for Pre-Employment Transition Services for students with disabilities, ages 14-21, and VR Services to ensure a smoother transition. Referral forms provided to local education officials across Alaska and DVR's website have been updated to provide information on which regional office is responsible for each school district throughout the state. DVR has prioritized that individualized plans for employment are developed within 90 days or prior to graduation if an applicant is in the final semester of their final year.

2. Information on the formal interagency agreement with the State educational agency with respect to:

A. Consultation and technical assistance to assist educational agencies in planning for the transition of students with disabilities from school to post-school activities, including VR services;

In the state of Alaska, payment of subminimum wages is not legal, therefore neither DVR nor the state education agency have procedures for pursuing such employment.

DVR continues to work towards developing cooperative agreements with all levels of educational institutions within the state, including local school districts, the Department of Education & Early Development (DEED), and the University of Alaska (UA) statewide system. DVR and UA have agreements in place for specific UA sites such as UA Southeast. DVR's agreement with DEED has not yet been finalized, but DVR has identified a target date of October 2020 for completion of the agreement, which should result in LEA agreements being finalized by January of 2021. The agreement with DEED, which will form the basis for LEA agreement, outlines the overarching purpose and importance of transition from high school or the education of students and youth with disabilities to employment. Additionally, respective definitions are described to ensure programmatic understanding. Both the DEED and LEA agreements will contain specific information regarding consultation and technical assistance, transition planning for students, roles and responsibilities for each agency, assurances, and financial responsibilities of each agency, but they will not include coordination for employment in sub-minimum wage as this is no longer legal in Alaska.

Consultation and technical assistance include activities such as transition planning, annual meetings, participation on the Alaska Inter-agency Transition Council, and TA directly provided to transition teachers at district and school levels through in-person or web-based presentations. including information on Pre-Employment Transition Services, Work Experience development, strategies for successful job placement, career exploration, local resources, financial and for post-secondary education, VR service descriptions, referral procedures, eligibility criteria, AT needs/assessments, and benefits planning.

The most notable TA service DVR provides is participation in the annual Alaska Statewide Special Education Conference. This conference attracts over 400 special education administrators, teachers, and paraprofessionals from across the state. DVR utilizes this conference to provide information and training on referral information and coordination of services. The 2019 Alaska Statewide Special Education Conferences featured a two-day Community Resource Provider (CRP) Training and cross-training designed to provide teachers and paraprofessionals with tools and strategies for developing and supporting students in work experience activities.

B. Transition planning by personnel of the designated State agency and educational agency that facilitates the development and implementation of their individualized education programs;

DEED's Special Education Unit in the Division of Teaching and Learning Support (TLS) and DVR have updated their interagency agreement designed to facilitate the transition of students with disabilities from receipt of educational services in school to the receipt of vocational rehabilitation services.

The agreement includes:

1. DVR's assurance of the development and implementation of an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) for each student determined to be eligible for vocational rehabilitation services within 90 days of eligibility or at least before the student leaves school;
2. Designation of a regional DVR contact in each school district who is responsible for clarifying questions and concerns relating to the implementation of the agreements with the local school districts, including access to DVR's Transition Coordinator as needed for additional coordination and technical assistance needs to be provided locally or at other events in which a TLS or DVR representative may connect;
3. Participating in TLS's IEP development meetings for shared students with disabilities, depending on availability. ADVR may participate in person or through use of alternative means such as conference calls or other methods. When ADVR is unable to attend the IEP meeting, TLS and ADVR will communicate regarding IEP goals and needed transition services as soon as possible after the IEP meeting;
4. Collaborate with and assist TLS SE teachers in transition planning for students with disabilities, to facilitate development and completion of their IEPs as required under section 614(d) of IDEA. ADVR will inform TLS SE Teachers of community events, such as job fairs, transition fairs, and career days to introduce and expose students with disabilities to possible career goals and objectives;
5. Introduction and guidance of students with disabilities to post-school alternatives which include, but are not limited to employment, postsecondary education, vocational training, and adult education, by TLS transition coordinators and ADVR staff. Planning may also include coordination of social or vocational experiences for students with disabilities in real life work settings to improve competitive integrated employment outcomes; and
6. DVR's assurance that the core tenets, principles, and career goals stated in each student's Individual Education Program (IEP) will be incorporated into the development of their Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE). DEED's Special Education Unit also provides funding for members of the State Vocational Rehabilitation Committee to travel to events related to transition students such as the annual Statewide Special Education Conference.

[C. Roles and responsibilities, including financial responsibilities, of each agency, including provisions for determining State lead agencies and qualified personnel responsible for transition services;](#)

An MOU between Department of Education and Early Development (DEED) and DVR states that DEED, through the Division of Teaching and Learning Support (TLS), will designate a lead who will ensure that communication between TLS, DVR, and school districts is maintained. These personnel will also ensure that policies are developed and revised at the state department level, which will promote effective transition for students with disabilities from school into adulthood. The Alaska lead is Kate Foster, Education Specialist II.

The DEED MOU further states that DVR will designate a staff member responsible for the continuation and enhancement of communication and policy development between DVR, TLS, and school districts for improving transition services statewide to students with disabilities. This Alaska lead is Jim Kreatschman, Program Coordinator II.

Youth Transition: DVR and DEED partner in contracting with Southeast Regional Resource Center (SERRC) under the Alaska Transition Outreach Project (ATOP) project to provide continuing education and training to teachers on secondary transition planning and transition camps for students.

Teacher training: DEED staff monitor school districts for compliance with Indicator 13. Utilizing their own staff, and through the ATOP grant, each district directly funds all teacher instruction time, travel, and lodging directed for compliance with indicator 13.

Transition Camps - DEED identifies school districts (six) through its monitoring efforts which need additional Technical Assistance delivering transition planning directly to students. DEED covers the cost of coordinating the camp, travel, and lodging for the SERRC team facilitating the camps. DVR contracts with SERRC, a Certified Rehabilitation Provider (CRP), to deliver directly to the students the Pre-Employment Transition Services that are the content of the transition camps. DVR's Youth Transition Coordinator is responsible, along with the CRP, for developing the content of all camps. The CRP is responsible for actual delivery of services. DVR has expanded transition camps beyond its partnership with DEED to provide Pre-Employment Transition Services through the transition camp model to additional school districts, juvenile justice facilities and foster youth in state custody. For these camps, the CRP contracts directly with the school district, DJJ facility or state agency for the coordination, travel, and lodging costs. DVR funds the direct delivery to students of the Pre-Employment Transition Services as the content for the camp. DVR braids funding with the Division of Employment and Training to further expand the reach of transition camps.

- DEED - ATOP grant - \$220,000
- DVR- Cost per student - average \$850
- DETS- Cost per student - average \$250
- Other organizations - Costs depending on geographic location and requested content

Delivery of general outreach/instruction coordination: Both the DEED and DVR lead coordinate outreach activities that promote best practices for transition planning. Both agencies participate in the annual special education teacher's conference and annual new special education directors' training. DEED and DVR co-chair the Alaska Interagency Transition Council (AITC). The AITC is a stakeholder group consisting of DEED, DVR, Tribal VR and the State's Parent Training and Information Center. The AITC provides cross-agency coordination of outreach, technical assistance on transition planning, and implementation with the following goals:

- Developing a flow of services across agencies.
- Developing and providing cross-agency training to staff and families about transition.
- Designing a social media campaign for disseminating promising practices in transition.
- Developing a scope and sequence of transition skill development for Alaska Students, including assessment.

Each participating agency covers their individual costs.

#### D. Procedures for outreach to and identification of students with disabilities who need transition services.

DVR is working with DEED to update its current cooperative agreement to include WIOA requirements, especially as it relates to the provision of Pre–Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS). Activities to date include:

1. DVR/DEED survey of all school districts to identify the needs of students regarding Pre-ETS and the gaps in school district services; and,
2. Joint participation in intensive technical assistance through a three–year partnership agreement with National Technical Assistance Center on Transition.

DVR updated the simplified Secondary Transition Referral form in 2017 in coordination with DEED. Efforts to encourage referrals through this refined process include DVR/DEED joint training to special education directors at the annual Special Education Director Training and to teachers at the Alaska Statewide Special Education Conference. The form provides teachers with an easy and efficient way to connect a student with the VR counselor serving the school and provides the teacher with an avenue to request a joint conference with the student and counselor. Teachers can access the referral form on DVR’s website under Transition Tools for Teachers. This website also hosts referral guidance and School to Work Orientation to DVR video under the Teacher Tools for IEP meetings banner. There is also an access portal for the JOBZ Club Network list-serve with over 270 subscribers. The Network utilizes the list-serve to promote Pre-ETS activities in addition to using it as a recruitment tool for teacher vendors to provide Pre-ETS in their schools.

DVR and DEED continue to jointly fund Transition Camps through the Alaska Transition Outreach Project. Expansion of transition camps have targeted remote areas of the state and continues to be an avenue of coordination of Pre-ETS with the Division of Juvenile Justice, Office of Children’s Services (OCS), and American Indian Vocational Rehabilitation (AIVR/TVR) projects.

DVR and DEED rely heavily on the activities of the Alaska Interagency Transition Council (AITC) for coordinating outreach efforts and collecting data for program development. The AITC administered the Survey of Secondary Transition Personnel Training Needs for development of a regional special education teacher transition training program. The first Regional Transition Training was conducted in the Lower Kuskokwim School District with 30 teachers from rural and remote village high schools attending the two days. The AITC also produces quarterly newsletters that are distributed to special education administrators, and community stakeholders, which highlights the efforts of AITC member agencies activities in schools and communities across the state.

#### e. Cooperative Agreements with Private Nonprofit Organizations

Describe the manner in which the designated State agency establishes cooperative agreements with private non-profit VR service providers.

DVR has signed agreements with Community Rehabilitation Providers (CRPs) to provide specific vocational rehabilitation services. Only CRPs who meet the qualifications described in DVR’s Standards for CRPs and the CRP application, and have a signed agreement with DVR, are eligible to provide such services. CRP applications may be submitted at any time and must be renewed every three years.

A new CRP structure has been implemented for new applicants giving clearer definitions of the probationary requirements, standardizing the service rating structure, and giving more control and flexibility to DVR Counselors (VRCs) and Managers (VRMs). The probationary requirements have changed from experience and college degree, to a combination of education, experience, training, and performance. There are also clearer definitions of Standard, Exception and Provisional CRPs.

DVR and the University of Alaska Anchorage (UAA) partnered to ensure ongoing training is available to CRPs throughout the state. UAA has received national accreditation from the Association of Community Rehabilitation Educators (ACRE) to provide employment services training. DVR requires CRPs complete a minimum of 40 hours of ACRE accredited training to meet the minimum requirements to provide basic vocational rehabilitation services. Additional resources are provided for CRPs to obtain additional certifications to deliver advanced services.

The service provider application and agreement:

- Requires a background check for all CRP staff who may have unsupervised contact with DVR consumers, as well as a summary of their education and employment experience;
- Establishes specific fees for each service at two probationary levels and a standard level. Exception and Provisional Status rates are negotiable depending on DVR's needs (i.e., cost of living differentials for CRPs that may be needed in remote areas);
- Outlines the conditions and guidelines under which the division and the CRP will provide services for individuals with disabilities, specifying the responsibilities of each party, the scope of services, the evaluation criteria, and reporting and billing requirements; and
- Outlines standards for service providers including organizational structure; personnel; fiscal management; health, safety, and accessibility; and indemnity and insurance requirements.

DVR's CRP Specialist is responsible for approving the agreements and updating the database. Changes in key personnel and fees are reported to and negotiated with DVR. Following the principles of informed choice, information on the CRPs, including their services and fees, are available to DVR's consumers.

CRPs are monitored throughout the duration of each agreement. At a minimum monitoring consists of a thorough review of the following documents submitted by the CRP:

- Written narrative reports (VRC reviews the content and verifies if specific service and information was provided as requested);
- Prior to approving invoices for payment, the Vocational Rehabilitation Assistant (VRA) or VRC confirms receipt of the report and verifies information on the invoice. The invoice information (service category, hours, rates, dates of service, etc.) must correspond with the Authorization for Payment;
- Fiscal staff in Central Office review all CRP invoices before certifying them for payment;
- Timeliness of reports.

DVR conducts annual case reviews and includes a sample of cases that have utilized CRP services. The referral process and the quality of services provided by the CRP are reviewed.

The CRP Specialist periodically reviews CRP data from the case management system to verify timeliness and confirm CRPs are providing only the services they are approved to provide, at the approved rate. To keep informed on CRP performance and regional service needs, the CRP Specialist maintains regular communication with the VR Managers.

When a CRP has been identified as having performance issues, they are informed by the referring VRC. If performance issues continue or are significant, they are contacted by the CRP Specialist and steps are identified to resolve the performance issue. Depending on the circumstances, DVR may immediately suspend or terminate a CRP Agreement, or place the CRP on a Corrective Action Plan (CAP). DVR may decide not to approve an agreement with a CRP that has repeatedly been out of compliance or has a history of poor performance. DVR may impose additional reporting and internal control processes on CRPs that have past compliance and performance issues.

Data on CRPs are collected from staff and from the CRPs themselves for incorporation into the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA). The surveys address the need to establish, develop, or improve CRPs within the State. Since remote areas of the state are lacking CRPs, steps have been taken by the Pre-ETS Transition Coordinator to streamline the process for becoming a CRP. The CRP Specialist has updated the website and the internal staff intranet, and anticipates creating a “CRP Resource Site” to assist CRPs. DVR continues to look for innovative ways to keep and nurture CRPs as they provide valuable services to the program.

#### [f. Arrangements and Cooperative Agreements for the Provision of Supported Employment Services](#)

[Describe the designated State agency’s efforts to identify and make arrangements, including entering into cooperative agreements, with other State agencies and other appropriate entities in order to provide supported employment services and extended employment services, as applicable, to individuals with the most significant disabilities, including youth with the most significant disabilities.](#)

DVR, the Division of Behavioral Health (DBH), the Governor’s Council on Disabilities and Special Education (GCDSE), the University of Alaska’s (UAA) Center for Human Development (CHD), and the Division of Senior and Disability Services (DSDS) continue to collaborate in order to provide extended services to Supported Employment (SE) consumers leaving the VR program, unless the individual is a youth with a disability who requires extended services that are not available through other sources.

The Governor’s Council on Disabilities and Special Education functions as the State Council on Developmental Disabilities and builds capacity, plans for systems change, and advocates for change for people with disabilities. System change includes housing, employment, early intervention, special education, lifelong learning, independent living, and inclusion in the community. DVR’s Director is appointed and holds a seat on the GCDSE. DSDS maintains the developmental disability register, which is in essence the wait list for long-term support services. DVR has finalized its cooperative agreement with DSDS.

The Alaska Mental Health Board (AMHA) and the Governor’s Advisory Board on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse work together to plan and advocate for policies, programs, and services that

help Alaskans who experience mental illness and/or substance abuse issues. The DVR Director is an active member on the AMHB board. In addition, DVR has an on-going commitment to quality SE services, as evidenced by the recent formation and active participation in several cross-agency SE related initiatives such as the Alaska Integrated Employment Initiative and piloting the Individual Placement and Support model with DBH. DVR has sustained the principles of the system change customized employment grant that focused on wrap-around services for the most severely disabled.

DVR continues to be involved in an advisory capacity with different organizations that focus on groups that may often require SE services, such as those individuals with traumatic brain injury, those diagnosed with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD), and individuals with severe mental illness. The traumatic brain injury service delivery system is focused on collaboration with the Alaska Brain Injury Network, with an overarching goal to educate, plan, coordinate, and advocate for a comprehensive service delivery system for TBI survivors. The FASD Steering Committee recognizes the long-term effects FASD has on those affected and the increasing need of long-term supports while developing strategies for individuals with FASD to have better supports at a younger age. DBH and DVR continue to work with the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority to establish the Individual Placement and Support model that should increase competitive integrated employment outcomes for those with severe mental illness.

#### g. Coordination with Employers

Describe how the designated State unit will work with employers to identify competitive integrated employment and career exploration opportunities in order to facilitate the provision of:

##### 1. VR Services; and

DVR partners with employers to promote the hiring of individuals with disabilities. DVR implemented the dual customer model to deliver services to employers. DVR has a Business Engagement Services Team (BEST) that is tasked with providing employers four core services as outlined in WIOA.

##### 1. Training and Technical Assistance in:

- a. Understanding the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and its application to a workplace situation; referral to the ADA partners' project;
- b. Disability awareness training provided to HR, managers, staff, boards, and other interested groups;
- c. Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs regulations;
- d. U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission regulations;
- e. Balancing the application of federal, state, and local employment laws and regulations.

##### 2. Creating Opportunities for Placement by:

- a. Developing opportunities for both adults and youth to provide a full range of unpaid work experiences, informational interviews, job shadows, and On-the-Job Training (OJT);

- b. Offering recruitment supports, assisting in workforce development including placement, OJT, Schedule A, and Provisional Hire;
  - c. OJT, Job Coaching, and external training (not at worksite).
3. Network Development through:
  - a. Connecting with community partners and employers, locally and nationally. The BEST has connected over 50 employers with the Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs staffers, the Governor’s Council on Disabilities & Special Education, the AJC’s Business Connection, and the VA VR&E’s employment support team.
4. Linking to Financial Support offered through:
  - a. Work Opportunity Tax Credit
  - b. Workplace accessibility assessment
  - c. Other employer incentives

Employers can assist DVR with successful placement of individuals with disabilities by:

- Establishing internal policies that prioritize hiring people with disabilities;
- Ensuring that the hiring of people with disabilities is part of a company’s overall hiring plan;
- Conducting targeted outreach to attract qualified candidates with disabilities;
- Developing community linkages;
- Retaining and reviewing applications from applicants with disabilities when future openings occur; and
- Ensuring fully accessible online job applications and electronic and social media recruitment materials.

Other successful strategies for employers to practice in the assistance of building their talent pool include conducting targeted outreach through community based partners, such as DVR; forming community-linkages and partnerships, especially large employers who are seeking to diversify their workforce; posting job announcements in targeted spaces, such as ILCs or DVR offices; or starting internship programs or allowing for the development of work-based learning experiences in their agency.

Additionally, DVR can show employers how some of their existing programs may only require minor improvements to include the needs of employees with disabilities.

Modification or implementation of programs such as orientation and onboarding, career development (OJT), mentoring, and employee resource groups can increase retention rates of individuals with disabilities.

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) partners with employers to promote the hiring of individuals with disabilities. DVR utilizes a dual customer model and works with employers to provide human resource services and connections to potential employees. DVR has hired an

Employment First Coordinator to promote industry sector partnerships with businesses in industries that are both high-demand and high-wage. DVR utilizes vocational evaluation services, and local labor market surveys to ensure individuals with disabilities are provided informed choice to foster the pursuit of career pathways in high-demand industries and apprenticeship opportunities. DVR continues to partner with WIOA core programs to maximize services to individuals with disabilities and coordinate services to promote successful employment outcomes.

## 2. Transition services, including pre-employment transition services, for students and youth with disabilities.

DVR partners with employers to promote work experiences for youth and students with disabilities, potentially leading to employment. Youth and students with disabilities benefited from coordination with employers through participation in:

- Transition Camps
- Summer Work Experiences
- Tapestry
- Project Search
- Alaska Business Week Discovery Program

DVR's Transition Specialist works with has created a school to career pathway in which CRPs work with employers to expose students to career pathways in high-demand or high wage industries.

Programs partner with schools, businesses, and industry leaders to provide students with the opportunity to obtain a full understanding of specific jobs and careers within an industry and:

- What skills and competencies the employer is looking for,
- What working conditions are like for specific industries,
- What education and training are required for entry level employment; and,
- What pathways are available for individuals to ascend from entry- to higher-level jobs and careers within an occupational area.

DVR will develop additional partnerships with local job centers, businesses, and postsecondary education and training providers to expand and enhance the career pathways program. Examples include:

- Job Centers: Interest inventories, job seeking skills workshops and labor market information
- Education and training providers: Hands-on learning opportunities or basic industry recognized training- OSHA, NCCER, etc.
- Business: work experience, soft skills, expectations, interest versus abilities

Student participants in pathways objectives are to:

- Prepare: Gain an understanding of their own personal interests and abilities, through assessment, and how those interests match career clusters
- Experience: Participate in industry lead exploration activities to experience workplace conditions, tasks and gain and insight into the skills and knowledge needed to advance within that industry
- Reflect: Design a personal career pathways map using what they have learned about themselves and the industry
- Participate: Training in work readiness skills (soft skills) common across all industries

#### h. Interagency Cooperation

Describe how the designated State unit will collaborate with the State agency responsible for administering each of the following programs to develop opportunities for competitive integrated employment, to the greatest extent practicable:

##### 1. The State Medicaid plan under title XIX of the Social Security Act;

DVR is actively updating its cooperative agreement with the Division of Public Assistance, describing how both agencies will work towards achieving competitive integrated employment outcomes for beneficiaries. DVR has developed a draft of this agreement which includes strategies, including best practices, for assisting Medicaid recipients' transition into meaningful employment while ensuring informed choice in determining their employment goals. DVR has set a target date of August 2020 for finalization of the cooperative agreement with the Division of Public Assistance.

##### 2. The State agency responsible for providing services for individuals with developmental disabilities; and

A memorandum of understanding (MOU) between the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) and Division of Senior and Disability Services (DSDS), located in the Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS), was completed on May 3, 2017. The goal of the agreement was to clarify roles and responsibilities of DVR and DSDS concerning common consumers. Some of the areas addressed in the document include purpose, philosophy, terms, authority and funding, responsibilities, confidentiality, and referral. The agreement will remain in effect until amended or terminated by either party. Additionally, DSDS and DVR have developed a task force that combines DVR's expertise as it relates to employment and SDS' expertise as it relates to individuals with I/DD. The taskforce has developed tangible goals outlining how both agencies will provide technical assistance and support to one another. DSDS has already presented to multiple field offices and DVR's Chief of Services has and, will continue to, present to DSDS staff and providers on specific topics such as trial work experiences.

##### 3. The State agency responsible for providing mental health services.

There is a current MOU between DVR and the Division of Behavioral Health (DBH) which was signed in August 2018. The purpose of the agreement is to establish the terms and conditions that will guide the partnership between DVR and DBH and reaffirm the collaborative framework for developing, expanding, and improving opportunities for competitive, integrated employment for individuals with disabilities who are served by both entities, including individuals with the most significant disabilities associated with behavioral health conditions.

Additionally, the agreement assures services are provided in accordance with the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, and as required under WIOA. Both agencies have identified the Individual Placement and Support model to pilot in at least two regions. DBH has providers who are currently delivering Individual Placement and Support services in Kenai and Anchorage. This model is designed for individuals with significant mental health disabilities to better prepare them for long-term employment. Additionally, DBH is now moving towards providing long-term supports for this population, making pursuing supported employment a better option for this population. Each agency has assigned staff to resolve any issues or questions.

#### i. Comprehensive System of Personnel Development; Data System on Personnel and Personnel Development

Describe the designated State agency's procedures and activities to establish and maintain a comprehensive system of personnel development designed to ensure an adequate supply of qualified State rehabilitation professional and paraprofessional personnel for the designated State unit, including the following:

##### 1. System on Personnel and Personnel Development

###### A. Qualified Personnel Needs

Describe the development and maintenance of a system for collecting and analyzing on an annual basis data on qualified personnel needs with respect to:

#### i. The number of personnel who are employed by the State agency in the provision of VR services in relation to the number of individuals served, broken down by personnel category;

To assess and identify the need for qualified personnel, DVR accesses three systems:

1. DVR has developed and maintains a database through the AWARE case management software. This software includes information on the number of VR professionals providing VR services statewide.
2. The Department of Administration provides an updated Workforce Profile in each fiscal year. The profile represents demographics such as age, ethnicity distribution, and retirement projections with job titles and categories. These data become an important step in the workforce planning process and are used to predict personnel needs for the next five years.
3. Effective November 7, 2011, the Division of Personnel began to transition Human Resources staff back to each department, therefore, DVR, under the Department of Labor and Workforce Development, has its own personnel system for collecting and analyzing data for maintaining personnel needs and evaluating and managing employee performance. Currently, the standard for the size of each counselor's caseload is based on the level, VRCI, VRCII, or VRCIII. Currently, a VRCI caseload is 60 cases; a VRCII is 75 cases; and a VRCIII is 90 cases. This objective is reviewed on an annual basis to ensure caseload distribution remains equitable and can handle the number of participants entering the DVR program.

In State FY2019, DVR served 2,780 individuals with disabilities, utilizing the staff of 83 full time vocational rehabilitation (VR) professionals. These consist of:

- 1 Director
- 1 Chief
- 1 Deputy Chief
- 1 Administrative Operations Manager
- 5 Regional Managers
- 36 VR Counselors
- 23 VR Assistants
- 6 Administrative and Support Staff
- 3 Fiscal
- 1 Program Coordinator II
- 2 Program Coordinator I
- 1 Pre-ETS Transition Coordinator
- 1 BEP Program Coordinator
- 1 Training Specialist II
- 1 CRP Specialist
- 1 ASL Interpreter

ii. [The number of personnel currently needed by the State agency to provide VR services, broken down by personnel category; and](#)

DVR finds present staffing levels sufficient to serve all eligible participants. The average employee turnover rate in FY2019 was 11.1%.

- 1 Director
- 1 Chief
- 1 Deputy Chief
- 1 Administrative Operations Manager
- 5 Regional Managers
- 42 VR Counselors
- 26 VR Assistants
- 6 Administrative and Support Staff
- 4 Fiscal
- 1 Program Coordinator II

- 2 Program Coordinator I
- 1 Pre-ETS Transition Coordinator
- 1 BEP Program Coordinator
- 1 Training Specialist II
- 1 CRP Specialist
- 1 ASL Interpreter

iii. Projections of the number of personnel, broken down by personnel category, who will be needed by the State agency to provide VR services in 5 years based on projections of the number of individuals to be served, including individuals with significant disabilities, the number of personnel expected to retire or leave the field, and other relevant factors.

Over the next 5 years, DVR anticipates a rate of 28 percent of staff leaving the field, resulting in approximately 27 projected vacancies from FY2020-FY2025. DVR anticipates job vacancies will remain stable in the next five years through staff retirement or attrition. Additionally, DVR maintains approximately a 4-5 percent vacancy rate to allow for positions to be filled in the event of an influx of VR clients.

Projected vacancies over the next 5 years is 27 taken from a total number of 95 full-time positions available.

Position Projected Vacancies – FY2020 to FY2025:

- VR Counselor: 8
- VR Assistant: 12
- Administrative and Support Staff: 7

In DVR's 2020 Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment, the projected number of individuals with disabilities, including those with significant disabilities, is expected to increase by 2.9%, based on data from 2016-2017. A 2.9% increase in VR cases would equate to approximately an additional 30 cases per year, which DVR would be able to serve adequately without entering into an Order of Selection.

## B. Personnel Development

Describe the development and maintenance of a system for collecting and analyzing on an annual basis data on personnel development with respect to:

i. A list of the institutions of higher education in the State that are preparing VR professionals, by type of program;

Educational institutions within the State of Alaska currently lack Master's level programs in Rehabilitation Counseling. The University of Alaska offers academic programs in related disciplines, such as Associate and Bachelor degrees in Human Services, Rural Human Services, Psychology, and Social Work, as well as Master's degrees in Education, Counseling, and Counselor Education. DVR diligently ensures that all employees are fully qualified to provide vocational rehabilitation services and are either Certified Rehabilitation Counselors or on the

path to becoming a Certified Rehabilitation Counselor. Those who do not meet CSPD conditions at the time of hire are mandated to enroll in rehabilitation counseling programs (full length or graduate certificates), offered via distance delivery through University of Kentucky, West Virginia University, and University of Massachusetts Boston.

In FY2019, nine VR counselors enrolled in accredited Rehabilitation Counseling programs; five required a full master's degree and four required 2-4 graduate-level courses; and two VR counselors successfully passed the Certified Rehabilitation Counseling (CRC) exam. In FY2019, DVR employed 36 VR Counselors. Of those, 75% or 27 VR Counselors have fully met the Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD) requirements.

ii. The number of students enrolled at each of those institutions, broken down by type of program; and

- University of Massachusetts Boston – Master's degree in Rehabilitation Counseling: three students
- University of Massachusetts Boston – Graduate-level course in Rehabilitation Counseling: two students
- University of Kentucky – Master's degree in Rehabilitation Counseling: one student
- University of Kentucky – Graduate-level course in Rehabilitation Counseling: two students
- West Virginia University - Master's degree in Clinical Rehabilitation and Mental Health Counseling: one student

iii. The number of students who graduated during the prior year from each of those institutions with certification or licensure, or with the credentials for certification or licensure, broken down by the personnel category for which they have received, or have the credentials to receive, certification or licensure.

Two individuals graduated from the University of Massachusetts, Boston, and obtained CRC Certification.

## 2. Plan for Recruitment, Preparation and Retention of Qualified Personnel

Describe the development and implementation of a plan to address the current and projected needs for qualified personnel including, the coordination and facilitation of efforts between the designated State unit and institutions of higher education and professional associations to recruit, prepare, and retain personnel who are qualified, including personnel from minority backgrounds and personnel who are individuals with disabilities.

DVR evaluates its personnel needs annually as part of the strategic planning process. The recruitment of qualified rehabilitation personnel has been historically challenging in Alaska due to lack of Rehabilitation Counseling programs within Alaska's university system, as well as the Division of Personnel regulations, which mandates that several unsuccessful in-state recruitment searches occur prior to out-of-state recruitment efforts becoming an option. To overcome these difficulties, DVR developed positive relationships with several Rehabilitation Counseling Education (RCE) programs to enable entry level and journey level counselors to obtain the necessary qualifications through distance education and intensive on-the-job supervision. This

strategy is effective with paraprofessional staff as well. DVR recruits from various entities, including tribal vocational rehabilitation and human service agencies, and offers paid and non-paid internships to rehabilitation counseling graduate students who are interested in relocating to Alaska.

In accordance with Title I of the ADA, DVR offers preferential hire to individuals with disabilities to enhance their access to meaningful and gainful employment, and to ensure that individuals with disabilities receive employment services in the most community integrated setting. Alaska relies upon educational institutions that deliver curriculums via distance education. Relationships with educational institutions fluctuate based on availability of long-term training grants and staff needs. However, DVR has developed a strong working relationship with Virginia Commonwealth University, University of Kentucky, Western Washington University, University of Massachusetts Boston, and West Virginia University. To reach a wider applicant market outside of the traditional in-state recruitment, DVR vacancies are advertised at the UAA Career Development Center, University of Washington Center for Continuing Education in Rehabilitation (CCER), and other university partners. Qualified individuals are identified through the on-going relationship with academic programs throughout the nation and Workforce Innovation Technical Assistance Center (WINTAC).

### 3. Personnel Standards

Describe the State agency's policies and procedures for the establishment and maintenance of personnel standards consistent with section 101(a)(7)(B) to ensure that designated State unit professional and paraprofessional personnel are adequately trained and prepared, including:

A. Standards that are consistent with any national or State-approved or -recognized certification, licensing, registration, or other comparable requirements that apply to the profession or discipline in which such personnel are providing VR services; and

The State of Alaska does not currently mandate licensure for rehabilitation counselors. As a result, DVR has adopted the Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification (CRCC) academic degree requirements as its standard. Strategies that DVR employs to ensure an adequate supply of qualified vocational rehabilitation professionals are:

- Participating in local job/career fairs.
- Formation of an in-house training and staff development team.
- Offering paid and non-paid graduate internships.
- Supporting rehabilitation counseling as an employment goal for DVR participants.
- Supporting staff in fulfilling academic requirements to qualify for CRC certification.
- Seeking out training to help staff achieve CRC recertification and professional growth
- Utilizing training resources and support of CCER.
- Arranging presentations to graduate level counseling students at the local university.
- Developing a career advancement system that integrates education, training and credential requirements for initial hire and future promotion. DVR successfully modified

rehabilitation counselor position descriptions to comply with CSPD provisions/mandates.

The Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification requires a Master's degree in Clinical Rehabilitation Counseling, or Rehabilitation Counseling to sit for the CRC exam. The program must be accredited by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP). The Commission also accepts Master's degrees in related fields with additional courses along with a period of time working under a CRC to sit for a CRC exam.

All non-CRC counselors receive Requirements for Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD) packet, including a memo issued by the Chief of Rehabilitation Services during the Alaska DVR New Hire Orientation. The memo clearly states that the Alaska DVR has adopted the standard of competency established by the Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification (CRCC). The staff must read and fully understand their educational responsibilities and must sign the Acknowledgement of Requirement for the CSPD. Copies are stored in the agency personnel file, the agency Training Specialist staff training record, and the staff's office.

DVR's Training Policy outlines staff expectations as it relates to obtaining a CRC, as well as all other training provided by the agency.

[B. The establishment and maintenance of education and experience requirements, in accordance with section 101\(a\)\(7\)\(B\)\(ii\) of the Rehabilitation Act, to ensure that the personnel have a 21st century understanding of the evolving labor force and the needs of individuals with disabilities.](#)

Employees who do not meet the qualifying standard must fulfill all academic requirements necessary to qualify for the CRC examination within five years of hire (for VRC I) or three years of hire (for VRC II). Additionally, these employees will receive more intensive supervision and ongoing review of all non-delegable functions (i.e., guidance and counseling, eligibility determination, individualized plan for employment, plan amendment approval, and closure). DVR supports employees who are pursuing additional education through assisting employees obtain scholarships or funding additional classes, depending on what is needed to sit for the CRC. As part of DVR's strategic planning process, an annual evaluation of the effectiveness of recruitment and training practices is completed, and areas of improvement are then identified and incorporated into the plan. As personnel move through the progression of the VRC or VRA series, their performance is rated based upon their experience, education, and competency. Once an employee meets the minimum qualifications for the next promotional level of the series and shows, through a thorough review of their work, that they have the competency to perform at the higher level, the employee is offered a promotion to the next level of the series. For counselors, this requires extensive education, such as obtaining a graduate degree, and successfully passing their CRC examination. Additionally, counselors with a CRC must have at least a year of experience as a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor to be hired at, or promoted to, a VRC III level.

Alaska DVR recognizes the importance of its employee's education and supports required training and continuing education of all its employees. DVR employs a Training Specialist whose primary duties are to plan, implement, and facilitate staff development and training for DVR's professional, paraprofessional, administrative, and support staff. Every new employee receives an Employee Development Plan which outlines the training and/or education necessary for them to perform the duties of their position and, preferably, moves them towards promotion. The

Training Specialist, in conjunction with the Chief and Deputy Chief, coordinates annual Regional Training in which the topics are derived from findings from Case Reviews, new or emerging practices for serving individuals with disabilities, and policy and procedures. Each year, Regional Training encompasses a variety of topics that ensure personnel maintain their understanding of the needs of the workforce with disabilities, including current and relevant areas that enhance their ability to serve DVR clients. Topics such as Neuro-developmental Aspects of Traumatic Brain Injury, Gender Identity and VR, and Motivational Interviewing for Youth with Disabilities are just some training topics that DVR has provided to personnel in order to maintain its requirements in accordance with section 101(a)(7)(B)(ii) of the Rehabilitation Act. DVR will continue to coordinate Regional Training every year and offer CRC credits for that training.

Additionally, for training that is offered by other entities, such as the Alaska Brain Injury Network, Trust Training Collaborative, and School on Addictions, there is an expectation that staff who received such training share the materials, knowledge, and skills with those who may not have attended. If the agency has not previously disseminated the information, the training materials and resources will be distributed through training announcement e-mails and the staff intranet.

#### 4. Staff Development

Describe the State agency's policies, procedures, and activities to ensure that, consistent with section 101(a)(7)(C) of the Rehabilitation Act, all personnel employed by the designated State unit receive appropriate and adequate training in terms of:

A. A system of staff development for professionals and paraprofessionals within the designated State unit, particularly with respect to assessment, vocational counseling, job placement, and rehabilitation technology, including training implemented in coordination with entities carrying out State programs under section 4 of the Assistive Technology Act of 1998; and

Throughout the year, staff are provided professional development opportunities in assessment, vocational counseling, job placement, rehabilitation technology, and Assistive Technology (AT). DVR recognizes and supports the efforts of employees to upgrade their skills and knowledge through staff development. Training is provided on a continual basis to ensure professional enhancement. Training may be provided to groups or to individuals based on specific staff expectations and duties. DVR employs VR counselors who provide services in the areas of assessment, guidance and counseling, and job development. Staff who provide services in each area are provided training throughout the year in their areas of expertise. Additionally, in 2019, DVR provided all staff training on the use of assessment in the vocational rehabilitation planning process for the use in conjunction with Career Pathways. Job development staff, which is part of the Business Engagement Services Team (BEST) regularly attends training focused on job development strategies, including providing services to employers to ensure successful placement of individuals with disabilities.

DVR coordinates training with the Assistive Technology of Alaska (ATLA) to provide Assistive Technology training to DVR in areas such as an overview of AT for employees with disabilities, how to conduct an AT needs assessment, and common cognitive barriers and AT strategies. ATLA has also recently developed weekly webinars in areas such as solutions for distance communication including akCanConnect which provides equipment for Alaskans who have vision and/or hearing loss. Training on Rehabilitation Technology is frequently provided to staff

in conjunction with much of the AT training including topics such as “Independent Living through AT” which describes how AT can aid someone in transitioning to independent living.

#### B. Procedures for the acquisition and dissemination of significant knowledge from research and other sources to designated State unit professionals and paraprofessionals.

Training and development are guided by issues identified during needs assessment, and take into account budget availability, new federal initiatives, and outcomes of program evaluation. Needs assessment involves individual/regional case reviews, client satisfaction surveys, consumer forums, performance appraisals, performance skill rating tools, employee development plans, Client Assistant Program annual reports, and supervisor/employee training needs surveys.

During FY2019 DVR staff participated in several conferences and trainings, including:

- Annual Regional Training – Changes to Supported Employment under WIOA & Implications to VR Service Program; Determination of Eligibility: Overview & Documentation in AWARE; Effective Caseload Management; Engaging & Serving Youth: Collaboration between Education & VR; Pre-ETS & IPE; Understanding Gender Identity: Best Practice for VR Professionals
- Ethics Training – Ethics & Change; Code of Professional Ethic for Rehabilitation Counselors; Ethics & Technology; Dual Relationships: Ethical Boundaries
- Conferences – Psychopharmacology; Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI); Alaska Government Contracting for the Business Enterprise Program (BEP) team; Alaska Statewide Special Education; Reducing Recidivism & Reentry; Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD); Brain Institute: Returning to Life; School on Addictions & Behavior Health; Embracing Cross-disciplinary Partnership;
- Webinars – Alaska Interpreting Alliance; Sex Offenders & Victims: Current Trends; Simple Scripts for Problems at Work; Trauma 101; Medical Marijuana Alternative Treatments; Identifying & Diagnosing Common Personality Disorder; Case Documentation & Recording; Using Occupational Info in Vocational Evaluation; Five Foundations of Business Engagement;
- Online Training – National Certificate in Employment Services
- Face-to-Face Training – WOWI Assessment for the Division’s Statewide Assessment Team (DSAT): Across-Cultural Communication; One-stop Training Academy; Motivational Interviewing;

Training activities occur on a continuous basis and many are delivered via teleconference and through webinars offered by Alaska Training Cooperative, University of Alaska Center for Human Development, University of Arkansas Currents, AAACEUs, and National Clearinghouse of Rehabilitation Training Materials. VR counselors utilize the services of medical/psychiatric consultants to regularly update their disability-related knowledge. Evidence-based best practices and advances in the field, presented by the Institute on Rehabilitation Issues, National Rehabilitation Association, and the National Rehabilitation Counseling Association, are regularly distributed to the field staff. The DVR leadership team receives regular updates from the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA), and maintains active communication with

University of Washington Center for Continuing Education in Rehabilitation (CCER) to keep pace with the changes in the field of vocational rehabilitation.

The DVR Training Specialist is responsible for disseminating all available training opportunities and resources to DVR staff. Information is regularly emailed to the field and then placed on the DVR SharePoint Training page so staff can easily access information at a later date. Additionally, DVR staff regularly participates in research opportunities including participation with the University of Montana Rural Institute, Mathematica, and the Center for Psychiatric Rehabilitation at Sargent College of Rehabilitation Sciences at Boston University. Publications of these research projects are shared with all staff.

DVR staff is trained regularly on Policies and Procedures, including reviews of existing policies and procedures conducted by regional managers during regional weekly staff meetings. Significant policy and procedure changes are disseminated to all staff through structured training that is either delivered in person, or via distance means, such as GoToWebinar, by the Chief or Deputy Chief. Staff is also provided with FAQs to assist with answering commonly asked questions about a particular policy.

## 5. Personnel to Address Individual Communication Needs

Describe how the designated State unit has personnel or obtains the services of other individuals who are able to communicate in appropriate modes of communication with or in the native language of applicants or eligible individuals who have limited English speaking ability.

DVR employs a fulltime staff member who is fluent in American Sign Language (ASL) to facilitate communication with participants and staff who use ASL. The agency supports employees who are interested in becoming proficient in ASL to increase communication with hard of hearing and deaf participants. DVR's Director is fluent in ASL as well. Tele-interpreting is widely used. VR counselors who serve this population can use the text message function as a form of accommodating their participants' needs. For individuals with limited English proficiency, DVR maintains a roster of employees fluent in various languages; staff may utilize the services of a professional interpreter when needed. DVR relies heavily on Tribal Vocational Rehabilitation programs to educate state staff regarding culturally appropriate methods of communication with Alaska Native participants.

Other tools used to address individual communication needs include:

- IP-Relay: TTY/TDD system connects callers to an operator who then reads their messages to the recipients and transcribes their messages back to the callers.
- Video Phone allows users to access videos, IP Relay services, and instant messaging services
- Captel Phone allows users to see the text of a phone call in real-time while hearing it.
- Communication Access Real-time Translation (CART) to provide real-time captioning.
- Fring allows users to make voice/video calls and IM chats from an iPhone/iPod; via) JAWS, Dragon, CCTV Readers allow users to see screen content.

## 6. Coordination of Personnel Development Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

As appropriate, describe the procedures and activities to coordinate the designated State unit's comprehensive system of personnel development with personnel development under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

DVR consistently collaborates with the State of Alaska Department of Education and Early Development (DEED) on numerous staff development and training initiatives.

DVR Transition Services - DVR reaches out to students with disabilities throughout Alaska to foster their smooth transition from secondary school into vocational/academic training and into the world of work. VR counselors within each regional office are assigned to specific schools to streamline the referral process, ensure counselor participation in Individual Education Plan (IEP) development, and ensure that all schools are informed of DVR services. Contact with schools is carried out, at a minimum, on a monthly basis. Rural and village schools communicate with DVR through their special education staff, as well as DVR staff who are assigned and travel to that particular rural region. The transition coordinator holds bi-monthly teleconferences with all VR counselors involved in transition initiatives. These teleconferences allow staff to share information, brainstorm ideas, and develop effective strategies for service delivery. Tapestry, which is administered through the University of Alaska's Center for Human Development, caters to young adults with intellectual disabilities with the goal of teaching them appropriate personal, social, and vocational skills in fostering a successful transition to employment. DVR actively collaborates with the Center for Human Development, the Anchorage School District and other community agencies to ensure that these young individuals with disabilities access the full array of vocational rehabilitation services.

DVR Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) - DVR field staff are carrying out Pre-ETS activities for students with disabilities age 14 to 21 (up until the individual's 22<sup>nd</sup> birthday) the following services: i) Job exploration counseling; ii) Work-based learning experiences; iii) Counseling on opportunities for enrolment in comprehensive transition or postsecondary educational programs at institutions of higher education; iv) Workplace readiness training to develop social skills and independent living; v) Instruction in self-advocacy includes peer mentoring. DVR staff also provide Pre-employment transition coordination includes attending Individual Education Plan (IEP) meetings for VR applicants and attending person-centered planning meetings for individuals receiving services under Title XIX of the Social Security Act.

Alaska Statewide Special Education Conference - DVR strongly encourages counselor attendance and active participation in this annual conference to establish/maintain an ongoing dialogue with school districts and stay abreast of new developments in the field of special education (e.g., disability issues, AT, classroom accommodations, new legislation, Individuals with Disabilities Education Act requirements, etc.). Eleven DVR staff attended this conference in FY2019. In addition, the DVR transition coordinator participates in this conference annually as a presenter and vendor. Through breakout sessions, the transition coordinator provides pertinent information on how DVR is expanding the coordination of Pre-ETS in school districts across the state. DVR also offers a two-day post conference training in partnership with DEED. The training prepares teachers to enhance transition planning utilizing Pre-ETS as assessment activities for writing transition goals in the IEP. It also introduces, through agency presentations, teachers to additional postsecondary resources for transition planning. Teachers received in depth training in: core areas of assessment, job development, job accommodations, and job

supports; development of functional transition plans that meet indicator 13 requirements; statewide resources for connected with postsecondary resources like Social Security work incentives and DSDS waiver services; and transition support services such as Transition Camps, JOBZ Club, and Phlight Club that enhance transition services already being provided in the schools. Over 30 teachers have attended the post-conference course over the last two years.

Special Education Director Conference - The DVR Transition Coordinator or Field Chief regularly presents at this annual conference, which offers special education professionals from Alaska's 54 school districts opportunity to learn about DVR services. DVR's transition coordinator participates in several regional and state initiatives: University of Alaska Anchorage Center for Human Development (Tapestry Project), Alaska Interagency Transition Council, Governor's Council on Disability & Special Education Rural Transition Committee and their Transportation and Employment Committee, Statewide Independent Living Council, and the Alaska Mental Health Trust's Employment Initiative. These boards develop initiatives and activities that would improve the transition outcomes of students with disabilities, however, it is the responsibility of DEED to disseminate the information to school districts and special education officials and recommend involvement. DVR disseminates initiatives to regional managers and counselors to ensure they can assist with carrying out agreed upon initiatives on a local level.

#### j. Statewide Assessment

1. Provide an assessment of the rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities residing within the State, particularly the VR services needs of those:

A. With the most significant disabilities, including their need for supported employment services;

The Alaska Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR), as part of the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development (DOLWD), is responsible for the administration and operation of Alaska's public vocational rehabilitation program. While DVR continually assesses its performance and the needs of Alaskans with disabilities, the Rehabilitation Act, as amended, Public Law 99-506 Section 101(a), requires each state vocational rehabilitation agency conduct a Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA) jointly with the State Vocational Rehabilitation Committee (SVRC) triennially. The SVRC's Planning and Recruitment Subcommittee worked with DVR on the preparation and updating of the DVR State Plan and tri-annual CSNA. The results of the CSNA are used to develop goals, priorities, strategies, and actions for both DVR's Strategic and Combined State Plans.

Information obtained from the 2020 CSNA, which analyzed data from FY18, showed that long-term supports continue to be a challenge in the state of Alaska, due to geography, availability of health providers, services, and lack of funding for long term supports.

The State of Alaska has historically experienced basic health care and health care facility shortages throughout the state. The most populated areas of Alaska, including Anchorage, Palmer, Wasilla, Fairbanks, Juneau, Kenai, and Kodiak, have a high number of individuals receiving services through the Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD) Medicaid waiver, with large portions of the state having no waivers. For individuals with a complex plan of care living in rural areas, services or providers may not exist, and they may be required to relocate to an area that has such services.

As of June 30, 2018, the Division of Senior and Disabilities Services had restricted the issuance of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD) Medicaid waiver to 50 new waivers granted annually, with no more than 600 total enrollees per year. Currently, 836 individuals on the IDD Medicaid waiver waiting list have been on it for 90 days or more. In SFY 2018, the average length of time individuals spend on the IDD Medicaid waitlist was 40.6 months.

For DVR participants who are most severely disabled (MSD), some may require supported employment (SE) services to ensure success with long-term supports. SE cases can be complex and involve a team of providers who work with the individual and DVR.

#### B. Who are minorities;

DVR collects demographic information of participants to evaluate the racial breakdown of individuals served through the program. The racial distribution of potentially eligible students with a disability served by DVR is also reviewed. Based upon results from DVR's 2020 Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment, DVR serves the following total populations at the following rates:

White: Population 66%; VR Served 58%; Potentially Eligible Served 30%

Alaska Native/American Indian: Population 15%; VR Served 19%; Potentially Eligible Served 50%

Black: Population 4%; VR Served 6%; Potentially Eligible Served 4%

Asian: Population 6%; VR Served 2%; Potentially Eligible Served 2%

Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander: Population 1%; VR Served 1%; Potentially Eligible Served 2%

Multi-racial: Population 7%; VR Served 14%; Potentially Eligible Served 12%

Based upon analysis of minority racial categories, including examination of those who are multi-racial, DVR concluded that it is not unserving nor underserving minorities.

#### C. Who have been unserved or underserved by the VR program;

Based upon results from DVR's 2020 Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment, DVR did determine that the most underserved population are those individuals living in rural and remote areas of Alaska. Counselors are assigned to regional "hub" areas, which are more highly populated rural areas, such as Bethel, Dillingham, Barrow, Nome, and Kotzebue, where DVR does not have offices. The assigned counselors travel to rural hubs to meet with participants several times a year. Though technology such as GoToMeeting and SARA (texting software) does assist with communication efforts, internet is often limited in rural areas. Combined with the lack of other supportive services as well as limited employment opportunities in these communities, serving rural participants can be challenging. Areas in which DVR has field offices, which are also in the most highly populated areas of the state, are adequately served, whereas rural and remote areas in which DVR can only serve itinerantly show significantly smaller participant numbers.

Economic conditions and lack of employment opportunities affect rural communities. Often participants must travel to urban areas for training or employment, removing them from their support groups and family. In addition, this increases the cost of training as there are costs for transportation and housing.

The State of Alaska is experiencing a population decline as out-migration is currently exceeding in-migration. The changes are relatively small, less than 1% and this trend is fairly recent; however, this can have an impact on services due to reduced availability of resources.

#### D. Who have been served through other components of the statewide workforce development system; and

DVR works closely with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) partners and routinely refers participants to other WIOA programs. For PY18, the Wagner-Peyser program served 1,973 individuals with disabilities, 213 of whom were youth ages 16-24. The individuals identified by the WIOA partners are individuals who have self-disclosed a disability and do not necessarily meet the eligibility criteria for DVR services. The Infrastructure Cost Agreement with the Division of Employment and Training Services (DETS), identified 196 individuals shared with DVR in PY17.

The Disability Employment Initiative (DEI) program has been active in Alaska since 2010 building a cohesive system in which to support individuals with disabilities. In PY17, Alaska was administering a DEI Round VI grant focusing on building partnerships to meet the needs of youth with disabilities, aged 14 to 24, by expanding access to employment and career pathways to prepare for in-demand careers. Unfortunately, the DEI grant cycle ended in PY18.

The Governor and Alaska Workforce Investment Board (AWIB) have determined that the expansion of Registered Apprenticeship by employers will lead youth and adults, including those with disabilities and those who have multiple barriers to employment, into good paying jobs with career opportunities, while providing employers with new workers to fill in-demand occupations.

The Division of Labor and Workforce Development is working with the Alaska Department of Education & Early Development and local school districts to expand work-based learning opportunities for students and out-of-school youth, including youth with disabilities. This includes school-to-apprenticeship programs, internships, and co-operative learning to strengthen career paths and better prepare young Alaskans for employment in their career field.

DVR is co-located in four of the 14 American Job Centers throughout the state. Those co-located offices are in Wasilla, Juneau, Sitka, and Ketchikan. In addition, DVR counselors work with Job centers in Nome, Dillingham, Bethel, Kodiak, and Homer when traveling to those locations.

The referral process among the core programs is implemented on an individualized basis depending on the specific needs of the individual. All DOLWD staff are trained and expected to be knowledgeable in the requirements and eligibility of other core programs to ensure an appropriate program referral. Appropriate referrals are necessary to leverage resources and maximize services.

DVR is currently pilot testing SARA (communication software), provided by The Career Index and paid for by the United States Department of Education Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA). Using this communication software, DVR and other WIOA partners within the state workforce system can share data and partner on services for mutual clients, as required under Section 116(d)(2) of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunities.

E. Who are youth with disabilities and students with disabilities, including, as appropriate, their need for pre-employment transition services or other transition services.

In DVR's 2016-2018 Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment, DVR developed a target goal of 585 students to be provided Pre-Employment Transition Services annually through 2021. For State Fiscal Years (SFY) 2018 DVR exceeded this goal, serving 1011 students and in SFY19, served 944. DVR was able to expend the required 15% of its federal award set aside for Pre-Employment Transition Services and has every expectation of expending the 15% in SFY20.

DVR's Transition Coordinator developed and distributed technical assistance to teachers via a secondary transition newsletter and promoting transition initiatives that are successful.

DVR's Transition Coordinator created a coaching model that focuses on teacher and student knowledge of postsecondary transition requirements, best practices, and Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) transition services. This coaching is offered through distance learning and is in coordination with the National Technical Assistance Center on Transition (NTACT).

2. Identify the need to establish, develop, or improve community rehabilitation programs within the State; and

Having an adequate number of CRPs who can deliver a wide variety of services has been a consistent challenge for DVR, even in urban areas. There are a limited number of CRPs in urban areas and remote locations may not have any. Monitoring CRP performance and accountability can also be a challenge and requires a full time CRP Coordinator to manage the quality assurance process.

The availability of adequate training for CRPs is an obstacle and finding those with specialized transition training to work with students with disabilities has been difficult.

DVR has at least one counselor in each regional office to perform in-house job development services to meld the dual customer model that addresses the needs of both employers and participants and to offset CRPs who lack job development experience.

To address the needs of transition age youth, DVR worked with CRPs to develop proposals to best serve this population. Additionally, DVR's Rural Team continues to strategize methods to increase the number of CRPs in rural areas, which are traditionally underserved. In rural areas, DVR's Transition Coordinator has developed an abbreviated process to allow for Special Education teachers to become Teacher CRPs more quickly to deliver Pre-Employment Transition Services to students with disabilities.

In rural areas, AKDVR's Transition Coordinator has developed an abbreviated process to allow for Special Education teachers to become Teacher CRPs more quickly in order to deliver Pre-Employment Transition Services to students with disabilities. DVR's JOBZ Club and S'Cool Store programs are specifically designed to support Teacher CRPs (local teachers) and communities in the delivery of various activities for students. These activities might include Transition Camps where teams from urban areas fly in to rural/remote communities to expose potentially eligible students to education and employment opportunities throughout Alaska. Additionally, DVR designed a proposal process for service providers to create innovative Pre-Employment Transition Service programs to be delivered in their communities; ensuring the design and service delivery met fidelity guidelines set by DVR.

### 3. Include an assessment of the needs of individuals with disabilities for transition career services and pre-employment transition services, and the extent to which such services are coordinated with transition services provided under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

DVR's Transition Coordinator works closely with the State of Alaska's Department of Education and Early Development (DEED). The April 1, 2019 report outlining Alaska's State Systemic Improvement Plan, Phase III, is designed to increase the graduation rates of students with disabilities. The report includes the participation and collaboration with DVR and the Pre-Employment Transition Services that have been offered to potentially eligible students ages 14-21.

DVR's Transition Coordinator worked with the NTACT to host a two-day transition academy in Bethel for special education teachers from the Lower Kuskokwim School District. Thirty teachers were provided the opportunity to meet with local and state partners for services to support high school students in achieving graduation and moving into their post-school realities. Teachers were also given tips about transition assessments and writing transition plans. Attendees learned about JOBZ Club and S'Cool Store (transition curriculums provided by DVR), programs for developing entrepreneurship, and ways of incorporating subsistence activities into transition plans. An additional six virtual sessions with NTACT and DVR are incorporated into this training.

DVR's Transition Coordinator presented at the 2019 Alaska State Special Education Conference. This session provided information on how DVR can enhance transition services to prepare students to transition from school to work.

Alaska DEED and school district staff are working with DVR to evaluate the effectiveness of JOBZ Club and S'Cool Store in increasing graduation rates and post-school outcomes for students with disabilities. As SFY2019 is the first year of collecting data at the student level, this will be an on-going evaluation. DVR will also be providing data to Alaska DEED on employers who provide opportunities for high school students with disabilities.

DVR has been extremely successful in providing statewide services to transition age students in urban, rural, and remote locations. This has been accomplished through partnerships with school districts, specialized Pre-Employment Transition Services Community Rehabilitation Providers (CRPs), and other organizations that assist with coordinating transportation and enrollment.

#### k. Annual Estimates

##### Describe:

##### 1. The number of individuals in the State who are eligible for services

The 2018 American Community Survey 1-Year estimates approximately 89,491 individuals, or 12.6% of the Alaskan population between the ages of 18 to 74, experience a disability. This is a significant decrease from the 2016 estimate. Outmigration from Alaska continues due to job loss in the oil and gas industry, and Alaska has been losing about -.12% of its population annually.

DVR serves a portion of the population of individuals with disabilities as some individuals are working and others may not be interested in working. According to the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Research and Analysis Section State Projections, population growth/loss during FFY2020 is expected to range from a low of -.24%, to a middle of .68%, and a high of +1.79, with births being the primary factor in population growth.

Population growth/loss during FFY2021 is expected to range from a low of -.27%, to a middle of .65%, and a high of +1.78, with births being the primary factor in population growth. Using the middle projection rate for both FFY2020 and FFY2021, the estimated number of individuals in the state who are eligible for service are as follows:

FFY2020: 94,706 (+.68%)

FFY2021: 95,325 (+.65%)

## 2. The number of eligible individuals who will receive services under:

### A. The VR Program;

In FFY2019, Alaska DVR provided services to 2,780 individuals, which was an 8.9% decrease from the previous year. The downward trend would suggest that DVR may continue to see a decline. Historic unemployment rates in Alaska have led to a decrease in number of individuals served annually, and the increase of students with disabilities served under Pre-Employment Transition Services have offered early intervention services which have possibly led to a decline in cases.

This estimate includes those who are eligible for receiving services.

Number served by Federal Fiscal Year:

FFY2017 – 3417

FFY2018 – 3107 (-9%)

FFY2019 – 2780 (-8.9%)

Estimates:

FFY2020 – 2533 (-8.9%)

FFY2021 – 2308 (-8.9%)

While FFY2020 and FFY2021 estimates are based on the historical decline in cases, DVR's focus over the next four years will be to increase the number of individuals with disabilities served throughout Alaska. Strategies for increasing individuals served are explained in detail in section 1.2.

### B. The Supported Employment Program; and

For the FFY2019, the Supported Employment Program provided services to 189 individuals with the most significant disabilities. SE cases have decreased along with overall VR program numbers. Low unemployment numbers coupled with stipulations regarding when SE funds could be expended (during employment only) have led to a decrease in numbers.

FFY2017 – 246

FFY2018 – 214 (-8.6%)

FFY2019 – 189 (-8.8%)

Estimates:

FFY2020 – 173 (-8.7%)

FFY2021 – 158 (-8.7%)

While FFY2020 and FFY2021 estimates are based on the historical decline in cases, DVR's focus over the next four years will be to increase the number of individuals with the most significant disabilities served throughout Alaska. Strategies for increasing individuals served under Supported Employment are explained in detail in section 1.2.

### C. Each priority category, if under an order of selection.

DVR was not operating under an Order of Selection during FFY2019, as there was adequate funding and qualified staff to provide services identified in IPEs to all eligible individuals. DVR anticipates this availability of qualified staff and funding will continue during FFY2019 through FFY2021. Throughout the year, DVR will continue to closely monitor expenditures and obligations in relationship to VR participant numbers as well as staffing patterns to ensure DVR's ability to provide VR services to all eligible individuals.

### 3. The number of individuals who are eligible for VR services, but are not receiving such services due to an order of selection; and

DVR is not on an Order of Selection.

### 4. The cost of services for the number of individuals estimated to be eligible for services. If under an order of selection, identify the cost of services for each priority category.

Analysis of Funding:

- The FFY2019 budget beginning October 1, 2018 had a \$780,000 increase in funding from RSA.
- During FFY2019, DVR collected approximately \$700,000 in Social Security Reimbursements. These reimbursements have been averaging about \$950,000 for several years. To continue this level of reimbursement, DVR purchased specific "Ticket Tracking" software. This software tracks all tickets currently outstanding and files the reimbursement paperwork.
- There was adequate Title VI, Part B funding for SE services, including the 50 percent set-aside for youth with the most significant disabilities.
- DVR was able to obtain \$1.2 million in additional FFY19 federal funds, through the re-allotment process and anticipates continuing to request additional federal funds through the re-allotment process for FFY2020 through FFY2022.
- Eligible receiving Title I: 2,365; estimated funds \$4,774,500; average cost of services, \$2,019; and
- Eligible receiving Title VI: 68; estimated funds \$315,000; average cost of services, \$4,632.

### I. State Goals and Priorities

The designated State unit must:

1. Identify if the goals and priorities were jointly developed and agreed to by the State VR agency and the State Rehabilitation Council, if the State has a Council, and jointly agreed to any revisions

DVR and the SVRC developed goals and priorities for the state vocational rehabilitation (VR) program during the strategic planning process. DVR's strategic plan is aligned with the three-year cycle of the CSNA that was just completed, with interim progress assessments regarding goals and priorities.

The strategic planning process is comprehensive and includes defining the agency's mission, principles, goals, priorities, strategies, and measurements. Input for the development of these goals, priorities, and strategies came from the CSNA; public comment taken at the SVCR's quarterly meetings; ongoing consumer satisfaction surveys; and other program evaluation activities including the case file review, management information system reports, and monitoring activities. DVR continuously monitors its progress towards meeting the standards and indicators and makes necessary adjustments to priorities and strategies as required. The goals, priorities, and progress are reviewed quarterly by the DVR Leadership team and discussed with the SVRC at their quarterly meetings. Adjustments are made as required. The current strategic plan is a three-year plan, starting in 2020 and going through 2023.

## 2. Identify the goals and priorities in carrying out the VR and Supported Employment programs

The goals and priorities that were developed for DVR's Strategic Plan beginning PY2020 through PY2023 include:

### Goal 1: Service Delivery –

DVR will deliver high quality vocational rehabilitation services to people with disabilities to assist them in obtaining employment consistent with their career goals.

#### Priority 1.1: Improve employment outcomes to more closely align with high demand jobs

- Review Labor Market Research protocol to ensure validity.
- Ensure Labor Market Research is occurring in cases at IPE when appropriate.
- Train field staff on Career Pathways and RSA expectations for employment and training outcomes.
- Utilize all training opportunities such as AVTEC, UAA, UAF, and UAS, apprenticeships, by educating staff on all opportunities available.
- Engage with AVTEC to ensure staff recognize the opportunities offered.
- Work with employers to ensure opportunities for DVR clients to succeed in high demand jobs.
- Work with Department of Labor Research and Analysis section to ensure staff have access to the most current job forecasts by developing a distribution plan for "Trends" economic forecast magazine, economic development information, etc.
- Provide training to in-house job developers.
- Develop YouTube channel, post clips that the Business Engagement Services Team can bring to employers, show ADA information, and positive examples and experiences from other employers.
- Develop standardized outreach materials for employers.

- Develop standardized FAQs to be publicly available.

Priority 1.2: Evaluate services to individuals who are blind or visually impaired

- Update software and procedures for Business Enterprise Program (BEP) to include SARA.
- Update policies and administrative codes where necessary to ensure BEP meets all regulatory requirements.
- Modernize existing BEP sites with Micro-Markets.
- Evaluate current program to determine gaps and improvements that can be made to better serve this population.
- Inform all regional offices about the BEP program and opportunities for referrals.

Priority 1.3: Evaluate services to individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing

- Evaluate current program to determine gaps and improvements that can be made to better serve this population.

Priority 1.4: Enhance communication with Tribal Partners

- Host face-to-face meetings.
- Create communication plan to increase referrals and shared cases.
  - Ensure information is exchanged between agencies.
  - Identify contact in each region to share information and communicate information.
  - Identify clear chain of command for reporting issues.
- Review MOU and draft changes as agreed upon.

Priority 1.5: Continue to deliver Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS)

- Increase work experience activities and sites.
- Work closely with CRPs and Pre-ETS contractors to align work experiences with high demand jobs.
- Ensure that the expected number of students participating in Pre-ETS matches the CSNA goal.
- Continue to recruit CRPs for providing Pre-ETS services.
- Continue to ensure At-Risk Youth are included in Pre-ETS activities.

Priority 1.6: Improve usage and quality of CRP services in all regions

- Work with CRP Coordinator to develop a comprehensive CRP monitoring plan.

- Ensure Managers are involved in vetting new CRP applicants and in creating corrective action plans.
- Use software to improve service delivery.

Priority 1.7: Continue to provide quality services to rural locations

- Continue to support rural locations with VRC travel.
- Develop rural travel expectations to ensure staff time is effectively utilized.
- Expand services to underserved hubs.
- Start attending events like Alaska Federation of Natives, Native Youth Olympics, South Central Foundation Wellness Fairs, etc.
- Invite TVR Directors to attend rural services meeting.
- Expand use of technology in rural areas.

Priority 1.8: Utilize “Employment First” initiative

- Hire an Employment First Coordinator.
- Increase Supported Employment opportunities.
- Increase the use of Provisional Hire (PH) within the State.
  - Include training at the Hiring Manager level.
  - Meet with other division directors to education on the PH process.
  - Adapt AWARE work status to include PH as a tracking option.
  - NEOGOV links to include PH opportunities when new positions post.
- Use “Job Ready” consistently in all regions and provide training.

Goal 2 – Staff Development: DVR will recruit, employ, retain, and train the most qualified and highly skilled rehabilitation staff.

Priority 2.1: Ensure resources are available for hiring and retaining qualified staff.

- Schedule “all-staff” training sessions for professional staff when feasible.
- Utilize internship programs
- Expand recruitment strategies to fill both VRC and VRA vacancies.
- Ensure all staff are aware of continuing education and advancement opportunities.
- Develop professional development plans for VRC staff.
- Ensure all VRAs receive the VRA Online Training.

Priority 2.2: Ensure on-going staff development and training

- Provide links for training on technology such as Microsoft Office and Outlook, and basic computer training.
- Provide specialized training: FAST, BEST, Blind Services, Deaf/Hard of Hearing, and Evaluation.
- Provide on-going training opportunities for VRAs.
- Rewrite online modules for VRC training.
- Develop on-going education for eligibilities, severity of disabilities, plans, closures, etc.
- Regional Manager training on software and reporting.

Priority 2.3: Continue mentoring and succession planning

- VRCIIs are given opportunities to be in acting RM status.
- Develop specialized desk manuals for unique job duties.

Goal 3 – DVR will continuously evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of organizational systems and identify opportunities to develop innovative solutions for necessary changes

Priority 3.1: Provide ongoing Quality Assurance (QA) and program evaluation activities to ensure integrity of VR Services

- Program evaluation results are reviewed by administrative and management staff.
- Consumer satisfaction responses are analyzed and disseminated to SVRC on a quarterly basis and sent Managers monthly.
- Internal case review process developed and implemented, for both qualitative and quantitative case reviews.
- Develop procedures with internal controls and ensure fidelity and accuracy of data submitted to RSA.
- Create reports in Tableau for Managers to run on demand.
- Help Desk staff will provide on-going support and training by participating in monthly staff meetings and flying to Fairbanks and Juneau semi-annually to meet with staff.
- Develop position paper by February 2020, on the importance of face-to-face case reviews.

Priority 3.2: DVR will meet or exceed state and federal common performance measures (CPMs)

- Establish baseline data for all WIOA required data elements and negotiate with RSA on required CPMs.
- Monitor data collection processes to ensure program fidelity.
- Work with National Clearinghouse to obtain additional education information.

- Work with Leadership to determine appropriate Missions and Measures (State dashboard).

Priority 3.3: DVR will continue to update the Case Management System (AWARE) to provide quality data.

- Help desk team will actively participate in all AWARE user groups and community of Practice group to ensure DVR's workflows are considered when Alliance is creating enhancements to the software.
- Help desk team meeting and thoroughly analyze impact to field and accounting staff with each iteration of RSA-911 data manual, upgrade to the AWARE system or clarification of current regulations by RSA.
- Help desk team works with management team to ensure on-going, accurate data collection by field staff.
- Help desk team coordinates all training of field and other staff and provides training in a timely manner.
- Help desk team routinely run QA on AWARE data to ensure accuracy and consistency.
- Policy, Planning, and Program Evaluation (PP&P) team to evaluate processes for moving to a paperless system for case management reporting and tracking, to include hardware and software purchases that may be necessary for all staff training.
- Incorporate SharePoint in all policy and procedure development.

Priority 3.4: Continue to support SARA communication system.

- Help desk staff will continue support and provide training for SARA.
- Increase staff SARA usage by 10% over the next 6 months.
- Incorporate BEP clients into SARA. Provide training to vendors.
- Incorporate CRPs into SARA.

Priority 3.5: Explore and improve technology usage.

- Replace current Intranet by implementing SharePoint and training staff.
- Explore shared IT staff with DVR and DDS.
- Set up a "Text DVR" number for anyone to request additional information about DVR to increase outreach.

Priority 3.6: Review existing policies and procedures.

- Revise existing policies.
- Obtain SVRC approval on service delivery policies.
- Revise client services procedures.

Goal 4 – DVR will provide leadership in the workforce system

Priority 4.1: Improve communication between the WIOA partners.

- Develop structured communication plan with DETS.
- Develop structured communication plan with Labor.

Priority 4.2: Increase OCS and DVR collaboration.

- Create a scorecard for serving the At-Risk Youth population to determine baseline and progress.

Priority 4.3: Promote senior employment

- Promote senior employment by forming a standing committee between DETS and DVR to determine activities to improve senior employment rates.

3. Ensure that the goals and priorities are based on an analysis of the following areas:

A. The most recent comprehensive statewide assessment, including any updates;

The following priorities derived from the CSNA were incorporated into the Strategic Plan for 2020-2023:

- Providing services to the most severely disabled and supported employment population continues to be a challenge. Long term supports have limited availability.
- Underserved population continues to be rural and remote populations. Finding service providers is especially difficult in rural and remote areas, contributing to those populations being underserved.
- Engaging with WIOA partners to share resources, data, and participants to provide services to the population we serve will be an on-going project. DVR will need to continue to work closely with Job Centers.
- To continue to provide Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) will require working closely with Alaska Department of Education and Early Development (DEED) to provide transition services to as many potentially eligible students as possible, both in urban and rural/remote areas.
- Using the existing data on labor and population trends, high demand job projections, and specific information on the economic health of Alaska, DVR can better target its efforts towards those employers and employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities. This same data can also be used to identify those employment opportunities that may present the greatest challenges for both participants and employers. DVR's focus should be on those outcomes that present the best opportunities for success for everyone involved.
- DVR should continue to strengthen and expand Pre-ETS that more closely align with high demand employment opportunities and continue to work closely with the Alaska Department of Early Education to ensure that DVR services are a part of transition services. In addition, the agency should expand outreach to students with a disability to inform them of the training and career services that DVR offers.

- DVR should expand training and outreach to employers, particularly those in high demand industries. With the additional job developers on staff with DVR, developing better relations with employers will be an opportunity to provide training and education to employers across Alaska.

#### B. The State’s performance under the performance accountability measures of section 116 of WIOA; and

DVR has collected baseline data on employment status at second and fourth quarter after exit as well as median wage at second quarter after exit from UI wage data. DVR is working on getting reliable data on educational attainment, measurable skill gain (MSG), and effectiveness in serving employers. For PY19, RSA wanted negotiated performance measures for MSGs, but the negotiation did not happen. For this report, DVR used the MSG number from PY17 and PY18 to determine a reasonable MSG rate for PY 19, which is 60 MSGs.

#### C. Other available information on the operation and effectiveness of the VR program, including any reports received from the State Rehabilitation Council and findings and recommendations from monitoring activities conducted under section 107.

DVR’s monitoring review was conducted in April 2018. In October of 2019, the draft report was reviewed by management. The findings that required corrective action were:

- Untimely development of the IPE;
- Policies relating to the provision of Pre-ETS services
- Internal controls must include procedures to ensure accurate data collection and financial accountability.
- Ensure SF425 and RSA2 are accurate and that costs charged to the VR award are allowable and allocable.
- Finalize MOU and IFA for the State’s local workforce area.

These corrective action items will all be addressed with RSA’s Alaska State team.

The SVRC publishes an annual report, which helps shape policy by reviewing strategic planning, needs assessment, consumer satisfaction surveys, and ongoing program evaluation. The SVRC has had no significant concerns regarding DVR’s operation and effectiveness.

#### m. Order of Selection

Describe:

1. Whether the designated State unit will implement and order of selection. If so, describe:

##### A. The order to be followed in selecting eligible individuals to be provided VR services

DVR is not on an Order of Selection.

##### B. The justification for the order

DVR is not on an Order of Selection.

### C. The service and outcome goals

DVR is not on an Order of Selection.

### D. Time within which these goals may be achieved for individuals in each priority category within the order; and

DVR is not on an Order of Selection.

### E. How individuals with the most significant disabilities are selected for services before all other individuals with disabilities

DVR is not on an Order of Selection.

### 2. If the designated State unit has elected to serve eligible individuals, regardless of any established order of selection, who require specific services or equipment to maintain employment

DVR is not on an Order of Selection; however, DVR has always supported individuals who are in danger of losing their jobs due to their disability. If DVR did have to implement an order of selection, DVR would serve individuals who required services in order to maintain employment.

### n. Goals and Plans for Distribution of title VI Funds

#### 1. Specify the State's goals and priorities for funds received under section 603 of the Rehabilitation Act for the provision of supported employment services

DVR's goals and priorities as outlined in the PY2020-PY2023 Strategic Plan include:

- Continuing to utilize 50 percent of SE funds for youth with the most significant disabilities.
- Continuing to collaborate with the DETS regarding youth transition programs in the state.
- Partner with the Center for Human Development and the University of Alaska to expand postsecondary education opportunities to youth.
- Continue to collaborate with the Governor's Council on Disabilities and Special Education and the Center for Human Development and distribute transition handbooks to multiple stakeholder groups.
- Progress of goals and priorities will be determined by examination of outlined activities to achieve the goals and priorities. These activities will be monitored quarterly utilizing a working version of DVRs Strategic Plan. Specific DVR staff has been assigned responsibility of all implementation and monitoring of activities.

#### 2. Describe the activities to be conducted, with funds reserved pursuant to section 603(d), for youth with the most significant disabilities, including:

##### A. The provision of extended services for a period not to exceed 4 years; and

DVR Supported Employment funds will be used to provide the following activities to youth with the most significant disabilities:

- Ongoing job supports while the youth is employed.
- Extended services to ensure ongoing support services are provided to maintain employment when the youth is unable to transition to long-term supports through other agencies.
- Extended services may be provided to a youth with a most significant disability for a period of up to 4 years, or until the individual turns 25 years of age.

DVR's cooperative agreement with Senior and Disability Services (SDS) specifically outlines collaboration and that the transition of an individual from DVR to SDS supports must occur at the time for which it is appropriate for the individual, not the agency.

**B. How the State will leverage other public and private funds to increase resources for extended services and expanded supported employment opportunities for youth with the most significant disabilities.**

- Continue to increase the number of Community Work Incentives Coordinators (CWICs) through collaborative CWIC training opportunities.
- Work with the Center for Human Development, the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority, the Governor's Council on Disabilities and Special Education, Senior and Disability Services, and other partners to increase provider capacity for employment services and supports.
- Partner to disseminate information on resources available for people with disabilities to obtain and maintain employment through job fairs, conferences, and other events.
- Encourage natural supports, where appropriate, to ensure the maximum potential for success, especially in rural and remote areas.

**o. State's Strategies**

Describe the required strategies and how the agency will use these strategies to achieve its goals and priorities, support innovation and expansion activities, and overcome any barriers to accessing the VR and the Supported Employment programs (See sections 101(a)(15)(D) and (18)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act and section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA)):

**1. The methods to be used to expand and improve services to individuals with disabilities**

DVR's overarching goals include:

Deliver high quality vocational rehabilitation services to people with disabilities to assist them in obtaining employment consistent with their career goals.

Recruit, employ, retain, and train the most qualified and highly skilled rehabilitation staff.

Continuously evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of organizational systems and identify opportunities to develop innovative solutions for necessary changes

Provide leadership in the workforce system.

These goals and activities listed to achieve these goals will assure DVR is able to expand and improve services to individuals with disabilities.

DVR continues to actively accept feedback from the SVRC regarding consumer satisfaction surveys to assure continuous improvement to all individuals with disabilities. DVR has continued to improve the quality of services provided to consumers by providing staff with ongoing training and education.

Additionally, DVR has developed in-house staff responsible for expanding DVRs presence in local communities for both employment opportunities and to increase referral sources as well. DVR attends all local job fairs whenever possible, the largest being the Veterans job fair every November. DVR staff frequently presents at partnership meetings across the state in order to increase referrals to the program in an effort to expand services across Alaska.

## 2. How a broad range of assistive technology services and devices will be provided to individuals with disabilities at each stage of the rehabilitation process and on a statewide basis

The Division has a policy on Assistive Technology (AT) service delivery throughout the VR process. DVR has established an AT team that examines the use of AT throughout DVR for all individuals. Additionally, this team also looks at how AT can be used to deliver VR services to remote and rural Alaska.

## 3. The outreach procedures that will be used to identify and serve individuals with disabilities who are minorities, including those with the most significant disabilities, as well as those who have been unserved or underserved by the VR program

DVR's most underserved population continues to be rural Alaskans. This has been an ongoing challenge for the Rural Services Team, as there are so few jobs within remote and rural communities. Employment opportunities are much more available in urban areas. The Rural Team strategizes ways to obtain more CRPs in rural areas, which are traditionally underserved. The Business Employment Services Team has been created specifically to provide outreach and training services to employers, with the goal of encouraging more employers to provide employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities. DVR has expanded services to Petersburg, Haines, and Prince of Wales Island due to increased need and has increased the number of counselors within the agency who are providing rural services. Collaboration with the AT team has enabled utilization of available electronic tools and video conferencing. DVR has increased the number of CRPs serving rural Alaska through the provision of Pre-ETS. Work is ongoing in developing qualifications for rural CRPs, as it is difficult to find qualified CRPs in rural areas.

## 4. The methods to be used to improve and expand VR services for students with disabilities, including the coordination of services designed to facilitate the transition of such students from school to postsecondary life (including the receipt of VR services, postsecondary education, employment, and pre-employment transition services)

DVR has built an impressive infrastructure for the delivery of Pre-ETS services and continues to develop new activities to give students a vision of their future. DVR continues to expand its Pre-ETS into rural Alaska through increased coordination with LEAs in rural and remote location. Outreach efforts and strategic partnerships continue to benefit the expansion of Pre-ETS across the state. Based upon the 2016-2018 Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA), DVR set a target goal of serving 585 students with a disability annually. In PY2018 DVR served

944 potentially eligible students with disabilities in over 100 communities across Alaska and expended approximately \$1.64 million on Pre-Employment Transition Services. DVR anticipates being able to continue this level of service annually.

DVR's Pre-Employment Transition Summer Work Program, identified as a promising practice by the Workforce Innovation Technical Assistance Center, continues to expand its reach every year. PY18 had participation from 15 school districts and community agencies providing Pre-ETS work-based learning to over 200 student participants. DVR continues to take advantage of new partnerships to leverage additional funds and resources to enhance its Pre-Employment Transition Services. During PY18 participation in DVR's Explore program almost doubled with 65 participants. Explore is a partnership between DVR and the University of Alaska Southeast College of Career Education that provides students with disabilities hands-on exploration in several high demand, high wage career fields.

#### [5. If applicable, plans for establishing, developing, or improving community rehabilitation programs within the State](#)

Collaboration and partnership with UAA to ensure ongoing training is available to CRPs throughout the state. UAA is in the process of gaining national accreditation from the ACRE to provide employment services training. DVR requires CRPs complete a minimum of 40 hours of ACRE accredited training to meet the minimum requirements to provide basic vocational rehabilitation services.

#### [6. Strategies to improve the performance of the State with respect to the performance accountability measures under section 116 of WIOA](#)

For the accountability measures that involve quarterly wages and percentages, DVR has a data sharing agreement with DOLWD's Unemployment Insurance to procure the data and will be able to report percentages and state wage data for adults and youth. However, DVR has not been able to obtain federal wage data, resulting in lower percentages of participants employed and lower overall wage data targets.

For the accountability measures involving education and credentialing, that information is proving to be much more difficult to obtain. DVR was working to establish the relationship with education that will allow for sharing the schooling/credentialing data, but RSA is requiring only grades or transcripts. DVR is changing internal processes to give counselors direction on how to best obtain this documentation. For education and training being paid through DVR, that information is readily available and will be collected and reported. However, the level of detail that is being required for secondary education does impose a burden of additional staff time to provide that data. Even if this data can be obtained, the work involved in collection and entering into the reporting system is extremely burdensome.

Wages are collected each quarter via an interface between the DVR's case management system and Unemployment Insurance's (UI)'s wage system. DVR utilizes the Ticket Tracker software which identifies all DVR clients from the previous quarter that had an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE). These records are pulled quarterly by DVR staff and temporarily placed into an interface holding area until UI wages are received. After wages are received (usually the eighth day of the month), DVR staff imports those records back into their case management system, AWARE. The case services report, RSA-911, includes client wages as a result from this process. It should be noted that this process does not include wages earned from clients that achieved

competitive integrated employment in the Public sector (Federal wages) nor Self-Employed individuals.

The service to employers metric has been determined and DVR is working with our state WIOA partners to combine all our data for reporting.

In addition, DVR has developed, through SARA, the capability to match participants between WIOA programs to show which participants were participating in other DOLWD core programs.

#### 7. Strategies for assisting other components of the statewide workforce development system in assisting individuals with disabilities

- Currently co-located, four Alaska Job Centers (AJCs).
- Increase collaboration and integrated service delivery with AJCs including monthly meetings between Job Center Managers and Regional Managers.
- Under Section 188, AJC Universal Access, ensure physical and communication accessibility, program accessibility, AT, and AJC staff training is adequate to serve the needs of individuals with disabilities.
- DVR and AJCs have a shared Co-Enrollment policy to ensure services to individuals are maximized effectively.

#### 8. How the agency's strategies will be used to:

##### A. Achieve goals and priorities by the State, consistent with the comprehensive needs assessment;

DVRs 2020 Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA) identified gaps in services that shaped the 2020 Strategic Plan and the goals and priorities for the next three years. DVR Leadership determined the following goals and strategies to assist in filling the gaps identified in the CSNA.

- Deliver high quality vocational rehabilitation services to people with disabilities to assist them in obtaining employment consistent with their career goals.
- Recruit, employ, retain, and train the most qualified and highly skilled rehabilitation staff.
- Continuously evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of organizational systems and identify opportunities to develop innovative solutions for necessary changes
- Provide leadership in the workforce system.
- These goals and activities listed to achieve these goals will assure DVR is able to expand and improve services to individuals with disabilities.
- Additionally, DVR will:
- Build clear routes for students, youth, and adults to careers.
  - Sponsor transition camps throughout Alaska.

- Contract with CRPs to provide pre–employment transition services to students ages 16–21, or younger if transition services are determined necessary by the IEP team.
- Work with Special Education teachers to ensure appropriate referrals.
- Provide outreach to alternative schools and youth correctional facilities.
- Develop multiple paths for employers and workers.
  - Increase outreach to employers.
  - Work with BEST to survey needs and gaps for improved partnerships with employers. Develop training module to ensure staff captures and documents services to employers once final regulations are published with definitions of “services.
  - Support and grow learning opportunities for workers at all stages of life.
    - Work closely and collaborate with AJCs to ensure a smooth referral process between each entity.
    - Work closely with and collaborate with the other core programs to ensure a smooth referral process between programs.
    - Continue to improve outreach to rural areas.
    - Maximize training opportunities by collaborating with other core programs.
    - Have representation on statewide boards like AWIB, the Alaska Mental Health Trust, and the Governor’s Council on Disabilities and Special Education to ensure people with disabilities continue to have a voice in developing learning opportunities.
  - Improve the efficiency and performance of Alaska’s workforce system.
    - Collaborate with statewide data group to develop streamlined enrollment processes across all core programs.
    - Refine referral process to enhance co–investment opportunities between core programs.
    - Meet or exceed negotiated performance measure targets.

#### B. Support innovation and expansion activities; and

- Develop portable, electronic training modules to provide information to employers, based on survey results of needs and gaps.
- Collaborate with statewide data group to develop streamlined enrollment processes across all core programs.

- Continue to provide funding to the Alaska’s State Vocational Rehabilitation Committee (State Rehabilitation Council).

C. Overcome identified barriers relating to equitable access to and participation of individuals with disabilities in the State VR Services Program and the State Supported Employment Services Program.

The largest barrier to equitable access is due to the remoteness of Alaskan communities and limited resources. DVR partners with school districts, Tribal Vocational Rehabilitation Services programs, WIOA core programs, and other local partners in designated hub communities throughout Alaska. Through coordination of services with these partners, DVR can provide VR services to individuals living in rural Alaska. Additionally, DVR has a Rural Services Team that is constantly examining methods for improving service delivery to Alaskans with disabilities residing in rural and remote communities. DVR is also committed to continued efforts to develop CRP capacity in rural Alaska, as well as implementing innovative strategies using Assistive Technology to enhance and encourage continued consumer participation throughout the VR process.

p. Evaluation and Reports of Progress: VR and Supported Employment Goals

Describe:

1. An evaluation of the extent to which the VR program goals described in the approved VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan for the most recently completed program year were achieved. The evaluation must:

A. Identify the strategies that contributed to the achievement of the goals

Goal 1 – Service Delivery: DVR will provide high quality services to all eligible individuals to assist them in obtaining employment consistent with their career goals.

Priority 1 – Expand Pre-Employment Transition Services to students 14-21 (Pre-ETS)

During the 2018/2019 school year, nine transition camps in five school districts and four juvenile justice facilities.

Twenty-eight teacher vendors providing JOBZ Club. Number of student participants 89.

Career Pathways:

Pathways School to Career- career pathways through partnership with career education providers.

For three years we have provided Carpentry Boot Camp for four rural school districts on Prince of Wales Island. One-week summer program with 12 students

For two years provided Explore – a weeklong career exploration of construction, power train technology, and health care through a partnership with University of Alaska Southeast School of Career Education. Sixty-five students participated during the spring of 2019. Ten Explore students started postsecondary education in the fall of 2019.

Eight students in Fairbanks Youth Facility (DJJ) participated in culinary career pathways during summer July 2019. This was possible due to a partnership between DJJ, DVR, and the Fairbanks North Star Borough School District.

DVR facilitated a Health Care Career Connections training to occur in December. Nineteen students have registered, from eight school districts.

#### Entrepreneurship:

A partnership with Alaska Chamber of Commerce/Business Week provides entrepreneurship training. This program was expanded in SFY18 to a second session and in FY19 to a third location in rural Alaska.

Implemented S’Cool Store Small Business Concepts in the spring of 2018. Currently 13 teacher vendors provide S’Cool Store services. Number of student participants 87.

Created a partnership with the Alaska State School for the Deaf 3<sup>rd</sup> annual Bizown through Junior Achievement Deaf Day.

#### Expanding opportunities for work experience:

Summer Work – work experience program currently has 15 vendors, community agencies and school districts, and has provided 145 hours of paid work experience and instruction in soft skills to 212 student participants.

Through a partnership with the Matanuska-Susitna Borough School District (Mat-Su) DVR has provided work experience for 30 students annually.

- Strategies contributing to success:
  - Utilizing strategic partnerships for expanding and enhancing services
  - Leveraging funds from other programs and agencies to expand programing
  - Partnering with postsecondary education and vocational education to enhance programing - industry driven content with “hands-on” learning opportunities
  - Business partnerships have increased opportunities for work-based learning and job exploration
  - Coordinating services with school districts provides access to student participants
  - On-going efforts to maintain relationships with school district staff directly involved with students who experience a disability.
    - Presentations at the Alaska Statewide Special Education Conference
    - Enrolling teachers as vendors for delivery of Pre-ETS services in rural and urban areas.
    - Implementing teacher training. Over 70 teachers were trained during the 2019 school year. Topics were presented to increase their ability to provide effective transition planning, including information on DVR’s mission, and how to provide student preparation to move from school to work through implementation of Pre-ETS services.
    - Alaska Interagency Transition Council (AITC), a partnership between Department of Education and Early Development and DVR, provides access to LEA’s for information on needed programs. Quarterly

newsletter provides coordinated means for disseminating information on Pre-ETS and postsecondary resources.

- JOBZ Club Network maintains a list serve of 276 teachers and stakeholders which is used to distribute, and promote, new and expanded Pre-ETS programming.
- Five counselors in Fairbanks, Anchorage, and Wasilla assigned as Project Search Counselors in high schools.
- DVR transition team includes all VR counselors assigned to high schools, and the transition coordinator continues to meet with them every other month.
- Technical assistance has increased to provide CRPs with strategies towards increasing student participation.
- Continued to explore and expand the use of social media to connect youth to VR services.
- Continued to educate school staff on DVR's mission as it relates to referrals.
- Updated website with information on Pre-ETS opportunities and tools for teachers, including a video for special education teachers.
- Having a dedicated Youth Transition Coordinator.

Priority 2 - Provide all services required under WIOA.

- Strategies contributing to success:
  - DVR worked with other state programs, software vendor and internal staff to plan for the release of regulations that could impact operations. Due to regulations not being available until September 26, 2016, staff training and policy revisions were made after program year had started.
  - Provided staff training in August 2017 explaining new WIOA requirements.
  - Provided additional staff training again in April 2017 to address workflow changes and data collection, based on the PD that was issued in September 2016.

Priority 3 - Improving DVR services in rural Alaska. DVR remains committed to improving services to rural Alaska.

- Strategies contributing to success:
  - Continued partnerships with the AIVRS programs, the local AJCs, and other state agencies providing rural services.
  - The number of counselors assigned to travel on an itinerant basis has increased. Even so, providing services to rural Alaska continues to be a challenge for DVR.

- The 2020 Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment identified rural Alaska as being underserved. This designation ensured the development of strategic goals and activities to address this need.
- Continued expansion of tools and resources that are not available in rural areas such as vocational evaluation tests/assessments for VR counselors to use when traveling.
- DVR counselors participated in Rural Transition Camps.
- Funding available for travel to rural areas.
- Increased number of CRPs working in rural communities. Expedited process for obtaining CRP status.

Priority 4 - Provide evaluation of services offered through DVR.

- Strategies contributing to success:
  - Revision of DVR policies and procedures will require a review of current workflows and processes. These revisions can ensure that QA/QI processes are included, and results reviewed on a regular basis.
  - Provided ongoing and continuous QA/QI to drive additional training.
  - Updated internal control document to provide for continuous QA/QI. Review cases on a more systematic and regular basis, using results to foster an environment of quality and improvement.
  - Surveyed staff to determine issues that may need to be addressed before they become problems.

Priority 5 - Meet or exceed state and federal performance standards.

- Strategies contributing to success:
  - Working with user groups, Community of Practice groups, and other state agencies to ensure that DVR understands the new data requirements and can implement them correctly and provide training to staff that will lead to accurate data collection.
  - Working with the WINTAC to ensure that DVR understands, as much as is possible, RSA requirements for data collection.
  - Continue to accumulate and review baseline data to ensure that negotiations for performance measures are realistic and achievable.
  - Continue to work with other state programs to share best practices.

Priority 6 - Provide effective CRP performance and outcomes.

- Strategies contributing to success:
  - Continue to monitor and evaluate CRP performance through staff surveys and review of case files.

- CRP application process has been revised with the minimum training, education, and experience requirements established for each service, particularly for rural, underserved areas.
- Ongoing meetings scheduled with Managers to obtain feedback on performance of CRPs.

Priority 7 - Deliver quality AT.

- Strategies contributing to success:
  - Continued partnership with Assistive Technologies of Alaska (ATLA) to improve service delivery for AT products within the State.

Priority 8 - Provide quality service delivery for individuals who are SSA beneficiaries and ensure compliance with federal regulation.

- Strategies contributing to success:
  - Ensuring staff is aware of presumption of eligibility of beneficiaries.
  - Providing a benefits analysis to participants who are beneficiaries to ensure their understanding of how income could impact their benefits (informed choice).

Goal 2 – Staff Development: DVR will recruit, employ, retain, and train the most qualified and highly skilled rehabilitation staff.

Priority 1. Recruit and retain qualified staff.

- Strategies contributing to success:
  - Developing consistent statewide tools for training needs.
  - Providing individual training opportunities for professional staff and annual all staff training
  - Providing training budget for funding counselors in graduate level rehabilitation courses.
  - Providing opportunities for CRC accredited courses to enable staff to renew their CRC certification.

Priority 2. Support leadership development and succession planning.

- Strategies contributing to success:
  - The State Department of Administration has developed a two-day course for new VR Managers for leadership excellence.
  - Division staff are provided opportunities to act in administrative positions for short period of time, exposing them to higher level duties.

Goal 3 – DVR will continuously evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of organizational systems and identify opportunities to develop innovative solutions for necessary changes.

Priority 1. Review and revise case review process to include electronic data collection and analysis.

- Strategies contributing to success:
  - Survey tool has been tested and a data compliance review process has been initiated. A full case review is scheduled for early in 2018.
  - Staff understand the need for case reviews to ensure quality data collection and to provide data necessary for improvement(s).

Priority 2. Implement all federally mandated changes to RSA-911 report.

- Strategies contributing to success:
  - Case Management Software is managed by Alliance Enterprises and they have been very responsive to incorporating changes in the data collection.
  - Other State programs have been generous in sharing time, resources, and their interpretation of required elements.
  - Both RSA and Alliance Enterprises have developed edit programs which enable DVR to product error-free reports.
  - Able to plan and execute state-wide training on new data collection requirements.

Priority 3. Evaluate Social Security Reimbursement Process.

- Strategies contributing to success:
  - Ticket Tracker software installed and meets all SSA's reporting requirements.

Goal 4. DVR will provide leadership in the workforce system

Priority 1. Maintain a leadership role in expanding vocational opportunities for Alaskans with disabilities.

- Strategies contributing to success:
  - Working with One-Stop Job Centers to ensure referrals to and from DVR are occurring.
  - DVR presence on appropriate boards.

## B. Describe the factors that impeded the achievement of the goals and priorities

Goal 1 – Service Delivery: DVR will provide high quality services to all eligible individuals to assist them in obtaining employment consistent with their career goals.

Priority 1 – Expand Pre-Employment Transition Services to students 14-21 (Pre-ETS)

- Factors Impeding progress:
  - Teacher turnover is over 35% in rural areas of the state. This requires constant outreach efforts as to the availability of Pre-ETS.
  - Coordination with school districts for implementing programming is difficult.

- Students are “in school” during the day.
- Lack of trained providers in rural areas.
- Distance from resources and available programming is prohibitive for travel in rural Alaska.

Priority 2. Provide all services required under WIOA:

- Factors Impeding progress:
  - Limited guidance from RSA, last minute changes to data collection requirements.
  - Having to train all staff, several times, with limited resources, as guidance documents became available.

Priority 3. Improving DVR services in rural Alaska. DVR remains committed to improving services to rural Alaska.

- Factors impeding progress:
  - Size of the state.
  - Lack of service(s) in rural Alaska.
  - Lack of employment opportunities in rural Alaska.

Priority 4. Provide evaluation of services offered through DVR.

- Factors Impeding progress:
  - Limited staffing with shifting priorities and responsibilities.
  - Shifting data collection elements makes comparisons and trending difficult.

Priority 5. Meet or exceed state and federal performance standards.

- Factors impeding progress:
  - Still capturing baseline data and performance measures have not yet been established.

Priority 6. Provide effective CRP performance and outcomes.

- Factors impeding progress:
  - Difficult to hire CRPs.
  - Many areas of the state are underserved by CRPs, making it difficult to recruit and retain CRPs.
  - adherence to reporting requirements by CRPs.
  - Feedback loop from Managers to CRP Specialist and back is not consistently utilized.

Priority 7. Deliver quality AT.

- Factors impeding progress:
  - None

Priority 8. Provide quality service delivery for individuals who are SSA beneficiaries and ensure compliance with federal regulation.

- Factors impeding progress:
  - None

Goal 2 – Staff Development: DVR will recruit, employ, retain, and train the most qualified and highly skilled rehabilitation staff.

Priority 1. Recruit and retain qualified staff.

- Factors impeding progress:
  - Educational institutions within Alaska lack Bachelor and Master level programs in Rehabilitation Counseling.
  - State’s employment and pay policies make it difficult to recruit new staff.
  - Periodic hiring freezes impact recruiting.
  - Lack of retention of HR staff make the recruiting and hiring process more time consuming and difficult.

Priority 2. Support leadership development and succession planning.

- Factors impeding progress:
  - Lack of availability of local training.
  - Succession planning is difficult, as DVR must work within the State’s hiring practices.
  - This goal has been a challenge due to the State limiting travel to mission critical.
  - Staff turnover.

Goal 3 – DVR will continuously evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of organizational systems and identify opportunities to develop innovative solutions for necessary changes.

Priority 1. Review and revise case review process to include electronic data collection and analysis.

- Factors impeding progress:
  - Having the time to develop new case review processes and survey questions.

Priority 2. Implement all federally mandated changes to RSA-911 report.

- Factors impeding progress:
  - Limited staff time available.
  - Not having a stable data set and CMS data collection tool.

- Staff training.

Priority 3. Evaluate Social Security Reimbursement Process.

- Factors impeding progress:
  - None.

Goal 4 - DVR will provide leadership in the workforce system

Priority 1. Maintain a leadership role in expanding vocational opportunities for Alaskans with disabilities.

- Factors impeding progress:
  - Limited staff time to devote to board and committee memberships.

2. An evaluation of the extent to which the Supported Employment program goals described in the Supported Employment Supplement for the most recent program year were achieved. The evaluation must:

A. Identify the strategies that contributed to the achievement of the goals

- Strategies contributing to success:
  - Continued efforts coordinated with the Governor's Council on Disabilities and Special Education.
  - Continued to work with the Center for Human Development and the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority to increase provider capacity for employment services and supports.
  - Continued to increase use of the Provisional Hire process.

B. Describe the factors that impeded the achievement of the goals and priorities

- Factors impeding progress:
  - Ongoing challenges include the level of funding for I/DD Home and Community Based Services. Funding to Senior and Disability Services (SDS) is being reduced while the cost of plans of care continue to increase. Due to these funding reductions, the waiver waitlist has increased substantially. Through the cooperative agreement, DSDS will be delivering training to DVR staff across the state to ensure both service providers and DVR staff understand the best way to develop plans of care and IPEs. DVR and DSDS have agreed that all individuals are unique in the services they require to obtain employment and that the provision of services and the responsible entity for funding is not prescriptive nor arbitrary. This will result in thoughtful IPEs that give full consideration to each individual's needs, including extended supports for youth. DVR continues to set aside 50% of Title VI, Part B funds for the provision of SE services to youth with the most significant disabilities.

### 3. The VR program's performance on the performance accountability indicators under section 116 of WIOA

DVR has not reported, nor historically collected data, on the six performance accountability indicators under section 116 of WIOA. DVR is unable to predict its future performance on any of the six performance indicators, including the SE program goals, until baseline targets have been established. DVR has data sharing agreements with DOLWD's Unemployment Insurance and Research and Analysis units to establish the data collection necessary for determining baseline indicators and future reporting. As DVR is still accumulating baseline data, only one indicator, MSG rate, are marked as "To Be Determined" in Appendix C of the Combined State Plan, per instructions.

Performance Measure 1: Employment Rate - 2nd quarter after exit.

- DVR has a data sharing agreement with UI but has no mechanism to obtain wage/employment data for federal employees.

Performance Measure 2: Employment Rate - 4th quarter after exit.

- DVR has a data sharing agreement with UI but has no mechanism to obtain wage/employment data for federal employees.

Performance Measure 3: Median Earnings - 2nd quarter after exit.

- DVR has a data sharing agreement with UI but has no mechanism to obtain wage/employment data for federal employees.

Performance Measure 4: Credential Attainment Rate (within 1 year of exit)

- DVR is utilizing SARA, a text messaging software, to automatically send out requests for additional educational attainment after exit.

Performance Measure 5: Measurable Skills Gains.

- DVR will be negotiating this measure with RSA and will indicate that CPM in the Appendix.

Performance measure 6: Effectiveness in Serving Employers.

- DVR has established the effectiveness measures with the other WIOA state partners and have been reporting this as a combined measure.

### 4. How the funds reserved for innovation and expansion (I&E) activities were utilized

DVR sets aside a portion of funds allotted under Section 110 of the Act for development and implementation of innovative approaches to improve the provision of VR services, particularly for individuals with the most significant disabilities. For FFY2019 and through FFY2022, DVR plans on using these funds primarily to support SVRC. The SVRC is a full and active partner in the development of agency policies, regulations, and procedures. The SVRC collaborates with DVR to hold public meetings in different areas around the state each year. These meetings are another way for DVR to identify needs and to gather trend information for strategic planning. DVR also supports the SILC; however, the administration of the SILC has been moved to DHSS SDS, who will assume the responsibility to fully fund the SILC beginning in FY2022. The DVR Director is a member of the SVRC, and the Transition Coordinator for DVR is a member

of the SILC and participates in the development of the State Plan for Independent Living (SPIL).

#### Innovation and Expansion Activities for PY2018

- Support of the SRC: \$ 80,450
- Support of the SILC: \$ 199,996

#### Innovation and Expansion Activities for PY2019

- Support of the SRC: \$ 80,450
- Support of the SILC: \$ 120,000

#### q. Quality, Scope, and Extent of Supported Employment Services

Include the following:

1. The quality, scope, and extent of supported employment services to be provided to individuals with the most significant disabilities, including youth with the most significant disabilities

Goals and Priorities for the PY2019–PY2022 supported employment (SE) program:

1. DVR will provide SE services to eligible individuals.

- DVR will set aside 50 percent of the SE award to provide services to youth with the most significant disabilities.
- DVR will assist 50 SE eligible individuals to obtain competitive employment.
- DVR will be able to provide all the identified required VR services to all SE eligible individuals.
- Explore opportunities for CRPs and other entities to become employment networks to provide long-term supports.
- Work with the community mental health system to increase and establish work-related programs within that system.
- Emphasize community-based, integrated employment settings with the Governor's Council on Disability and Special Education, the Alaska Mental Health Board, community behavioral health programs, and the Alaska Mental Health Trust to increase vocational programs within the mental health service delivery system.

PY2018 SE Program Outcomes:

- DVR provided VR services under an IPE to 200 SE eligible individuals, of which 108 were youth.
- DVR successfully assisted 56 SE eligible individuals in obtaining competitive employment, of which 26 were youth.
- DVR was not on an order of selection and had adequate funding and staff to provide SE services to all eligible individuals.

Strategies contributing to the achievement of the goals:

- Ensure adequate SE funding is available to DVR counselors.
- DVR has continued to support and work with the DETS in the endeavor of AJCs to become Employment Networks.
- DVR has continued to support Project SEARCH.
- DVR has continued to work with the community mental health system to increase and/or to reinstate work related programs within that system of providers.
- DVR is working closely with the Division of Behavioral Health to implement an Individual Placement and Support model as well as the potential for long-term funding for DBH beneficiaries.
- Alaska passed Employment First legislation.

## 2. The timing of transition to extended services

Under reauthorization, the timeframe to provide extended services for SE increased from 18 to 24 months for adults, and up to 48 months for youth with the most significant disabilities. DVR and SDS developed a cooperative agreement in which it was determined that extended services would be provided until the individual had transitioned to stable employment, but typically not to exceed 24 months, unless the individual was a youth with a most significant disability in which then services could be provided for up to 48 months.

## Vocational Rehabilitation (Combined or General) Certifications

### States must provide written and signed certifications that:

1. The (enter the title of authorized representative below) is authorized to submit the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan under title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Rehabilitation Act), as amended by WIOA<sup>13</sup>, and its supplement under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act<sup>14</sup>;

Enter the name of designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate

Alaska Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

2. As a condition for the receipt of Federal funds under title I of the Rehabilitation Act for the provision of VR services, the (enter the title of authorized representative below)<sup>15</sup> agrees to operate and administer the State VR Services Program in accordance with the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan<sup>16</sup>, the Rehabilitation Act, and all applicable

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<sup>13</sup> Public Law 113-128.

<sup>14</sup> Unless otherwise stated, "Rehabilitation Act" means the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by WIOA, signed into law on July 22, 2014.

<sup>15</sup> All references in this plan to "designated State agency" or to "the State agency" relate to the agency identified in this paragraph.

<sup>16</sup> No funds under title I of the Rehabilitation Act may be awarded without an approved VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan in accordance with section 101(a) of the Rehabilitation Act.

regulations<sup>17</sup>, policies, and procedures established by the Secretary of Education. Funds made available under section 111 of the Rehabilitation Act are used solely for the provision of VR services and the administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan;

Enter the name of designated State agency

Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development

3. As a condition for the receipt of Federal funds under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act for supported employment services, the designated State agency agrees to operate and administer the State Supported Employment Services Program in accordance with the supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan<sup>18</sup>, the Rehabilitation Act, and all applicable regulations<sup>19</sup>, policies, and procedures established by the Secretary of Education. Funds made available under title VI are used solely for the provision of supported employment services and the administration of the supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan;

4. The designated State agency and/or the designated State unit has the authority under State law to perform the functions of the State regarding the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement;

5. The State legally may carry out each provision of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement.

6. All provisions of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement are consistent with State law.

7. The (enter the name of authorized representative below) has the authority under State law to receive, hold, and disburse Federal funds made available under the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement;

Enter the name of authorized representative below

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8. The (enter the title of authorized representative below) has the authority to submit the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and the supplement for Supported Employment services;

Enter the title of authorized representative below

Director, Alaska Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

9. The agency that submits the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement has adopted or otherwise formally approved the plan and its supplement.

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<sup>17</sup> Applicable regulations, in part, include the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) in 34 CFR parts 76, 77, 79, 81, and 82; 2 CFR part 200 as adopted by 2 CFR part 3474; and the State VR Services program regulations.

<sup>18</sup> No funds under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act may be awarded without an approved supported employment supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan in accordance with section 606(a) of the Rehabilitation Act.

<sup>19</sup> Applicable regulations, in part, include the citations in footnote 6.

Certification Signature

Signatory information	Enter Signatory information in this column
Name of Signatory	Duane Mayes
Title of Signatory	Director, Alaska Division of Vocational Rehabilitation
Date Signed	February 27, 2020

**Assurances**

The designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate and identified in the State certifications included with this VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement, through signature of the authorized individual, assures the Commissioner of the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA), that it will comply with all of the requirements of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement, as set forth in sections 101(a) and 606 of the Rehabilitation Act. The individual authorized to submit the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement makes the following assurances:

**The State Plan must provide assurances that:**

<b>The State Plan must include</b>	
1. Public Comment on Policies and Procedures: The designated State agency assures it will comply with all statutory and regulatory requirements for public participation in the VR Services Portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, as required by section 101(a)(16)(A) of the Rehabilitation Act.	Yes
2. Submission of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and Its Supplement: The designated State unit assures it will comply with all requirements pertaining to the submission and revisions of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement for the State Supported Employment Services program, as required by sections 101(a)(1), (22), (23), and 606(a) of the Rehabilitation Act; section 102 of WIOA in the case of the submission of a unified plan; section 103 of WIOA in the case of a submission of a Combined State Plan; 34 CFR 76.140.	Yes
3. The designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate, assures it will comply with the requirements related to: Administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan:	Yes
3.a. The establishment of the designated State agency and designated State unit, as required by section 101(a)(2) of the Rehabilitation Act	Yes
3.b. The establishment of either a State independent commission or State Rehabilitation Council, as required by section 101(a)(21) of the Rehabilitation Act. The designated State agency or designated State unit, as applicable (A or B must be selected):	
3.b.(A) "is an independent State commission" (Yes/No)	No
3.b.(B) "has established a State Rehabilitation Council" (Yes/No)	Yes
3.c. Consultations regarding the administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, in accordance with section 101(a)(16)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act	Yes
3.d. The financial participation by the State, or if the State so elects, by the State and local agencies, to provide the amount of the non-Federal share of the cost of carrying out the VR program in accordance with section 101(a)(3)	Yes
3.e. The local administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, in accordance with section 101(a)(2)(A) of the Rehabilitation Act. Select yes or no, as appropriate, to identify if the designated State agency allows for the local administration of VR funds (Yes/No)	No

<b>The State Plan must include</b>	
3.f. The shared funding and administration of joint programs, in accordance with section 101(a)(2)(A)(ii) of the Rehabilitation Act. Select yes or no, as appropriate, to identify if the designated State agency allows for the shared funding and administration of joint programs (Yes/No)	No
3.g. Statewideness and waivers of statewideness requirements, as set forth in section 101(a)(4) of the Rehabilitation Act. Is the designated State agency requesting or maintaining a waiver of statewideness for one or more services provided under the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan? (Yes/No) See Section 2 of this VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan	No
3.h. The descriptions for cooperation, collaboration, and coordination, as required by sections 101(a)(11) and (24)(B); and 606(b) of the Rehabilitation Act	Yes
3.i. All required methods of administration, as required by section 101(a)(6) of the Rehabilitation Act	Yes
3.j. The requirements for the comprehensive system of personnel development, as set forth in section 101(a)(7) of the Rehabilitation Act	Yes
3.k. The compilation and submission to the Commissioner of statewide assessments, estimates, State goals and priorities, strategies, and progress reports, as appropriate, and as required by sections 101(a)(15), 105(c)(2), and 606(b)(8) of the Rehabilitation Act	Yes
3.l. The reservation and use of a portion of the funds allotted to the State under section 110 of the Rehabilitation Act for the development and implementation of innovative approaches to expand and improve the provision of VR services to individuals with disabilities, particularly individuals with the most significant disabilities	Yes
3.m. The submission of reports as required by section 101(a)(10) of the Rehabilitation Act	Yes
4. Administration of the Provision of VR Services: The designated State agency, or designated State unit, as appropriate, assures that it will:	
4.a. Comply with all requirements regarding information and referral services in accordance with sections 101(a)(5)(D) and (20) of the Rehabilitation Act	Yes
4.b. Impose no duration of residence requirement as part of determining an individual's eligibility for VR services or that excludes from services under the plan any individual who is present in the State in accordance with section 101(a)(12) of the Rehabilitation Act	Yes
4.c. Provide the full range of services listed in section 103(a) of the Rehabilitation Act as appropriate, to all eligible individuals with disabilities in the State who apply for services in accordance with section 101(a)(5) of the Rehabilitation Act? (Yes/No)	Yes
4.d. Determine whether comparable services and benefits are available to the individual in accordance with section 101(a)(8) of the Rehabilitation Act	Yes
4.e. Comply with requirements regarding the provisions of informed choice for all applicants and eligible individuals in accordance with section 102(d) of the Rehabilitation Act	Yes
4.f. Comply with requirements regarding the provisions of informed choice for all applicants and eligible individuals in accordance with section 102(d) of the Rehabilitation Act	Yes
4.g. Provide vocational rehabilitation services to American Indians who are individuals with disabilities residing in the State, in accordance with section 101(a)(13) of the Rehabilitation Act	Yes
4.h. Comply with the requirements for the conduct of semiannual or annual reviews, as appropriate, for individuals employed either in an extended employment setting in a community rehabilitation program or any other employment under section 14(c) of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938, as required by section 101(a)(14) of the Rehabilitation Act	Yes
4.i. Meet the requirements in sections 101(a)(17) and 103(b)(2) of the Rehabilitation Act if the	Yes

<b>The State Plan must include</b>	
State elects to construct, under special circumstances, facilities for community rehabilitation programs	
4.j. With respect to students with disabilities, the State,	Yes
4.j.i. Has developed and will implement,	
4.j.i.I. Strategies to address the needs identified in the assessments; and	Yes
4.j.i.II. Strategies to achieve the goals and priorities identified by the State, to improve and expand vocational rehabilitation services for students with disabilities on a statewide basis; and	Yes
4.j.ii. Has developed and will implement strategies to provide pre-employment transition services (sections 101(a)(15) and 101(a)(25))	Yes
5. Program Administration for the Supported Employment Title VI Supplement:	
5.a. The designated State unit assures that it will include in the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan all information required by section 606 of the Rehabilitation Act	Yes
5.b. The designated State agency assures that it will submit reports in such form and in accordance with such procedures as the Commissioner may require and collects the information required by section 101(a)(10) of the Rehabilitation Act separately for individuals receiving supported employment services under title I and individuals receiving supported employment services under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act	Yes
5.c. The designated state unit will coordinate activities with any other State agency that is functioning as an employment network under the Ticket to Work and Self-Sufficiency program under Section 1148 of the Social Security Act	Yes
6. Financial Administration of the Supported Employment Program:	
6.a. The designated State agency assures that it will expend no more than 2.5 percent of the State's allotment under title VI for administrative costs of carrying out this program; and, the designated State agency or agencies will provide, directly or indirectly through public or private entities, non-Federal contributions in an amount that is not less than 10 percent of the costs of carrying out supported employment services provided to youth with the most significant disabilities with the funds reserved for such purpose under section 603(d) of the Rehabilitation Act, in accordance with section 606(b)(7)(G) and (H) of the Rehabilitation Act	Yes
6.b. The designated State agency assures that it will use funds made available under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act only to provide supported employment services to individuals with the most significant disabilities, including extended services to youth with the most significant disabilities, who are eligible to receive such services; and, that such funds are used only to supplement and not supplant the funds provided under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act, when providing supported employment services specified in the individualized plan for employment, in accordance with section 606(b)(7)(A) and (D), of the Rehabilitation Act	Yes
7. Provision of Supported Employment Services:	
7.a. The Designated State Agency Assures That It Will Provide Supported Employment Services as Defined in Section 7(39) of the Rehabilitation Act	Yes
7.b. The designated State agency assures that:	
7.b.i. The comprehensive assessment of individuals with significant disabilities conducted under section 102(b)(1) of the Rehabilitation Act and funded under title I of the Rehabilitation Act includes consideration of supported employment as an appropriate employment outcome, in accordance with the requirements of section 606(b)(7)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act	Yes
7.b.ii. An individualized plan for employment that meets the requirements of section 102(b) of the Rehabilitation Act, which is developed and updated with title I funds, in accordance with sections 102(b)(3)(F) and 606(b)(6)(C) and (E) of the Rehabilitation Act	Yes

### Vocational Rehabilitation Program (Combined or General) Performance Indicators

Performance Indicators	PY 2020 Expected Level	PY 2020 Negotiated Level	PY 2021 Expected Level	PY 2021 Negotiated Level
Employment (Second Quarter After Exit)	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit)	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Credential Attainment Rate	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Measurable Skill Gains	18.0%	21.0%	18.0%	22.0%
Effectiveness in Serving Employers	NA <sup>1</sup>	NA <sup>1</sup>	NA <sup>1</sup>	NA <sup>1</sup>

*<sup>1</sup>“Effectiveness in Serving Employers” is still being piloted and this data will not be entered for 2020 State Plans.*

## VII. Program-Specific Requirements for Combined State Plan Partner Programs

States choosing to submit a Combined State Plan must provide information concerning the six core programs—the Adult program, Dislocated Worker program, Youth program, Wagner-Peyser Act program, Adult Education and Family Literacy Act program, and the Vocational Rehabilitation program—and also submit relevant information for any of the eleven partner programs it elects to include in its Combined State Plan. When a State includes a Combined State Plan partner program in its Combined State Plan, it need not submit a separate plan or application for that particular program. 24 If included, Combined State Plan partner programs are subject to the “common planning elements” in Sections II-IV of this document, where specified, as well as the program-specific requirements for that program.

[24] States that elect to include employment and training activities carried out under the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) Act (42 U.S.C. 9901 et seq.) under a Combined State Plan would submit all other required elements of a complete CSBG State Plan directly to the Federal agency that administers the program. Similarly, States that elect to include employment and training activities carried by the Department of Housing and Urban Development would submit all other required elements of a complete State Plan for those programs directly to the Federal agency that administers the program.

### Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP)

(OMB Control No. 1205-0040)

#### a. Economic Projections and Impact

1. Discuss long-term projections for jobs in industries and occupations in the State that may provide employment opportunities for older workers. (20 CFR 641.302(d)) (May alternatively be discussed in the economic analysis section of strategic plan.)

See the economic analysis section under Part II - Strategic Elements for the full strategic plan discussion on long-term projections for jobs in industries and occupations that may provide employment opportunities. SCSEP priority is for Alaskans to have universal access to employment, skill-building and training opportunities that lead to jobs with family sustaining wages, while meeting critical employer and industry needs. The program’s goals are to foster individual economic self-sufficiency, provide community service opportunities, offer vocational training to those who are not job ready, and increase participation in unsubsidized employment for people age 55 years and older with barriers to employment. Alaska continues to need older workers to help maintain a reliable, dedicated workforce as workers are in demand throughout Alaska’s economy across all industries and in all occupations.

2. Discuss how the long-term job projections discussed in the economic analysis section of strategic plan relate to the types of unsubsidized jobs for which SCSEP participants will be trained and the types of skill training to be provided. (20 CFR 641.302(d))

Alaska continues to develop the State’s resources and maximize its human capital. This is accomplished with the ongoing collaborative engagement of: AWIB, ACoA, local industries, State universities, vocational educational centers, organized labor, economic development representatives, educators, tribal entities, community and faith-based organizations, as well as regional and local officials. Currently, about 23 percent of the SCSEP participants are accepting

employment in office and administrative services; 15 percent in retail, sales, and related; 12 percent in transportation and material moving; 11 percent in community and social services; 7 percent in food preparation and service; with the remaining 32 percent in miscellaneous sectors. Alaska employers continue to hire older workers with a firm foundation of both basic employability skills and specific technical knowledge for occupations at all levels of education and training. Alaska is aware of the need to improve the training and preparation that individuals receive for jobs that are in demand. Strategies include: identifying competencies that workers must have to do their jobs effectively, helping participants build specific skills, and assessing their work to ensure that they have the capacity to perform duties or tasks competently and to develop techniques that focus on infrastructure, investment, and talent development.

3. Discuss current and projected employment opportunities in the State (such as by providing information available under §15 of the Wagner-Peyser Act (29 U.S.C. 491-2) by occupation), and the types of skills possessed by eligible individuals. (20 CFR 641.325(c))

Current and projected employment opportunities are found in health care, community and social services, personal care and service, sales, production occupations/industries, food preparation and serving, education, training, transportation and material moving occupations (logistics). Other employment opportunities include management, professional, and information occupations. Once participants have posted their skills-based resume into Alaska's virtual employment system, they will receive a system-generated notification of new job postings that require skills like those reflected in their resume. The types of skills that need to be developed and possessed by work ready SCSEP individuals are verbal communication skills, teamwork skills, analytical skills, and computer skills, plus initiative and a strong work ethic.

#### b. Service Delivery and Coordination

1. A description of actions to coordinate SCSEP with other programs. This may alternatively be discussed in the State strategies section of the strategic plan, but regardless of placement in document, must include:

A. Planned actions to coordinate activities of SCSEP grantees with WIOA title I programs, including plans for using the WIOA one-stop delivery system and its partners to serve individuals aged 55 and older. (20 CFR 641.302(g), 641.325(e))

Alaska SCSEP has been an active partner within the One-Stop delivery system for the past 15 years and works to improve coordination between SCSEP and WIOA at regional meetings with core program managers. Bi-monthly, SCSEP meets with WIOA program coordinators to ensure advancement of WIOA services and discuss enhancement between each other's services. SCSEP works with its integrated partners to ensure that participants understand that there are many services available from WIOA programs. SCSEP has developed an integrated system of case management plans that are braided to address the requirement of grant funds and needs of participants and employers. All partners accept each other's paperwork and case notes to assist the participant. The case managers work with participants and employment service partners to develop individual training plans.

SCSEP planned actions with WIOA and other programs are to provide labor market information, job listings, information on partner programs, and individualized services such as comprehensive and specialized assessments, development of individual employment plans, career counseling, career planning, or workforce preparation activities. Some SCSEP participants

are assigned to an Alaska Job Center to help ensure that older workers are aware of SCSEP training and to help them find local employment opportunities in their community.

**B. Planned actions to coordinate activities of SCSEP grantees with the activities being carried out in the State under the other titles of the Older Americans Act (OAA). (20 CFR 641.302(h))**

SCSEP continues to have a strong working relationship between the Older Americans Act and Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act programs regarding the long-term projections for employment opportunities for older workers, as Alaska's senior population continues to grow along with the needs of employers for older workers in health care and social services. Both the Alaska Workforce Investment Board (AWIB) and the Alaska Commission on Aging (ACoA) strategies to keep pace with workforce needs are through planning, advocacy, public awareness efforts, and collaboration with other organizations focused on the well-being of older Alaskans.

Joint actions that coordinate activities of SCSEP grantees include following labor directives and OAA guidance in developing the workforce needs. SCSEP is aligned with the state's commitment to economic development, and its workforce development programs rely on the broad strategic policy decisions of the AWIB and ACoA to clarify the relationship between programs and economic development efforts. In fact, the State has just completed its four-year Plan on Aging under the Older Americans Act and the Plan has been approved for the period from October 1, 2019 through September 30, 2023. SCSEP was an active partner in its development, see [http://dhss.alaska.gov/acoa/Documents/ACoA\\_StatePlan\\_FY2020-FY2023.pdf](http://dhss.alaska.gov/acoa/Documents/ACoA_StatePlan_FY2020-FY2023.pdf)

The specific goals include: promote healthy aging and provide access to comprehensive and integrated health care; ensure seniors are financially secure; protect vulnerable seniors from abuse, neglect, self-neglect, and exploitation; ensure seniors have access to quality, affordable, accessible, safe, and appropriate housing, including senior housing, across the continuum of care; and provide seniors with the highest quality of life. This OAA plan was developed alongside several existing and collaborating planning efforts: Alaska's Roadmap to Address Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias; Alaska Core Competencies for Direct Care Workers in Health and Human Services; State Plan for Independent Living; Comprehensive Integrated Mental Health Program Plan; Alaska Health Workforce Coalition 2017-2021 Action Agenda; and Alaska Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Plan.

SCSEP's service delivery plan and coordination includes working directly with other OAA partner agencies in providing services to those seniors most in need or by giving them a referral to OAA Titles III (Supportive Services, Nutrition, Disease Prevention/Health Promotion and Caregiver Programs), VI (Native American Programs and Elder Services), and VII (Elder Rights Programs). While multiple state agencies provide services to Alaska seniors, the Department of Health & Social Services (DHSS) is the State of Alaska's designated state unit on aging. The program works directly with the ACoA to plan and coordinate services with all other OAA programs and staff to better support not only employment, but also health, wellness, and independence for seniors. Partners will continue to work together on our state plan goals and needs assessment.

For example, each quarter at ACoA meetings, the state's SCSEP coordinator meets with other State directors and coordinators to ensure that SCSEP activities statewide are leveraging partnerships with: Aging and Disability Resource Centers, Senior Home and Community Based programs, Nutrition, Transportation, Support Services, Adult Day Service, National Family

Caregiver Support programs, the Alzheimer's Disease and Related Disorder Education and Support programs, Senior Residential Services, Medicare Information services, Legal Assistance, Alaska Legal Services, Consumer Choice, Medicaid Waiver programs, Nursing Facility Transition programs, Health and Disease Prevention programs, Adult Protective Services, etc. Referrals are made to all appropriate services to assist the participants as needed. These quarterly meetings are held statewide in various locations and via audioconference to ensure ongoing collaboration and communication with key organizations.

[C. Planned actions to coordinate SCSEP with other private and public entities and programs that provide services to older Americans, such as community and faith-based organizations, transportation programs, and programs for those with special needs or disabilities. \(20 CFR 641.302\(i\)\)](#)

SCSEP coordinates with 57 host sites and leverages resources to ensure successful outcomes for participants that foster individual economic self-sufficiency and promote useful opportunities in community service activities. The State provides a wide range of programs and services to seniors, spanning multiple divisions and other private and public entities. SCSEP works closely with DVR to ensure those with special needs or disabilities are enrolled in community service training to work. Once a participant is deemed work ready, DVR's provisional hire process and SCSEP work directly with recruitment staff to obtain necessary approval to hire in nine steps. The provisional hire may be used for any State permanent or non-permanent positions.

The teamwork provided to participants at the training sites as seniors are taken under host site wings and thoughtfully mentored become a life-changing experience. SCSEP is also an enormous value for seniors experiencing isolation and loneliness. The program works statewide with food banks, Alaska Disability and Resource Centers, housing and transportation agencies, public assistance, faith-based organizations, and many non-profits to reach those most in need and to provide wrap-around services.

[D. Planned actions to coordinate SCSEP with other labor market and job training initiatives. \(20 CFR 641.302\(j\)\)](#)

SCSEP continues to coordinate with other labor programs, initiatives, and entities in an ongoing effort to train Alaska's workforce and to maximize its human capital. These ongoing partnerships have yielded important new participant services and resources for older adults with gaps in work history and limited educational experience who wish to enter or re-enter the workforce. Actions to coordinate initiatives begin with planning and delivery of services at the Veterans Job Fair, Disability Job Fair, or by working directly with the Business Employment Services Team (BEST) team for provisional hires. The program requires that all participants attend job fairs in their communities, so they are aware of local employment opportunities or job training initiatives and skills needed to obtain positions.

[E. Actions to ensure that SCSEP is an active partner in the one-stop delivery system and the steps the State will take to encourage and improve coordination with the one-stop delivery system. \(20 CFR 641.335\)](#)

SCSEP is managed by DOLWD's Division of Employment and Training Services (DETS), which administers Title III, Wagner-Peyser funded employment services and delivers service in 14 AJCs. SCSEP has been fully integrated into the AJCs for more than 15 years and the close relationship between WIOA, Wagner-Peyser, and its core and required partners is seamless. This partnership ensures access to other employment services both to individuals and communities

throughout the state. SCSEP is collocated within AJC and it is beneficial, as referrals happen between all programs as older workers often needs additional assistance with resume and interview workshops, mock interview, assessments, testing for credentials, and other community resources for successful job placement.

The State recognizes the need for reliable older workers in the workforce and ensures that SCSEP is an active partner in the one-stop delivery system. Key organizations utilize Alaska Job Centers (AJCs) for meeting areas, training needs, employment searches, individual employment plan development, and general communication at partner meetings. Positive coordination continues within the one-stop delivery system with core and required agencies delivering training and employment services to seniors.

#### [F. Efforts to work with local economic development offices in rural locations.](#)

Alaska's SCSEP efforts to reach out to and engage employers in the development and promotion of opportunities to participants is accomplished by working with them directly through AJC business connection services. Staff provide outreach to promote SCSEP, such as presentations at local chambers of commerce, senior centers, partner meetings, and other local organizations that serve seniors. Local organizations are important to SCSEP and provide many employment opportunities in health care, tourism, and seasonal positions.

#### [2. The State's long-term strategy for engaging employers to develop and promote opportunities for the placement of SCSEP participants in unsubsidized employment. \(20 CFR 641.302\(e\)\) \(May alternatively be discussed in the State strategies section of strategic plan.\)](#)

Alaska's long-term strategy for engaging employers to develop and promote opportunities for the placement of SCSEP participants in unsubsidized employment is to foster regional collaboration among job centers, education institutions, labor, and non-profits, and to work with employers to determine local or regional hiring needs that informs responsive training programs that lead to employment. Alaska's strategy for engaging employers in the development and promotion of opportunities for seniors is to work directly with them as we develop and train participants for them to hire. The program remains focused on service delivery that is integrated into the state's workforce investment system and senior service system. Skilled AJC and project operator staff provide quality services to older workers. This strategy of working directly with employers to increase the hiring of seniors has been a win-win for both participants and employers. Employers have reported high satisfaction levels with SCSEP participants who have entered unsubsidized employment. Employers have also reported that participants have great work habits, problem solving skills, the ability to work with others, and adaptability to change with business needs. Alaska's long-term strategy is to continue reaching out to workforce development partners, the business community, and senior service partners to ensure successful outcomes for older workers and Alaskan businesses alike. Without SCSEP services, many of our eligible seniors would not have achieved employment. Once trained, employers state that these older workers are better educated and more computer savvy. They bring vast experience, high work ethics, low turnover rates, and knowledge.

#### [3. The State's long-term strategy for serving minority older individuals under SCSEP. \(20 CFR 641.302 \(c\)\)](#)

The State of Alaska workforce, like its population, is diverse culturally and racially. Our population growth has brought a shift in our demographics resulting in the growth of minority populations. This knowledge of the State's workforce gives us an awareness of how and where to

continue to change or to increase participation of minority individuals. A barrier to keeping seniors from program services is their modest incomes that place them just above the SCSEP income eligibility limit as this program is not able to enroll them for assistance regardless of their need. Alaska strives to provide services to the greatest possible number of participants, regardless of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, political affiliation, belief, marital status, changes in marital status, pregnancy, or parenthood under a state administered program.

The long-term strategy for serving minorities is working with partners to ensure that everyone is given service. All partners are working together and using a referral process with the partners of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, State Training Employment Program, Public Assistance, Public Housing, Corrections, and the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation. These local partners usually work with the participant first to see if they can place them in open employment positions based on their job skills. Partners have agreed to share their case notes and employment plans. SCSEP continues to operate the program through AJCs, sub-recipients, and the program coordinator to extend employment services to cover the entire State. The Alaska race population estimates of 2018 and percent of enrollment based on race.

Alaska Race	2018 Populations over 55 years old	2018 Percent of Enrollment	PY 18 Served
White (non-Hispanic)	75.78%	58.71%	118
Black/African American	2.64%	9.45%	19
American Indian/Alaska Native	11.82%	26.37%	53
Asian	6.32%	1.49%	3
Hispanic	3.30%	1.49%	3
Pacific Islander	0.64%	0.50%	1
Two or More Races	2.80%	1.99%	4

Below is a breakdown of Alaskan seniors by age, with data provided by the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development Research and Analysis Section.

Age	Total	Male	Female
55-59	51,366	26,456	24,910
60-64	47,679	24,287	23,392
65-69	36,095	18,828	17,267
70-74	23,205	11,817	11,388
75-79	13,490	6,691	6,799
80-84	7,936	3,644	4,292
85-89	4,252	1,688	2,564
90+	2,326	787	1,539
Total	186,349	94,198	92,151

This is the second year in a row there has been a decline in total population, which is now about 736,000 — down from 740,000 in 2016. Yet seniors continue to increase in Alaska. In 2016 there were about 182,034 seniors 55 and over compared to 186,349 in 2018. This means a growth of 4,315 more seniors in Alaska.

4. A list of community services that are needed and the places where these services are most needed. Specifically, the plan must address the needs and location of those individuals most in need of community services and the groups working to meet their needs. (20 CFR 641.330)

The types of seniors who are most in need of the SCSEP are widowed and divorced persons, minorities, high-school dropouts, veterans, persons not eligible for Social Security benefits, persons with a limited work history, and seniors on fixed low incomes. SCSEP operates where there is the greatest need relative to participants, host agencies, and employers. SCSEP-funded services remain available statewide via the AJCs and sub-recipients. These older workers need to find information and support to help them adapt to changing work arrangements, consider prospects for entrepreneurship, and acquire new technology and digital literacy skills. Other community services needed are mental health and financial literacy.

The areas with the greatest need for SCSEP-funded services are Anchorage, Fairbanks, Matanuska-Susitna, Kenai Peninsula, and Juneau, as so many seniors relocate to these regions to be near medical care. These areas also have the greatest need of SCSEP services because of the social isolation of older individuals living in these areas and the limited employment opportunities that are available due to the recent recession. In addition, older individuals may not have access to public transportation. Private transportation issues are compounded by fuel costs, vehicle maintenance costs, and the time and/or distance involved in traveling between a participant's home and the training site. SCSEP projects must consider these additional factors when a participant is assigned to a host agency. Regional economic challenges facing older Alaskans include income insecurity, the need for more reliable access to health care and long-term care supports, a shortage of sufficient senior services and health care services workforce to meet future needs, the need for emergency preparedness for a wide range of potential disasters, and soaring energy and utility costs. The supportive services needed for SCSEP participants are employment assistance, transportation, meals, information referrals, housing, health care, utility bill assistance, training, food assistance, and eyeglasses. The groups working with SCSEP on meeting senior needs are: the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services, Senior and Disabilities Services, Governor's Council on Disabilities and Special Education, Alaska Mental Health Trust, faith based organizations, food banks, senior centers, vocational training centers, and the University of Alaska.

5. The State's long-term strategy to improve SCSEP services, including planned long-term changes to the design of the program within the State, and planned changes in the use of SCSEP grantees and program operators to better achieve the goals of the program. This may include recommendations to the Department as appropriate. (20 CFR 641.302(k))

The long-term strategies to improve program goals and services gives the program an opportunity to work directly with its partners in education, industry, workforce development, economic development, and the public. SCSEP strategies include identifying competencies that workers must have to do their jobs effectively, helping workers build specific skills, and assessing their work to ensure that they have the capacity to perform duties or tasks competently. Many of the participants' former work skills are transferable; however, most participants need computer training to be able to apply for work and transition into today's workforce. The long-term strategy to improve SCSEP services is to link coursework and training to ensure that participants understand what is expected in the workplace and the types of work demands that are required of them. SCSEP attests that it and its partners have been involved in updating WIOA Combined Plan and policy development.

The WIOA Combined Plan for Alaska long-term strategy to improve SCSEP services emphasizes sector partnerships, career pathways, cross-program data and measurement, and job-driven investments with workforce partners. Alaska's plan stresses the importance of education, training, credentials, and skill attainment. Its joint plan addresses economic self-sufficiency of workers by aligning workforce development with education and economic development.

Another long-term strategy to improve SCSEP services is to include discussion with participants on financial and work incentives, to provide information on Social Security 1619b Medicaid While Working, and to explore specialized work incentives through programs including Ticket to Work, Impairment-Related Work Expenses, Blind Work Expenses, and Plan to Achieve Self-Support, and to provide referrals to those in need of these services.

#### 6. The State's strategy for continuous improvement in the level of performance for SCSEP participants' entry into unsubsidized employment, and to achieve, at a minimum, the levels specified in OAA Section 513(a)(2)(E)(ii). (20 CFR 641.302(f))

The State's strategy for continuous improvement includes collaboration and integration into the state's larger workforce development system and using the SCSEP Performance and Results QPR System (SPARQ) and other program data to drive decisions on services offered and industries targeted. Incorporating these elements into program planning and operations prepares SCSEP participants for self-sustaining employment and economic stability after program exit. Other strategies include strengthening initial assessments of participant skills, knowledge, interests, aptitudes, and qualities, and defining career objectives that are relevant for the participant's interests and abilities and local business needs.

#### c. Location and Population Served, including Equitable Distribution

##### 1. A description of the localities and populations for which projects of the type authorized by title V are most needed. (20 CFR 641.325 (d))

Alaska is 50<sup>th</sup> in the nation for unemployed people and its unemployment rate is 6.2 percent. The state has registered over-the-year job gains for 13 straight months after losing jobs for the prior three years. The gains are small, hovering around half a percentage point. Alaska has lost employment opportunities due to low oil prices, and is also impacted by its remoteness, climate, large geographic size, and small economy. The census regions most in need of Title V services are: Anchorage, Fairbanks, Matanuska-Susitna, Kenai Peninsula, and Juneau. Training is available statewide. The community service training projects most needed are in government, senior centers, transportation, education, health services, retail trade, leisure and hospitality.

##### 2. List the cities and counties where the project will be conducted. Include the number of SCSEP authorized positions and indicate where the positions changed from the prior year.

The State of Alaska uses the federal equitable distribution as the basis for authorized positions.

FIPS	Alaska County	2019	2018	Change
2013	Aleutians	0	0	0
2016	Aleutians	2	2	0
2020	Anchorage	56	56	0
2050	Bethel	6	6	0
2060	Bristol	0	0	0
2068	Denali	0	0	0
2070	Dillingham	2	2	0
2090	Fairbanks North Star	16	16	0
2100	Haines	0	0	0
2105	Hoonah-Angoon	2	2	0
2110	Juneau	5	5	0
2122	Kenai	21	21	0
2130	Ketchikan	5	5	0
2150	Kodiak	3	3	0
2158	Kusilvak	3	3	0
2164	Lake and Peninsula	0	0	0
2170	Matanuska-Susitna	25	25	0
2180	Nome	5	5	0
2185	North	2	2	0
2188	Northwest	3	3	0
2195	Petersburg	2	2	0
2198	Prince of Wales-Hyder	3	3	0
2220	Sitka	2	2	0
2230	Skagway	0	0	0
2240	Southeast	3	3	0
2261	Valdez-Cordova	3	3	0
2275	Wrangell	2	2	0
2282	Yakutat	0	0	0
2290	Yukon-Koyukuk	4	4	0
		175	175	0

No enrollee will be displaced in his/her position due to efforts to resolve equitable distribution problems as the state has the flexibility to assist participants no matter where they live. No enrollee will be terminated simply because of the equitable distribution requirement.

### 3. Describe current slot imbalances and proposed steps to correct inequities to achieve equitable distribution.

The state continues to reach out to all regions. All regions are open for enrollment. Alaska has the fastest growing senior population rate in the U.S. and is expected to grow very rapidly in the next 12 years due to the size of the baby boomer population as well as historical trends in migration and longevity. SCSEP's long-term strategy remains the same: to continue to help all those who qualify for services. SCSEP enrollment is affected by seasonal employment and the fact that many Alaskan seniors are work ready or over income.

### 4. The State's long-term strategy for achieving an equitable distribution of SCSEP positions within the State that:

#### A. Moves positions from over-served to underserved locations within the State in compliance with 20 CFR 641.365.

SCSEP services are available in all regions, and the program is fully integrated into all AJCs with the assistance of sub-recipients and host sites. The program continues to advertise at its AJC team meetings, informing partners and the public that the SCSEP program exists statewide and what this program can do for older Alaskans and employers. This proactive approach empowers the target population to connect with AJCs or sub-recipients to help this program achieve the equitable distribution requirements statewide.

#### [B. Equitably serves rural and urban areas.](#)

Alaska's SCSEP continues to be available to all eligible participants statewide. The state's long term strategies to equitably serve both rural and urban areas are: 1) to award sub-recipients who are capable project operators in the most populated areas of the state when such a project operator is available; 2) to operate the program in the most populated areas with DOLWD staff in AJCs where a capable project operator is not available; and 3) to continue to make program services available to both urban and rural areas of the state through the 14 AJCs, sub-recipients, partners, and host sites.

#### [C. Serves individuals afforded priority for service under 20 CFR 641.520. \(20 CFR 641.302\(a\), 641.365, 641.520\)](#)

Alaska's selection of participants is based on the Priority of Service and income eligibility requirements. The state understands that pursuant to regulations prescribed by the Labor Secretary, an eligible individual shall have priority for the community service employment and other authorized activities provided under the OAA Amendments of 2006, Title V - SCSEP if the individual is 65 years of age or older or:

- (A) has a disability;
- (B) has limited English proficiency or low literacy skills;
- (C) resides in a rural area;
- (D) is a veteran;
- (E) has low employment prospects;
- (F) has failed to find employment after using services provided under Title I of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act; or
- (G) is homeless or at risk for homelessness.

#### [5. The ratio of eligible individuals in each service area to the total eligible population in the State. \(20 CFR 641.325\(a\)\)](#)

The largest population areas are Anchorage, Fairbanks, Matanuska–Susitna, Kenai Peninsula, and Juneau. Areas with the highest percentages of population age 55 and over include Anchorage (37.79 percent), Matanuska–Susitna (14.36 percent), Fairbanks (12.41 percent), Kenai Peninsula (10.65 percent), and Juneau (4.82 percent). The remaining census areas have smaller percentages of population 55 and over. The table below gives estimates from July 2018.

Area	Total	Male	Female	Percent
Alaska	186,349	94,198	92,151	100.00%
Aleutians East Borough	798	511	287	.43%
Aleutians West Census Area	1330	899	431	.71%
Anchorage Municipality	70,412	34,081	36,331	37.79%
Bethel Census Area	3,214	1,675	1,539	1.72%
Bristol Bay Borough	325	183	142	.17%
Denali Borough	564	342	222	.30%
Dillingham Census Area	1,144	619	525	.61%
Fairbanks North Star Borough	23,122	11,728	11,394	12.41%
Haines Borough	1,027	502	525	.55%
Hoonah-Angoon Census Area	861	479	382	.46%
Juneau City and Borough	8,982	4,491	4,491	4.82%
Kenai Peninsula Borough	19,853	10,192	9,661	10.65%
Ketchikan Gateway Borough	4,283	2,170	2,113	2.30%
Kodiak Island Borough	3,282	1,713	1,569	1.76%
Kusilvak Census Area	1,216	638	578	.65%
Lake and Peninsula Borough	383	214	169	.21%
Matanuska-Susitna Borough	26,758	13,584	13,174	14.36%
Nome Census Area	1,804	959	845	.97%
North Slope Borough	1,920	1,220	700	1.03%
Northwest Arctic Borough	1,348	726	622	.72%
Petersburg Borough	1,120	579	541	.60%
Prince of Wales-Hyder Census Area	2,018	1,136	882	1.08%
Sitka City and Borough	2,687	1,295	1,392	1.44%
Skagway Borough, Municipality of	307	157	150	.16%
Southeast Fairbanks Census Area	2,009	1,128	881	1.08%
Valdez-Cordova Census Area	2,815	1,506	1,309	1.51%
Wrangell City and Borough	1,009	527	482	.54%
Yakutat City and Borough	169	90	79	.09%
Yukon-Koyukuk Census Area	1,589	854	735	.85%

## 6. The relative distribution of eligible individuals who:

### A. Reside in urban and rural areas within the State

- 52% of the enrolled participants reside in an urban area and 48% of the enrolled participants reside in a rural area

### B. Have the greatest economic need

- 80% of the enrolled participants are at or below the poverty level
- 75% of the enrolled participants are receiving public assistance
- 40% of the enrolled participants are homeless or at risk of homelessness
- 19% of the enrolled participants are veterans or eligible spouse of a veteran

### C. Are minorities

- 42% of the enrolled participants are minorities

### D. Are Limited English Proficient

- 6% of the enrolled participants have low literacy skills
- 1% of the enrolled participants have limited English proficiency

### E. Have the greatest social need. (20 CFR 641.325(b))

- 88% have severely limited employment prospects in areas of persistent unemployment
- 49% of the enrolled participants have low employment prospects
- 27% of the enrolled participants have disabilities
- 7% of the enrolled participants are individuals age 75 and over

### 7. A description of the steps taken to avoid disruptions to the greatest extent possible, when positions are redistributed, as provided in 20 CFR 641.365; when new Census or other reliable data become available; or when there is over-enrollment for any other reason. (20 CFR 641.325(i), 641.302(b))

Disruptions in service have not historically been a problem in Alaska's SCSEP. Yet, this past year, Alaska had ongoing earthquakes and fires that disrupted SCSEP service. To prevent disruption in service, both the AJCs and SCSEP sub-recipients will assist those participants affected. If disruption of services were to occur again, meetings with affected sub-recipients would be scheduled to outline scenarios for minimizing potential impacts. Budget revisions could be made to sub-recipients' funding allocations to alleviate under- or over-funding. This process also occurs at mid-year to adjust regions with the greatest needs from those regions that do not need the funding awarded. This effort, if necessary, would occur immediately, depending on the specific situation. The determination of where positions need to be relocated and how urgent the situation is will be the basis for the state's decisions. To address the issues of disruption of service, teleconferences with all affected parties would be scheduled to discuss the issues and to keep all partners informed.

## Appendix 1. Performance Indicators

### Performance Goals for the Core Programs

Each state submitting a Unified or Combined State Plan is required to identify expected levels of performance for each of the primary indicators of performance for the first two years covered by the plan. The state is required to reach agreement with the Secretary of Labor, in conjunction with the Secretary of Education, on state-negotiated levels of performance for the indicators for each of the first two years of the plan.

For Program Year (PY) 2016-2019 plans, the Departments used the transition authority under section 503(a) of WIOA to designate certain primary indicators of performance as “baseline” indicators to ensure an orderly transition from the requirements of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 to those under WIOA. A “baseline” indicator was one for which states did not propose an expected level of performance and did not come to agreement with the Departments on negotiated levels of performance because sufficient data was not available to establish such performance levels. As a result, “baseline” indicators were not used in the end of the year adjustment of performance levels and were not used to determine failure to meet adjusted levels of performance for purposes of sanctions. The Departments designated indicators as “baseline” based on the likelihood of a State having insufficient data with which to make a reasonable determination of an expected level of performance.

For PYs 2020-2023 Plans, Title I programs (Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth) and the Title II program (Adult Education and Family Literacy Act) will have two full years of data available to make reasonable determinations of expected levels of performance for the following indicators for PY 2020 and PY 2021:

- Employment (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit);
- Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Credential Attainment Rate; and
- Measurable Skill Gains

The Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service program, authorized under the Wagner-Peyser Act, as amended by title III of WIOA, will have two full years of data available to make a reasonable determination of expected levels of performance for the following indicators for PY 2020 and PY 2021:

- Employment (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit); and
- Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit)

The Credential Attainment Rate and Measurable Skill Gains indicators do not apply to the Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service program; therefore, this program will not submit expected levels of performance for these indicators.

For the first two years of PYs 2020-2023 Plans, the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program, authorized under title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by title IV of WIOA, will have two full years of data available for the Measurable Skill Gains indicator only. Therefore, the Departments will designate the following indicators as “baseline” for the VR program for PY 2020 and PY 2021:

- Employment (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit);
- Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit); and
- Credential Attainment Rate

VR agencies must continue to collect and report on all indicators, including those that have been designated as “baseline, pursuant to section 116(d) of WIOA.” The actual performance data reported by these programs for indicators designated as “baseline” for PY 2020 and PY 2021 will serve as baseline data in future years. The Departments will require VR agencies to submit expected levels of performance for these indicators for PY 2022 and PY 2023.

The Departments determined that the Effectiveness in Serving Employers indicator will be measured as a shared outcome across all six core programs within each state to ensure a holistic approach to serving employers. The Departments will continue piloting approaches for measuring this indicator for the first two years of PY 2020-2023 plans. Therefore, states are not required to submit an expected level of performance for the Effectiveness in Serving Employers indicator for PY 2020 and PY 2021. However, core programs are expected to collect data and report on this indicator for PY 2020 and PY 2021 as they did for PYs 2016-2019 plans.

Each core program must submit an expected level of performance for all of the other indicators, as applicable, with the exception of the four indicators designated as “baseline” for the VR program in PY 2020 and PY 2021. The Departments will work with states during the negotiation process to establish negotiated levels of performance for each of the primary indicators for the core programs not listed as “baseline.” Each state must update its plan to include the agreed-upon negotiated levels of performance before the Departments approve a state’s plan.

States may identify additional indicators in the plan, including additional approaches to measuring Effectiveness in Serving Employers, and may establish levels of performance for each of the state indicators. Please identify any such state indicators under Additional Indicators of Performance.

### Adult Program Performance Indicators

Performance Indicators	PY 2020 Expected Level	PY 2020 Negotiated Level	PY 2021 Expected Level	PY 2021 Negotiated Level
Employment (Second Quarter After Exit)	75.0%	77.5%	76.0%	77.5%
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)	72.0%	76.5%	73.0%	76.5%
Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit)	\$7,600.00	\$7,700.00	\$7,650.00	\$7,700.00
Credential Attainment Rate	63.5%	63.5%	64.0%	63.5%
Measurable Skill Gains	79.0%	79.0%	80.0%	79.0%
Effectiveness in Serving Employers	NA <sup>1</sup>	NA <sup>1</sup>	NA <sup>1</sup>	NA <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>“Effectiveness in Serving Employers” is still being piloted and this data will not be entered for 2020 State Plans.

### Dislocated Program Performance Indicators

Performance Indicators	PY 2020 Expected Level	PY 2020 Negotiated Level	PY 2021 Expected Level	PY 2021 Negotiated Level
Employment (Second Quarter After Exit)	77.0%	81.9%	78.0%	81.9%
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)	79.0%	75.0%	80.0%	75.0%
Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit)	\$9,500.00	\$10,800.00	\$10,000.00	\$10,800.00
Credential Attainment Rate	50.0%	50.0%	50.0%	50.0%
Measurable Skill Gains	65.0%	65.0%	65.0%	65.0%
Effectiveness in Serving Employers	NA <sup>1</sup>	NA <sup>1</sup>	NA <sup>1</sup>	NA <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>“Effectiveness in Serving Employers” is still being piloted and this data will not be entered for 2020 State Plans.

### Youth Program Performance Indicators

Performance Indicators	PY 2020 Expected Level	PY 2020 Negotiated Level	PY 2021 Expected Level	PY 2021 Negotiated Level
Employment (Second Quarter After Exit)	52.0%	54.0%	52.0%	54.0%
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)	52.0%	52.0%	52.0%	52.0%
Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit)	\$2,500.00	\$2,700.00	\$2,600.00	\$2,700.00
Credential Attainment Rate	48.0%	50.0%	48.0%	50.0%
Measurable Skill Gains	66.0%	66.0%	67.0%	66.0%
Effectiveness in Serving Employers	NA <sup>1</sup>	NA <sup>1</sup>	NA <sup>1</sup>	NA <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>“Effectiveness in Serving Employers” is still being piloted and this data will not be entered for 2020 State Plans.

### Wagner Peyser Program Performance Indicators

Performance Indicators	PY 2020 Expected Level	PY 2020 Negotiated Level	PY 2021 Expected Level	PY 2021 Negotiated Level
Employment (Second Quarter After Exit)	56.0%	58.0%	56.0%	58.0%
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)	55.0%	57.2%	56.0%	57.2%
Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit)	\$5,400.00	\$5,650.00	\$5,500.00	\$5,650.00
Credential Attainment Rate	NA	NA	NA	NA
Measurable Skill Gains	NA	NA	NA	NA
Effectiveness in Serving Employers	NA <sup>1</sup>	NA <sup>1</sup>	NA <sup>1</sup>	NA <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>“Effectiveness in Serving Employers” is still being piloted and this data will not be entered for 2020 State Plans.

### Adult Education and Literacy Program Performance Indicators

Performance Indicators	PY 2020 Expected Level	PY 2020 Negotiated Level	PY 2021 Expected Level	PY 2021 Negotiated Level
Employment (Second Quarter After Exit)	30.0%	28.0%	35.0%	30.0%
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)	30.0%	28.0%	35.0%	30.0%
Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit)	4,000.00	4,100.00	4,000.00	4,200.00
Credential Attainment Rate	40.0%	28.0%	50.0%	30.0%
Measurable Skill Gains	50.0%	28.0%	50.0%	30.0%
Effectiveness in Serving Employers	NA <sup>1</sup>	NA <sup>1</sup>	NA <sup>1</sup>	NA <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>“Effectiveness in Serving Employers” is still being piloted and this data will not be entered for 2020 State Plans.

### Vocational Rehabilitation Program (Combined or General) Performance Indicators

Performance Indicators	PY 2020 Expected Level	PY 2020 Negotiated Level	PY 2021 Expected Level	PY 2021 Negotiated Level
Employment (Second Quarter After Exit)	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit)	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Credential Attainment Rate	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline

Performance Indicators	PY 2020 Expected Level	PY 2020 Negotiated Level	PY 2021 Expected Level	PY 2021 Negotiated Level
Measurable Skill Gains	18.0%	21.0%	18.0%	22.0%
Effectiveness in Serving Employers	NA <sup>1</sup>	NA <sup>1</sup>	NA <sup>1</sup>	NA <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>“Effectiveness in Serving Employers” is still being piloted and this data will not be entered for 2020 State Plans.

### All WIOA Core Programs

The Departments determined that the Effectiveness in Serving Employers indicator will be measured as a shared outcome across all six core programs within each state to ensure a holistic approach to serving employers. The Departments will continue piloting approaches for measuring this indicator for the first two years of PY 2020-2023 plans. Therefore, states are not required to submit an expected level of performance for the Effectiveness in Serving Employers indicator for PY 2020 and PY 2021. However, core programs are expected to collect data and report on this indicator for PY 2020 and PY 2021 as they did for PYs 2016-2019 plans.

### All WIOA Core Programs

Performance Indicators	PY 2020 Expected Level	PY 2020 Negotiated Level	PY 2021 Expected Level	PY 2021 Negotiated Level
Effectiveness in Serving Employers	NA <sup>1</sup>	NA <sup>1</sup>	NA <sup>1</sup>	NA <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>“Effectiveness in Serving Employers” is still being piloted and this data will not be entered for 2020 State Plans.

### Additional Indicators of Performance

States may identify additional indicators in the plan, including additional approaches to measuring Effectiveness in Serving Employers, and may establish levels of performance for each of the state indicators. Please identify any such state indicators under Additional Indicators of Performance.

Alaska is not including any additional performance indicators in its plan.

## Appendix 2.1 Acronyms

Acronym	Definition
AAE	Alaska Adult Education
ABLE	Achieving A Better Life Experience Act
ACA	Alaska Construction Academy
ACoA	Alaska Commission on Aging
ACPE	Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education
ACRE	Association of Community Rehabilitation Educators
ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act
AEFLA	Adult Education and Family Literacy Act
AIEI	Alaska Integrated Employment Initiative
AITC	Alaska Interagency Transition Council
AIVRS	American Indian Vocational Rehabilitation Services
AJC	Alaska Job Center
AJCN	Alaska Job Center Network
ALEXsys	Alaska Labor Exchange System
ANCET	Alaska Native Coalition for Employment and Training
AOP	Agricultural Outreach Plan
APCA	Alaska Primary Care Association
ARDOR	Alaska Regional Development Organization
ASA	Alaska Safety Alliance
ASL	American Sign Language
AT	Assistive Technology
ATLA	Assistive Technologies of Alaska
ATOP	Alaska Transition Outreach Project
AVTEC	Alaska Vocational Technical Center
AWARE	DVR's case management software
AWIB	Alaska Workforce Investment Board
BEP	Business Enterprise Program
BEST	Business Employment Services Team
CCER	Center for Continuing Education in Rehabilitation at University of Washington
CCR	College and Career Readiness
COBRA	Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act for continuation of health care
CRC	Certified Rehabilitation Counselor
CRP	Certified Rehabilitation Provider
CSBG	Community Services Block Grant
CSNA	Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment
CSPD	Comprehensive System of Personnel Development
CSTS	Career Support and Training Services
CTE	Career and Technical Education
CWIC	Community Work Incentives Coordinator
DBH	Division of Behavioral Health
DCCED	Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development
DCRA	Alaska Division of Community and Regional Affairs DCCED
DEED	Alaska Department of Education & Early Development
DEI	Disability Employment Initiative
DETS	Division of Employment and Training Services
DHSS	Department of Health & Social Services
DJJ	Division of Juvenile Justice

<b>Acronym</b>	<b>Definition</b>
DOC	Department of Corrections
DOLWD	Department of Labor and Workforce Development
DPA	Division of Public Assistance
DRC	Disability Resource Coordinator
DSDS	Division of Senior and Disability Services
DVOP	Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program
DVR	Division of Vocational Rehabilitation
EGrAMS	Electronic Grants Administration and Management System
EL	Emerging Leaders
EN	Employment Networks
ES	Employment Service
ESL	English as a Second Language
ETA	Employment and Training Administration(USDOL)
ETPL	Eligible Training Provider List
FASD	Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
FFY	Federal Fiscal Year
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GED	General Educational Development
GPRA	Government Performance and Results Act (Employment & Training Administration)
GPS	Global Positioning System
HUD	U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
ICM	Individual Case Management
I/DD	Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities
IELCE	Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education
IEP	Individual Employment Plan or Individual Education Program
IL	Independent Living
IPE	Individualized Plan for Employment
ISER	University of Alaska's Institute of Social and Economic Research
ISS	Individual Service Strategies
ITA	Individual Training Account
JBER	Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson
JVSG	Jobs for Veterans State Grant
LEA	Local Education Agency
LVER	Local Veterans' Employment Representative
MASST	Mature Alaskans Seeking Skills Training
MOA	Memorandum of Agreement
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MSD	Most Significant Disabilities
MSFW	Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers
NFJP	National Farmworker Jobs Program
NRLI	National Rehabilitation Leadership Institute
OA	USDOL Office of Apprenticeship for Alaska
OAA	Older Americans Act
OCS	Office of Children's Services
OJT	On-the-Job Training
PETS	Pre-Employment Transition Services
PFDD	Permanent Fund Dividend

<b>Acronym</b>	<b>Definition</b>
PH	Provisional Hires
POS	Priority of Service
PPP	Planning, Policy and Performance Evaluation
PY	Program Year
Pre-ETS	Pre–Employment Transition Services
RA	Registered Apprenticeship
RCE	Rehabilitation Counseling Education
REAP	Renewable Energy Alaska Project
REF	Renewable Energy Fund
RESEA	Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment
RR	Rapid Response
RSA	Rehabilitation Services Administration
RTC	Regional Training Center
SAE	State Apprenticeship Expansion Grant from USDOL
SARA	Semi-Autonomous Research Assistant
SCSEP	Senior Community Service Employment Program
SCAHEC	South Central Area Health Education Center
SE	Supported Employment
SFY	State Fiscal Year (July 1 to June 30)
SMA	State Monitor Advocate
SNAP	Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
SPARQ	SCSEP Performance and Results Quarterly Progress Report System
STEP	State Training and Employment Program
SVRC	State Vocational Rehabilitation Committee
SWA	State Workforce Agency
TAA	Trade Adjustment Assistance
TAARA	Trade Adjustment Assistance Reauthorization Act
TABE	Test of Adult Basic Education
TANF	Temporary Assistance for Needy Families
TTY	Text Telephone
TVEP	Technical Vocational Education Program
TVR	Tribal Vocational Rehabilitation
UA	University of Alaska System
UAA	University of Alaska Anchorage
UAF	University of Alaska Fairbanks
UAS	University of Alaska Southeast
UI	Unemployment Insurance
USDOL	United States Department of Labor
VI	Visually Impaired
VOS	Virtual One-Stop
VR	Vocational Rehabilitation
VR&E	Vocational Rehabilitation & Education
VRC	Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor
WIA	Workforce Investment Act of 1998
WIOA	Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act

## Appendix 2.2. Mandatory and Optional One-Stop Delivery System Partners

WIOA Title I –Adult and Dislocated Worker
Organization: Department of Labor and Workforce Development; Division of Employment and Training Services
Website: <a href="http://labor.alaska.gov/dets/wioa_adult.htm">http://labor.alaska.gov/dets/wioa_adult.htm</a> <a href="http://labor.alaska.gov/dets/wioa_dislocated.htm">http://labor.alaska.gov/dets/wioa_dislocated.htm</a> Contact : Shawna Harper, Assistant Director Phone: (907) 465-1882 Email: <a href="mailto:shawna.harper@alaska.gov">shawna.harper@alaska.gov</a>
Program Authority: WIOA Chapter 1, Sec. 121, (b) One-Stop Partners, (1)
<p>The Adult program improves the quality of the adult workforce, reduces welfare dependency, and enhances the productivity and competitiveness of Alaska’s workforce. The program provides adults with workforce preparation, career services, training services and job placement assistance needed to increase occupational skill attainment, obtain industry recognized credentials, and secure a good job that provides earnings that lead to self-sufficiency.</p> <p>The Dislocated Worker Program provides a variety of services to workers who have been impacted by plant closures, workforce reductions, and natural disasters that lead to job loss. The goal is to provide dislocated workers with the tools and support needed to obtain credentials and occupational skills leading to jobs in high growth industries and high demand occupations. The program enhances the quality, productivity and competitiveness of Alaska’s workforce while meeting the needs of Alaska’s employers.</p>
WIOA Title I –Youth Program
Organization: Department of Labor and Workforce Development; Alaska Workforce Investment Board
Website: <a href="http://labor.alaska.gov/dets/wioa_youth.htm">http://labor.alaska.gov/dets/wioa_youth.htm</a> Contact: Greg Cashen, Assistant Director Phone: (907) 269-3569 Email: <a href="mailto:greg.cashen@alaska.gov">greg.cashen@alaska.gov</a>
Program Authority: WIOA Chapter 1, Sec. 121, (b) One-Stop Partners, (1)
The WIOA Youth program is designed to help disadvantaged or disconnected in-school youth ages 14-18 and out-of-school youth ages 16-24, gain access to employment, education, training, and support services needed to succeed and compete in today’s global economy. WIOA Youth projects provide a variety of services and activities leading to: the attainment of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, or a recognized postsecondary credential; postsecondary education and training opportunities; academic and vocational instruction; attainment of an industry recognized occupational credential; preparation for unsubsidized employment opportunities; connections to employers, in in-demand industry sectors and local and regional labor markets; and supportive services.

<b>WIOA Title II - Alaska Adult Education</b>
Organization: Department of Labor and Workforce Development; Division of Employment and Training Services
Website: <a href="http://jobs.alaska.gov/aae/">http://jobs.alaska.gov/aae/</a> Contact: Windy Swearingin, AAE Program Director Phone: (907) 465-8714 Email: <a href="mailto:windy.swearingin@alaska.gov">windy.swearingin@alaska.gov</a>
Program Authority: WIOA Chapter 1, Sec. 121, (b) One-Stop Partners, (1)(B)(iii) Adult Education and Literacy activities authorized under WIOA Title II
The Alaska Adult Education Program (AAE) is a statewide instructional program for adults seeking to enhance their postsecondary education skills in order to transition into employment. The goal of the AAE is to identify student’s educational level and facilitate a successful transition to postsecondary education, training, or employment. Adult Education Programs instruct student in basic skills, high school equivalency diploma attainment, English language acquisition, and workforce preparation courses.
The Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) and WIOA Title II require the State of Alaska to provide eligible agencies a multiyear grant award. The competitive three-year grant cycle enables eligible providers to develop, implement, and improve adult education and literacy activities within Alaska. Eligible providers must use funds to establish or operate programs that provide adult education and literacy activities, including programs that provide these activities concurrently.
The Division annually receives general funds from the State of Alaska and a grant from the U.S. Department of Education to fund adult education regional programs. These programs provide foundational skills and English literacy instruction to assist students who are studying to improve their reading, writing, and math skills. Alaska Adult Education includes 13 regional education grants, an integrated correctional system, and a grant for Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education (IELCE).

<b>WIOA Title III - Wagner Peyser Employment Services</b>
Program: Department of Labor and Workforce Development; Division of Employment and Training Services
Job Seeker Resources: <a href="http://jobs.alaska.gov/jobseeker.htm">http://jobs.alaska.gov/jobseeker.htm</a> Business Connection: <a href="http://jobs.alaska.gov/employer.htm">http://jobs.alaska.gov/employer.htm</a> Contact: James Harvey, Assistant Director Phone : (907) 465-4891 Email: <a href="mailto:james.harvey@alaska.gov">james.harvey@alaska.gov</a>
Program Authority: WIOA Chapter 1, Sec. 121, (b) One-Stop Partners, (1) Amendments to the Wagner-Peyser Act Programs (29 USC 49 et seq.)
The One-Stop delivery system collaborates with partners to create a seamless system of service delivery that will enhance access to services, and improve long-term employment outcomes for individuals receiving assistance.
Employment and training services are located in the One-Stop delivery system and provides universal access to workers, job seekers, and employers under one roof from easy-to-find locations. The delivery points for these services are through 14 job centers located throughout the state. Services include labor exchange, labor market information, job search, job referral and placement assistance, re-employment services to unemployment insurance claimants, and job fair and recruitment services to employers. More intensive services can include job seeker assessment of skill levels, abilities and aptitudes, career guidance when appropriate, job search workshops, and referral to intensive and training services. Services are delivered in one of three modes including self-service, facilitated self-help services, and staff-assisted service delivery.
Apprenticeship specialists in the job centers provide information to employers on sponsoring an apprenticeship program. Apprenticeships allow employers to establish the standards of proficiency, while developing a local and loyal workforce. Any business that requires skilled employees can benefit from an apprenticeship.

<b>WIOA Title IV - Division of Vocational Rehabilitation</b>
Organization: Department of Labor and Workforce Development; Division of Vocational Rehabilitation
Website: <a href="https://labor.alaska.gov/dvr/home.htm">https://labor.alaska.gov/dvr/home.htm</a> Contact: Duane Mayes, Division Director, DVR Phone: (907) 334-5963 Email: <a href="mailto:duane.mayes@alaska.gov">duane.mayes@alaska.gov</a>
Program Authority: Rehabilitation Act, Title I, Parts A & B – Rehabilitation Services Commission (29 USC 720); WIOA Chapter 1, Sec. 121, (b) One-Stop Partners, (1)(B)(iv) programs authorized under Title I of Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 USC, 720)(other than section 112 or part C of title I of such Act (29 USC 732, 741).
DVR operates a statewide comprehensive, coordinated, effective, efficient, and accountable vocational rehabilitation program as an integral part of a statewide workforce development system; and to assess, plan, and provide vocational rehabilitation services to individuals with disabilities so that those individuals may prepare for and engage in competitive integrated employment consistent with their unique strengths, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice.

<b>Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP)</b>
Organization: Department of Labor and Workforce Development; Division of Employment and Training Services
Website: <a href="http://labor.alaska.gov/masst/home.htm">http://labor.alaska.gov/masst/home.htm</a> Contact: Margarita (Rita) Gray, MASST Program Coordinator Phone : (907) 465-4872 Email: <a href="mailto:rita.gray@alaska.gov">rita.gray@alaska.gov</a>
Program Authority: Older Americans Act, Title V – Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) (42 USC 3056)WIOA Chapter 1, Sec. 121, (b) One-Stop Partners, (1)(B)(v) activities under title V of the Older Americans Act of 1965 (42 USC 3056)
The Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP), known in Alaska as Mature Alaskans Seeking Skills Training (MASST), supports self-sufficiency and employment for workers age 55 and older, by providing part-time, paid community service positions and work-based training for unemployed, low-income individuals, who are not work-ready. The program identifies strategies to ensure workers obtain the skills and competencies needed to obtain and maintain jobs that lead to self-sufficiency. Participants train in one of the following areas: office and administrative support, food preparation and service, retail, sales, custodial, transportation, community and social services, and healthcare. The program provides services through the job centers and subrecipient organizations. Each site works with host agencies to develop community service employment assignments, which provide participants with needed on-the-job training and skill development. This added expertise allows participants to pursue local employment opportunities.

<b>Veteran Services</b>
Organization: Department of Labor and Workforce Development; Division of Employment and Training Services
Website: <a href="http://jobs.alaska.gov/veterans">http://jobs.alaska.gov/veterans</a> Contact: Nakita Mongar, Program Coordinator I Phone: (907) 269-3016 Email: <a href="mailto:nakita.mongar@alaska.gov">nakita.mongar@alaska.gov</a>
Program Authority: WIOA Title I – Veteran’s Workforce Programs – (29 USC 2913, 29 USC 2919, 38 USC 41)
Veterans and eligible military spouses are offered specialized programs and opportunities to maximize training potential, employment, and retention. Veterans receive priority of services in all Job Centers. Veterans and eligible spouses with significant barriers to employment (SBE) and are assisted by specialized staff funded through the Jobs for Veterans Statewide Grant (JVSG).

**Veteran Services, continued**

The Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) specialists are housed in job centers located in areas with the highest veteran populations and provide in-depth interviewing and comprehensive assessments to identify employment goals, interim objectives, and appropriate services that will enable the veteran to meet his or her employment goals. If DVOP services are not available, referrals are made to appropriate partner programs such as Career Support and Training Services and Vocational Rehabilitation.

The Local Veterans' Employment Representative (LVER) establishes relationships with employers and facilitated the placement of veterans in meaningful employment. The LVER is a bridge between employers and veterans to recruit, hire, promote, and retain veteran hire.

**Trade Adjustment Assistance**

Organization: Department of Labor and Workforce Development; Division of Employment and Training Services

Website: <http://jobs.alaska.gov/TAA/index.html>

Contact: Laurie Fuglvog, Employment Security Analyst III

Phone: (907) 465-5926

Email: [laurie.fuglvog@alaska.gov](mailto:laurie.fuglvog@alaska.gov)

Program Authority: WIOA Chapter 1, Sec. 121, (b) One-Stop Partners, (1)(B)(vii) activities authorized under Chapter 2 of title II of the Trade Act of 1974 (19 USC 2271 et seq.); Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) (19 USC 2317) and North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) (19 USC 2271); Trade Act of 1974 (19 USC 2101 et seq.), Title II, Chapter 2, as amended in 2002, 2009, 2011 and Trade Adjustment Assistance Reauthorization Act (TAARA 2015)

The Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) program provides training and employment services to workers who were laid-off or had a reduction in hours or pay due to foreign trade-related circumstances including competition from imported goods or work outsourced to a different country. The program identifies trade-affected worker groups and coordinates with stakeholders to provide qualified individuals with employment, training and support services; job search and relocation allowances; weekly income support when unemployment insurance is fully exhausted, and workers who are 50 years of age and older with a wage subsidy to help bridge the salary gap between old and new employment. In Alaska, those workers eligible for TAA benefits were workers displaced by petroleum, timber, or fishing industries.

**Unemployment Insurance**

Organization: Department of Labor and Workforce Development; Division of Employment and Training Services

Website: <http://labor.alaska.gov/unemployment/>

Contact: Clifford Napier, Assistant Director,

Phone: (907) 269-3742

Email : [clifford.napier@alaska.gov](mailto:clifford.napier@alaska.gov)

Program Authority: Unemployment Insurance (UI) – (5 USC 85) (ORC Chapter 4141)WIOA Chapter 1, Sec. 121, (b) One-Stop Partners, (1)(B)(xi) programs authorized under state unemployment compensation laws (in accordance with applicable Federal law).

Alaska's UI Program is committed to providing support to the One-Stop centers through referrals to Reemployment Services Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) activities and dedicated UI staff available to respond to the needs of unemployed workers coming into the One-Stop centers. Alaska UI already requires mandatory registration, and provides Rapid Response program activities jointly with Alaska Job Center staff.

**RurAL CAP**

Organization: Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development; Division of Community and Regional Affairs

Website: <https://www.commerce.alaska.gov/web/dcra/>  
<https://ruralcap.com>

Contact: Tiel Smith, Chief Operating Officer

Phone: (907) 279-2511

Email: [tsmith@ruralcap.org](mailto:tsmith@ruralcap.org)

Program Authority: RurAL CAP is the only eligible Community Action Agency in the State of Alaska that is eligible to receive CSBG funds. State Assurance '676(b)(5); WIOA Chapter 1, Sec. 121, (b) One-Stop Partners, (1)(B)(ix) employment and training activities carried out under the Community Services Block Grant Act (42 USC 9901 et seq.).

State Assurance '676(b)(5): and the eligible entities in the state will coordinate, and establish linkages between, governmental and other social services programs to assure the effective delivery of such services to low-income individuals and to avoid duplication of such services, and state and the eligible entities will coordinate the provision of employment and training activities in the state and in communities with entities providing activities through statewide and local workforce investment systems under the Workforce Investment Act of 1998. RurAL CAP works extensively with state-related entities that receive funding under the Workforce Investment Act. The Anchorage Services Division works with Nine Star, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, State Training and Employment Program, all GED completion programs, CITC, etc. to assist resident participants in reaching their employment goals. DOLWD assists with job applications. In addition, residents are provided employment classes and internet access to private companies that may be hiring. They are also provided transportation to employment related activities and access to “day labor” jobs. The Planning and Construction Division hires individuals for the weatherization projects who have completed USDOL workforce training programs. DOLWD allows RurAL CAP to provide the necessary training and technical assistance to their service partners and within their organization to meet the new standards in the CSBG program.

**Alaska Housing Finance Corporation**

Organization: Alaska Housing Finance Corporation; Jumpstart Program (Moving to Work)

Website: <https://www.ahfc.us/publichousing/jumpstart>

Contact: Amanda (Mandi) Manning, Statewide Manager of the Self-Sufficiency Programs

Phone : (907) 330-6100

Email: [amanning@ahfc.us](mailto:amanning@ahfc.us)

Program Authority: WIOA Chapter 1, Sec. 121, (b) One-Stop Partners, (1)(B)(x) employment and training activities carried out by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)

AHFC is a Public Housing Division participating in the Moving to Work (MTW) Demonstration Program. As a Moving to Work Agency, AHFC has the flexibility to design and test various approaches for providing and administering housing assistance that:

- Reduce cost and achieve greater cost effectiveness in federal expenditures;
- Give incentives to families with children whose heads of household are either working, seeking work, or are participating in job training, educational, or other programs that assist in obtaining employment and becoming economically self-sufficient; and
- Increase housing choices for low-income families.

With this MTW designation, AHFC’s FY2014 MTW Annual Plan created Reasonable Rent and Family Self-Sufficiency initiatives. Under this program, families are divided into three classifications: Step, Classic and Set-Aside (vouchers designed to help designated groups such as veterans.) Families in the Classic program pay an income-based rent and see no time-limits on assistance. Families in the Step Program contain a work-able adult and do not meet the criteria for the Classic program. Under the Step program, families are limited to five (5) years of rental assistance and under the Step Rent/Subsidy schedule, the family’s share of rent increases

**Alaska Housing Finance Corporation, continued**

annually as AHFC’s subsidy decreases. To serve participating families, AHFC expanded and improved on its Family Self-Sufficiency Program by creating the Jumpstart Program. The Jumpstart Program provides financial incentives for participation and/or completion of employment, education, and long-term financial activities along with intensive case management for families identified as having a high shelter burden (the cost of rent plus utilities). The objective of Jumpstart is to reduce the dependency of low-income families on welfare assistance and on Housing Choice Voucher, Public Housing, or any Federal, State, or Local rent or homeownership subsidies. AHFC measures the success of Jumpstart not only by the number of families who achieve self-sufficiency, but also by the number of Jumpstart families who, as a result of participation in the program:

- Have family members who obtain their first job;
- Have family members who obtain higher paying jobs;
- No longer need benefits received under one or more welfare programs;
- Obtain a high school diploma, General Educational Development (GED.) certificate, or higher education degree; or
- Accomplish goals that assist the family in obtaining economic independence.

AHFC case managers work with families to develop individualized goals, introduce or direct them to resources and support services that can assist in their progress toward meeting these goals, and follow-up on the family’s progress. Local AHFC offices (16 locations statewide) regularly assist families in immediate need by referring them to resources and services. Referrals for employment assistance to One-Stop centers are a priority to assist with job training, preparation, and counseling; job development and placement; and follow-up assistance after job placement and completion of the contract of participation. AHFC coordinates closely with U.S. DOL to ensure non-duplication of services. AHFC also offers a suite of job readiness classes on-site at its Anchorage location through the Gateway to Education, which include multi-class occupational endorsements, computer lab classes, and other foundational courses to assist in gaining skills for immediate job placement.

**Department of Education and Early Development**

Organization: Department of Education and Early Development; Career and Technical Education; Perkins Postsecondary Competitive Grant

Website: <https://education.alaska.gov/cte>

Contact: Deborah Riddle, Division Operations Manager

Phone : (907) 465-2892

Email : [deborah.riddle@alaska.gov](mailto:deborah.riddle@alaska.gov)

Program Authority: Postsecondary Vocational Education – Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Education Act (20 USC 2301) WIOA Chapter 1, Sec. 121, (b) One-Stop Partners, (1)(B)(vi) career and technical education programs at postsecondary level authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006.

DEED actively participates through the Perkins Postsecondary program, which is carried out in Alaska through a competitive grant process open to all eligible postsecondary partners. Perkins-funded postsecondary programs have in the past focused mainly on professional development for CTE instructors. The current focus is on partnerships between secondary and postsecondary programs and industry, targeted at one or more of the high-priority industries. Programs either 1) provide secondary students with content-specific access to postsecondary career and technical education as dual-credit classes (at no cost to either the student or district) and make substantive links between secondary and postsecondary education and the workforce; or 2) provide professionals transitioning from the field into education with instructional skills specific to the secondary CTE classroom and are based on a clear program of study that results in participants receiving an industry certification upon completion

<b>Temporary Assistance for Needy Families</b>
Organization: Department of Health and Social Services; Division of Public Assistance
Website: <a href="http://dhss.alaska.gov/dpa/Pages/ataf">http://dhss.alaska.gov/dpa/Pages/ataf</a> Contact: Mark Walker, Field Service Manager I Phone: (907) 352-4106 Email: <a href="mailto:mark.walker@alaska.gov">mark.walker@alaska.gov</a>
Program Authority: Social Security Act – Welfare to Work Programs (42 USC 603(a)(5)); WIOA Chapter 1, Sec. 121, (b) One-Stop Partners, (1)(B)(xiii) programs authorized under part A of Title IV of the Social Security Act (42 USC 601 et seq.), subject to subparagraph (C).
DPA provides TANF case management, referrals to community agencies, and financial supportive services. Items such as tools, scrubs, medical equipment, background checks and licenses can be purchased. Supportive Services may continue for 12 months post Temporary Assistance if the client has earnings at the time of closure.

<b>Alaska Job Corps Center</b>
Organization: Alaska Job Corps Center
Website: <a href="https://alaska.jobcorps.gov/our-program">https://alaska.jobcorps.gov/our-program</a> Contact Name: Malyn Smith, Director Phone: (907) 861-8801 Email: <a href="mailto:smith.malyn@jobcorps.org">smith.malyn@jobcorps.org</a>
Program Authority: WIOA Public Law 113-128, Chapter 4, Subtitle C Job Corps, Section 148 Program Activities
Alaska Job Corps offers hands-on career technical training as well as academic training. Career technical training is available in the following industries: Business and Technology, Construction, and Health and Community Services. Academic training includes basic reading and math. Courses in independent living, employability skills, and social skills are offered in order to help students transition into the workplace. There are also several academic programs to help our students achieve their full potential. One of the top goals at the Alaska Job Corps is to ensure that every qualified student obtains his or her GED/high school diploma prior to leaving the center. Students who don't already have a high school diploma upon their arrival at Alaska Job Corps Center are automatically enrolled into our GED program. Students who complete this program's core classes may participate in the high school diploma program, which is an on-center program. Pre-requisites for the high school diploma program are the student must have fifteen or more credits, and the student must have passed at least two high school qualifying exams (HSQEs). Driver's education is available to all students needing an Alaska driver's license. Permits and licensing fees for students are paid for by the center. Arrangements for students to take the written and road examinations are also handled by the center. The Alaska Job Corps Center also offers a college program where students can enroll in Advanced Career Training (ACT) and attend the Mat-Su College in Palmer.

<b>Alaska Native Coalition on Employment and Training (ANCET)</b>
Organization: Coalition of 10 Alaska Native organizations, see list below
Website: <a href="https://www.doleta.gov/dinap/directories/477list/">https://www.doleta.gov/dinap/directories/477list/</a>
Program Authority: WIOA Subtitle D National Programs, Section 166 Native American Programs, includes grantees of Public Law 102-477 Indian Employment, Training, and Related Services Demonstration Act of 1992, as amended by Public Law 106-568, the Omnibus Indian Advancement Act of 2000. 29 USC 3221 – Native American programs (all programs under this section administered consistent with 25 USC 450 et seq. Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act)
Alaska Native Coalition on Employment and Training (ANCET), representing DOL-WIOA Funded Federally Recognized Tribes and Alaska Native Entities Participating in Public Law 102-477

**Alaska Native Coalition on Employment and Training (ANCET), continued**

<https://www.doleta.gov/dinap/directories/477list/>

The majority of the Alaska Native partners participating in employment and training workforce development activities (pursuant to WIOA Subtitle D, Sec. 166 Native American Programs; Public Law 102-477 Indian Employment Training, and Related Services Demonstration Act of 1992, as amended by Public Law 106-568, the Omnibus Indian Advancement Act of 2000), provide these services:

The emphasis for the majority of participating Alaska Native partners involves these activities:

Job Seeker Services – Emphasis on self-service, staff assisted career services including resume and cover letter, interview skills, careers, jobs, labor market information, workshops, labor exchange, education programs, support, Unemployment Insurance (UI), eligibility screening and referral process. Eligible individuals have access to case management for services such as intake and registration testing and assessment, Individual Employment Plans (IEPs), vocational counseling, short term pre-vocational services, training services, adult education and literacy activities, scholarships, and supplemental training funds for eligible individuals for supportive services, e.g. child care, transportation and clothing.

Services to Employers – Labor exchange, marketing, and workforce information.

Purpose: To support employment and training activities for Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian individuals in order to:

- Develop more fully the academic, occupational, and literacy skills of such individuals;
- Make such individuals more competitive in the workforce and to equip them with the entrepreneurial skills necessary for successful self-employment;
- Promote the economic and social development of Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian communities in accordance with the goals and values of such communities.
- Identify the education and employment needs of the population to be served and the manner in which the activities to be provided will strengthen the ability of the individuals served to obtain or retain unsubsidized employment leading to self-sufficiency;
- Consider the needs of the groups served by this section, including the differences in needs among such groups in various geographic service areas; and the economic circumstances of the communities served, including differences in circumstances among various geographic service areas.
- Highlight additional workforce development activities provided by partners (as shown on their public web pages) include but are not limited to:

**Organizations represented by ANCET**

<u>Aleutian-Pribilof Islands Assn., Inc. (APIA)</u>	<a href="https://www.apiai.org/services/employment-services/">https://www.apiai.org/services/employment-services/</a>	AANG Program assists eligible individuals prepare for, gain, or retain employment scholarship opportunities to individuals attending a college or university full time, working towards a 2 or 4-year degree; training scholarships for non-degree training, vocational training and certification courses.
Association of Village Council Presidents (AVCP)	<a href="https://www.avcp.org/services/education-employment-and-trainingchild-care/">https://www.avcp.org/services/education-employment-and-trainingchild-care/</a>	The Association of Village Council Presidents (AVCP), Education, Employment, Training and Child Care Department’s (EET & CC) outreach is a key component to informing and educating member tribes of the programs they have available, and for any Native American living in the AVCP region, who is enrolled in a federally recognized tribe. AVCP’s EET & CC Department also maintains a regional Talent Bank, a file of individuals from within the region. When a project comes to a village, they encourage local hire by looking through the Bank and identify any individuals from that community who might be qualified and appropriate for hiring on to specific jobs.
Bristol Bay Native Association (BBNA)	<a href="https://www.bbna.com/our-programs/workforce-development/">https://www.bbna.com/our-programs/workforce-development/</a>	Training assistance grants are available for adults attending a vocational or technical training certificate program ranging in length from 6 months to 2 years, for a wide variety of fields working towards a career goal. These include Driver’s Education to achieve a Driver’s License, Heavy Equipment Operating, Commercial Truck Driver License (CDL), Certified Nurse’s Aide, Child Care Associate Certificate or other short term occupation training leading directly to employment upon completion of the training.

<p>Central Council of Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes (CCHITA)</p>	<p><a href="http://www.ccthita.org/services/employment/overview/index.html">http://www.ccthita.org/services/employment/overview/index.html</a></p>	<p>Employment Services provides eligible participants who complete career assessment testing, motivational training, and job skills workshops with an employment portfolio to use while actively seeking employment.</p> <p>The Job Placement program within the Employment &amp; Training (E&amp;T) Division offers motivational, cultural, and basic office skills trainings to TANF, TVR, ES, and AVT clients. The program offers educational, training and employment opportunities to assist in finding meaningful employment and maintaining a healthy lifestyle independent of program services. Computer classroom training and vocational courses are offered to both tribal citizens and the general public through the Vocational Training &amp; Resource Center (VTRC).</p> <p>The Tribal Vocational Rehabilitation (TVR) program with the State of Alaska (SOA), Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) jointly serves eligible applicants with disabilities in Southeast Alaska. Because TVR and DVR work together to provide joint services, tribal citizens are actively referred to the SOA/DVR offices.</p> <p>The Youth Employment Services (YES) program assists eligible tribal youth between the ages of 14-21 to obtain summer employment in their community and provides participating youth with Job &amp; Life Skills Workshops including Job Hunting Tips, Completing an Application, Cover Letter, Resume, Interview Techniques, Surviving the Job, and Power of Choices.</p>
<p>Chugachmiut, Inc.</p>	<p><a href="http://www.chugachmiut.org/health-social-services/social-services/vocational-training/">http://www.chugachmiut.org/health-social-services/social-services/vocational-training/</a></p>	<p>Chugachmiut offers tuition assistance regarding vocational training to eligible Alaska Natives and American Indians. Applicants must reside in Chenega, Nanwalek, Port Graham, Seward or Tatitlek and demonstrate financial need due to unemployment or underemployment. The goal is to assist residents in obtaining long-term employment.</p>
<p>Cook Inlet Tribal Council (CITC)</p>	<p><a href="https://citci.org/employmenttraining/">https://citci.org/employmenttraining/</a></p>	<p>CITC's Employment Training and Services Department assists participants in achieving self-sufficiency by helping them enhance their communication, life management, vocational and academic skills. CITC also provides vocational rehabilitation services, and operates a One-Stop called Alaska's People Career Development Center. CITC's comprehensive wrap-around services include GED, TANF, GA, child care, and career training. The DOLWD is co-located at the CITC Career Development Center and partners with CITC staff to offer services to assist job seekers with training and employment.</p>
<p>Kawerak, Inc.</p>	<p><a href="https://kawerak.org/">https://kawerak.org/</a></p>	<p>The Kawerak Direct Employment (DE) Program provides a one-time grant to eligible tribal members who reside in the Bering Strait-Norton Sound region to assist with employment related needs and start-up living expenses in order to retain full-time employment.</p> <p>The Higher Education Program provides semester and quarterly scholarships to tribal members of the Bering Strait region that are enrolled at an accredited college or university.</p> <p>Kawerak Native Employment Work Services (KNEWS) provides Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF). KNEWS partners with the Division of Public Assistance to provide services to the villages in the Bering Strait Region. Because there is a shortage of paid positions in village communities, KNEWS works with local organizations to provide volunteer work opportunities for clients to gain job skills.</p>

		<p><b>Kawerak, Inc., continued</b></p> <p>Kawerak offers village-based carpentry and heavy equipment training programs. These 2-4 week programs are designed for apprentices who are registered by the USDOL. Each training program uses a standard curriculum that is approved by the National Center for Construction Education and Research (NCCER). Participants earn college-credit through Northwest College/University of Alaska. Training programs are not limited to carpentry and heavy equipment, and are determined on a village-by-village basis. Village Based Training works with the IRA's of each village to determine what job opportunities are coming to the village or what skills need to be upgraded to increase or keep village residents employed in the near future. Training is then recommended. Funding sources, trainers and other resources are prioritized to the best advantage of the region. Village Based training and all of EET, work to keep each village in the rotation of ongoing training, without favoritism.</p>
Kodiak Native Association (KANA)	<a href="http://kodiakhealthcare.org/community-services/cs-employment-education/">http://kodiakhealthcare.org/community-services/cs-employment-education/</a>	<p>Kodiak Area Native Association (KANA) operates the KANA Employment Center which offers access to computers to search for jobs, create resumes, information on college, trade schools and apply for scholarships. Life and employment skills workshops are offered. The Supplemental Youth Employment Training Program (SYETP) provides practical work experience for Kodiak area Native youth, aged 14-24, to build strong communities by providing the life experience they need. Youth placed in a successful match with a business are added to KANA's payroll for up to 100 hours, also making them eligible for a half work Co-op credit at Kodiak High School. The Tribal Vocational Rehabilitation Program (TVRP) assists Alaska Native and American Indian individuals who are members of a federally recognized tribe that experience disabilities prepare for, achieve, and maintain employment.</p>
Maniilaq Association	<a href="https://www.maniilaq.org/">https://www.maniilaq.org/</a>	<p>The goal of Maniilaq Employment &amp; Training Program is to assist in providing training to the people of the Northwest Arctic region into gainful employment and to be economically self-sufficient. Case workers assist each client in funding resources and case management, need assessments, and training needs to achieve employment, apprenticeship, on-the-job training, or supportive services.</p>
Tanana Chiefs Conference (TCC)	<a href="https://www.tananachiefs.org/job-seekers/job-training/">https://www.tananachiefs.org/job-seekers/job-training/</a>	<p>In addition to workforce development activities listed above, TCC also has AmeriCorps and VISTA programs. TCC announces job openings, trainings, and other job openings around the State of Alaska. The TCC Youth Employment Program offers year-round and summer-only work experience opportunities for 14-21 year olds. TCC operates a Tribal Employment Rights Office (TERO) through adoption of local village ordinances and helps ensure maximum Native hire on or near Indian Lands. TCC Youth Employment Services empowers Native youth facing barriers to employment by providing work experience, training and educational opportunities designed to foster world-of-work skills.</p>