

State of Alaska Annual Report Workforce Investment Act

Youth, Adult, & Dislocated Worker Programs

Program Year 2014: July 1, 2014 to June 30, 2015



**ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF LABOR
& WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT**



THE STATE
of **ALASKA**
GOVERNOR BILL WALKER

**Department of Labor and
Workforce Development**

Office of the Commissioner

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December 11, 2015

The Honorable Thomas E. Perez
United States Secretary of Labor
U.S. Department of Labor
200 Constitution Avenue, N.W.
Washington DC 20210

Dear Mr. Perez,

On behalf of Governor Bill Walker, the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, and the Alaska Workforce Investment Board, we are pleased to submit Alaska's Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Annual Performance Report for Program Year 2014. This report marks a period where the nation and our State are transitioning from the federal Workforce Investment Act (WIA) into the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). WIOA represents major changes in the way public workforce resources are used to provide employment opportunity for those living in Alaska.

The Annual report provides information about Alaska's performance with USDOL funded workforce programs serving Youth, Adults, Dislocated Workers, and National Emergency Grant participants under WIA and sets benchmarks for measuring future performance under new WIOA legislation.

Alaska is building "on ramps to America's skills superhighway" with engaged industry employers. Our workforce programs educate and direct students and adults to Alaska's good jobs and careers that strengthen our state and local economies. WIA/WIOA federal funds are a significant contribution to our public workforce system and we appreciate the federal/state partnership to develop our workforce.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Heidi Drygas in blue ink.

Heidi Drygas, Commissioner
Department of Labor and Workforce Development

Handwritten signature of Larry Bell in blue ink.

Larry Bell, Chair
Alaska Workforce Investment Board

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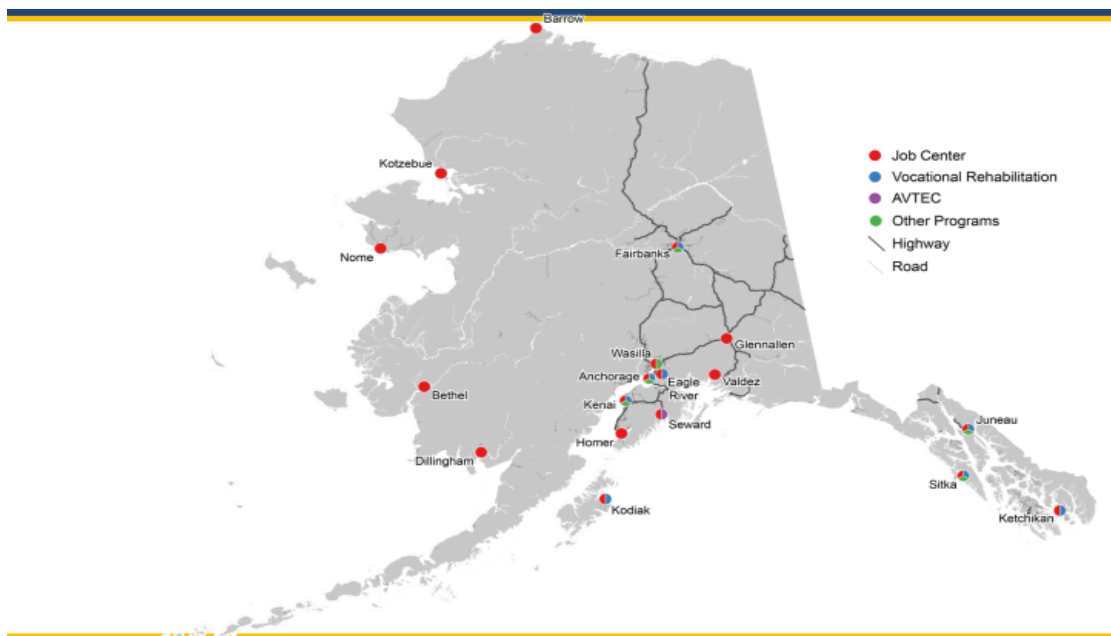
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Overview

Alaska is a unique land with a unique culture and economy, a state filled by a diverse population. We face a difficult fiscal future where the demand for services we provide in partnership with the Federal Government will continue to grow as we feel the impact of low oil prices and low oil production on our state budget, along with the continuous call for new employees who have the skills needed by employers.

Governor Bill Walker's vision for Alaska's future includes building an Alaska gasline and delivering gas to market, dealing with our financial concerns, and reinforcing career and technical education so Alaskans will have training to obtain good jobs and be prosperous citizens. Governor Walker is committed to ensuring that we have Alaskans filling Alaska jobs – Alaska hire, expanding Registered Apprenticeships as a pathway to good careers, and serving Veterans and Transitioning Service Members, even amid worker dislocations due to the loss of oil revenue with declining oil prices.

Our workforce system is vibrant, flexible and innovative. Alaska has a sturdy connection between industry, employers, educators, labor, and training providers to develop and provide career paths aimed at high wage occupations in vital industries that strengthen our economy. We are focused on engaging industry employers to meet the needs of Alaska's economy and providing employment security for Alaskans through workforce investments. We seek to meet the supply and demand challenge through our various job training programs serving those most in need (youth and adults, the unemployed, underemployed, low-income, disabled, special populations). To meet these challenges, we continue to implement the strategies laid out in our 2012-2016 Integrated Workforce Plan: Cross-Program Coordination; Partnerships; Leveraging Resources; and Policy Alignment.



Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development

The Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development promotes safe and legal working conditions and opportunities for employment in Alaska. Our three key program priorities are:

- 1) protection of Alaska's workers through statutory and regulatory assistance and enforcement;
- 2) workforce development to support Alaska hire and economic development; and
- 3) income replacement for injured, unemployed, and permanently disabled workers.

As the state's lead entity for workforce development, the department, through the Division of Employment and Training Services, administers WIA and WIOA programs as well as state funded employment, job training, and career training programs offering services through Alaska's Job Center Network, Wagner-Peyser Labor Exchange, and Unemployment Insurance. The department also supports the Alaska Workforce Investment Board, which provides policy and oversight of the state's workforce investment activities.

Our department's functional organizational chart is shown below.



Office of the Commissioner

The Office of the Commissioner provides policy guidance, administrative oversight, and coordinated communications for the Department of Labor and Workforce Development and the Alaska Workforce Investment Board. Also reporting directly to the Commissioner is our Division of Administrative Services, which provides management information and support services, develops and distributes labor market and population information, and conducts workforce research.

Division of Employment and Training Services

As part of our streamlining and policy alignment efforts in PY 2014, Governor Bill Walker signed Administrative Order No. 275 on June 10th, 2015, directing the Department of Labor and Workforce Development to merge the Employment Security Division (ESD) and the Division of Business Partnerships (DBP) into a single Division of Employment & Training Services (DETS). As the Order states, “Reorganization will reduce duplication and overlapping functions, streamline financial administration, and lay the groundwork for future change to improve public workforce services in a cost-effective manner.”

The Division is the designated state administrative agency for Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Title 1-B programs. It grants WIA funds to the state’s qualified youth employment and training providers as recommended by the Alaska Workforce Investment Board (AWIB). The Division also provides labor exchange services, employment and training services, unemployment insurance (UI) to Alaskans and Alaska businesses, and grant administration for various state and federal workforce programs, thereby advancing opportunities for employment and providing economic stability for communities in Alaska.

Alaska Workforce Investment Board

The Alaska Workforce Investment Board (AWIB) is overseen by an Executive Director, who reports directly to the Commissioner. The vision for the Alaska Workforce Investment Board is to "build connections that put Alaskans into good jobs." This comprehensive vision keeps the board focused on developing a workforce system that is useful, accessible, and understandable to all of the system's customers, which include businesses looking for qualified workers, unemployed Alaskans looking for jobs, and incumbent workers wanting to upgrade their skills in a changing work environment. The Board is tasked with reviewing workforce plans and providing recommendations to the department and the Governor to further train and prepare Alaskans for the workforce and help grow Alaska's economy.

The AWIB uses three primary strategies to help the programs meet the governor’s vision. First, AWIB identifies priority industries and occupations for the investment of scarce workforce investment resources. Second, AWIB works with these industry sectors to prepare and implement targeted workforce development plans, such as the Construction, Health Care, Maritime, Mining, and Oil and Gas Workforce Plans. Third, AWIB monitors investment of federal and state workforce programs.

The Board meets three times annually. Program Year 2014 meetings were October 1-2, 2014 in Anchorage; February 2-3, 2015 in Juneau; and May 6-7, 2015 in Seward.

Alaska Workforce Investment Board (AWIB) activities during program year 2014 include:

- Award of a Round 4 Disability Employment Initiative (DEI) grant from the U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration, in the amount of \$1,482,000 to improve education, training, and employment opportunities and outcomes of youth and adults who are unemployed and/or receiving Social Security disability benefits. Partner agencies include the One-Stop Job Centers, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, Division of Public Assistance, and Governor’s Council on Disabilities and Special Education.
- Reviewed grant applications for the State Training and Employment Program; Oil and Gas training program; and Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Youth program; and provided recommendations for funding.
- Reviewed and approved the 2014 Training Program Performance Report to the Legislature.
- Adopted the following resolutions
 - Resolution 15-01 to apply for Funds to Develop and Operate Jail Based Specialized Alaska Job Centers;
 - Resolution 15-03 for Expectations of Alaska’s Training Providers to Meet and Maintain eligible programs as required by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Eligible Training Providers List.
- Revision and updating of the AWIB website at <http://www.labor.alaska.gov/awib/>

Alaska’s Economic and Workforce Demand Overview

Statewide Overview

Alaska ranks 47th among states by population but is easily the largest geographically. The state’s 570,641 square miles of land make up 16 percent of the U.S. total and 35 percent of the nation’s water area is in Alaska. For the U.S. as a whole, there are 89.5 people per square mile; in Alaska there are 1.3.

The Alaska economy is most heavily dependent on oil and gas and other resource extraction industries and on the federal government, including a substantial number of military bases and installations (Army, Air Force, and Coast Guard in particular). Alaska has more veterans per capita than any other state.

Other important basic sector industries — those that bring money into the state by providing goods or services to the national and global economies — include fishing and tourism.

Alaska has especially high concentrations of employment in natural resources and mining (more than four times the national average). It has at least slightly higher concentrations in construction, utilities, and transportation and warehousing. The state has lower than national average employment

concentrations in manufacturing — other than seafood processing, Alaska has almost no manufacturing employment — financial activities, and professional and business services.

Over the 2012 to 2022 period, Alaska is projected to add 36,000 jobs for a 10-year growth rate of about 11 percent. A disproportionate percentage of those jobs are expected to be in health care, an industry that has seen much stronger than average growth in Alaska for most of the last two decades. But every major industry in the private sector is projected to grow and only government jobs are projected to see declines over that ten-year period.

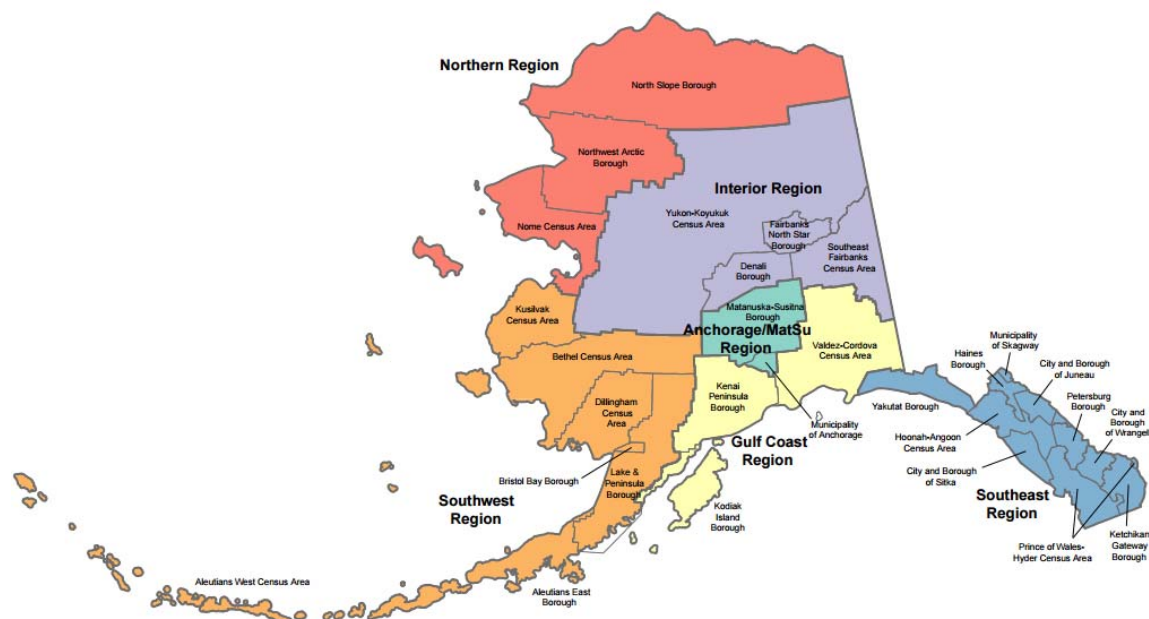
By occupation, the largest growth is projected to come from health care as well. Health Care Support is the occupational category projected to grow the most at 23 percent, followed by Health Care Practitioners and Technical, Personal Care and Service, Community and Social Service, and Construction and Extraction.

Occupational “openings,” the combination of growth and replacement needs, are projected to be highest among the especially large occupations, not surprisingly, and also those with relatively low wages because they tend to have the most turnover. At the top of that list is Cashiers, followed by Retail Salespersons. Among occupations with higher wages and more training requirements, Registered Nurses stands out for having an especially high projected number of openings.

Although Alaska’s economy and labor market are not dramatically different than most other states or the nation overall, outside of the state’s population centers, there are more significant differences.

Economic Region Overview

The state is divided into six economic regions: Northern, Interior, Southwest, Anchorage/Mat-Su, Gulf Coast, and Southeast.



For the most part, the Anchorage/Mat-Su, Gulf Coast, and Southeast regions would roughly mirror the state pattern in terms of the types of jobs they have and are projected to have. Fairbanks, the state's second largest city and the largest piece of the Interior Region by population would also have a typical mix of employment.

The Northern Region is home to most of the state's very large oil and gas industry and also includes the Red Dog Mine, one of the world's largest zinc mines. The Southwest Region is heavily dependent on fishing, which supplies a large percentage of the nation's total commercial fish harvest by both poundage and value. The Interior Region, outside Fairbanks, has a mix of resource industries — large coal and gold mines, for example — and is also home to Denali National Park, which generates a large number of seasonal jobs and a handful of year-round jobs.

Even in the most rural areas, there is a demand for basic health care, local government, retail, accommodations, and transportation jobs, among others. There is considerably less demand, as one would expect, for professional and business services, finance, information, and other jobs that depend on a larger population to serve.

Over the past year, Alaska experienced an increase in the unemployment rate while the rest of the nation's rate fell. According to [data](#) from the department's Research and Analysis Section, in June 2015 the total seasonally-adjusted unemployment rate for Alaska was 6.8 percent, an increase of 0.3 percent from June 2014. The comparable national rate in June 2015 was 5.3 percent, down an impressive 2.2 percent from June 2014.

Although Alaska continues to combat declining revenue, the state is projected to gain 36,000 jobs between 2012 and 2022, for a growth rate of 10.8 percent. The health care and social assistance sector will grow the most at a projected 25 percent, followed closely by mining — minus oil and gas — at 24.8 percent. Alaska's population is expected to grow by 10 percent between 2012 and 2022. During the same period, Alaskans age 65 and older will increase by a whopping 79 percent, which will substantially increase demand for health care workers, as will our recent Medicaid expansion.

Department Priorities

Alaska Hire

As the Administration focuses on economic development opportunities and near-term cost savings to address the budget shortfall, the Department of Labor and Workforce Development recognizes that it is critical to hire Alaskans for Alaska's jobs. The department plays a vital role by



making Alaska Hire a top priority. Alaska Hire requires that at least 90 percent of jobs on state-funded projects go to Alaska residents. At a time of shrinking capital budgets and declining oil sector employment, it is more important than ever that Alaska's limited tax dollars be invested efficiently to create economic opportunities for Alaskans. "Alaska Hire is good for families, good for local businesses, and good for our state's economy," according to Commissioner Heidi Drygas in the June 2015 Trends Magazine published by the department.

The department's Research and Analysis Section found that in 2013 (the most recent year for which data are available), the percentage of nonresident workers in Alaska increased by two-tenths of a percentage point and the percentage of wages earned by nonresidents increased by four-tenths of a percent. Nonresidents earned 15.2 percent of total wages, up from 14.8 percent in 2012. Alaska's workforce increased by 0.2 percent, but the number of resident workers fell by 0.03 percent while nonresident workers increased by 0.9 percent (<http://laborstats.alaska.gov/reshire/reshire.htm>). Reducing the rates of non-resident hire will mean more money staying in Alaska's economy to benefit more Alaskans.

Registered Apprenticeships

A priority of the department is to increase and expand Registered Apprenticeship as a training model across many industry sectors, with a focus on the healthcare, construction, oil and gas, mining, and maritime industries. Construction apprenticeships have created great career paths for decades in Alaska and will continue to be the bedrock of developing the construction and natural resource-related workforce. Alaska anticipates that more than 1,000 new apprentices will be enrolled in this industry alone over the next few years. Apprenticeship isn't limited to the trades, however, and is being used as a tool to expand the supply of skilled, credentialed workers that employers demand in the healthcare and maritime industries as well. Alaska expects at least 250 new healthcare apprentices and over 200 maritime industry apprentices in the next few years. Apprenticeships are an important tool for our evolving, technologically sophisticated labor market, and smart use of apprenticeships will ensure more Alaskans get hired for jobs in their community.

With Apprenticeship one of the focuses of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, and with our recent award of an American Apprenticeship Initiative grant, we are gearing up to take advantage of new opportunities.

Partnerships

The implementation of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) brings additional opportunities for collaboration and coordination between education, workforce and economic development, and training programs, more closely aligning them with regional economies. Alaska understands the vision of WIOA, and department leadership and the Alaska Workforce Investment Board have spent much of this past program year building closer ties among key workforce partners including business leaders, labor unions, the university system, other postsecondary partners, non-profit organizations, and youth-serving organizations. This coordination, coupled with the

implementation of a WIOA-compliant Eligible Training Provider and Program List, offers a more employer, job-driven approach to training and skills development. We are working to engage business partners to lead Industry Sector partnerships for Healthcare, Oil and Gas, Maritime, Mining, and Construction. These industries have each developed their own workforce development plans, which can provide the basis for robust sector partnership work.

Universal Access and Priority of Services

The department offers universal access to its services, while extending a priority of services to veterans, unemployment insurance claimants, long-term unemployed, under-employed, dislocated workers, low-income individuals, public assistance recipients, individuals with disabilities, individuals with limited English proficiency, the homeless, older workers, and returning citizens. With WIOA, priority of service is expanded to include a focus on individuals who are basic skills deficient and those with barriers to employment.

Integrated Service Delivery

One of the department's objectives is to maintain a fully integrated system that ensures availability of workforce services to all customers through a single delivery system. This efficient use of resources includes integrating all Workforce Investment Act (WIA) programs (now WIOA) -- Wagner-Peyser, Unemployment Insurance, Veterans' programs, Senior Community Service and Employment Program, and other required partners into the One-Stop Job Center system.

The department's vision for the One-Stop Job Centers is to field all job seeker needs, including case management, support services, career services, specific job-seeking services, referral to target programs, and educational resources. To make the Alaska One-Stop Job Center system more efficient, the department identifies high-skill/high-wage/high-demand occupations and develops job training strategies to meet the needs of Alaska businesses.

Goals for meeting employer needs and increase job seeker competitiveness include:

- Increasing the rate of industry-recognized credential attainment among participants who receive training;
- Promoting training strategies tailored to the unique needs of low-skilled adults;
- Increasing training in healthcare, resource production and extraction, construction, maritime, and other high growth industries.

Our main strategies for meeting these goals are:

- Co-enrollment among programs to leverage resources;
- Reviewing the "Enrolled in Education" designation and how it ties to credential reporting, to ensure grantees are entering credentials in a manner that allows them to be captured by the system;
- Coordinating with the state's Correctional system to provide technical training and pre-release career services to returning citizens;

- Co-location of Job Centers with other partners, e.g., Seward’s Job Center is co-located on the AVTEC campus;
- Making job center services more mobile, i.e., providing services at a correctional institution, secondary Career/Technical school, and other off-site venues; and
- Addition of a Local Veterans’ Employment Representative to focus on employer relationships in hiring veterans.

These strategies are being used across all the WIA core programs in order to improve the outcomes for our workforce system.

Workforce Investment Act Programs and Performance

Adult, Dislocated Worker, and National Emergency Grant Programs

The Adult, Dislocated Worker, and National Emergency Grant program services are delivered by Career Support and Training Services (CSTS) case managers located at the One-Stop Job Centers. CSTS staff work one on one with participants to provide individualized assessments and determine the appropriate range of services, goals, and support to meet the participant’s needs. The case manager gathers participant information for data validation and reporting purposes, provides career counseling, makes appropriate referrals to other resources, reviews labor market information with the participant, and helps identify short and long term employment goals to create the individual employment plan. The ultimate goal is credential attainment for employment in industries and occupations that offer good wages and opportunities for advancement.

The department’s Adult program focuses on preparing workers, particularly low income, disadvantaged, low-skilled, and underemployed, for good jobs. In PY 2014, there were 2,185 participants in the Adult program, with 1,666 of those receiving self-services. Case managers actively worked with 519 participants, of which 254 were new registrants. Program exits increased from 118 in PY 2013 to 198 in PY 2014 as case managers prioritized timely exits.

The Dislocated Worker (DW) program offers employment and training services to individuals who have lost their jobs, displaced homemakers, and employed workers who have received a notice that they will lose their jobs if additional training or credentials are not secured. PY 2014 saw a slight increase in enrollments from 202 in PY 2013 to 211 in PY 2014 with the overall total participants increasing by six percent from 393 to 419. The program experienced 166 exits during the program year.

Leveraging resources resulted in a 100 percent co-enrollment between the Dislocated Worker program and the Dislocated Worker Training-National Emergency Grant (DWT-NEG), which enabled more opportunities for unemployed workers to obtain employment and training services. The initial participant enrollment goal for the DWT-NEG was 100. By the end of PY 2014, that

enrollment had more than doubled to 214 participants throughout the life of the grant. There were 168 active DWT-NEG participants during the program year with 86 exits.

Performance Measures

The department continues to focus its workforce development programs on transitioning workers into high-wage, high-growth, and demand-driven jobs. This is evidenced in Adult and Dislocated Worker programs' average earnings performance as shown in Table 1. Alaska exceeded four of the six performance measures and met the remaining two.

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 will continue to expand and solidify its commitments to public/private partnerships; refine strategies and increase the responsiveness of the system; monitor, oversee, and provide technical assistance activities to improve program quality, strive for performance excellence, and make internal systemic changes as needed.

Table 1: WIA Performance Measures for Adult and Dislocated Workers Program

	PY 2014 Negotiated Performance	80% of Negotiated Performance	Exceeded/ Met/ Not Met	PY 2014 Actual Performance	PY 2013 Actual Performance	PY 2012 Actual Performance
Adult Employment Rate	80.0%	64.0%	Met	73.9%	79.4%	78.9%
Adult Retention Rate	82.0%	65.6%	Exceeded	84.8%	86.2%	81.3%
Adult Average Earnings	\$20,100	\$16,080	Exceeded	\$21,334	\$22,406	\$18,621
DW Employment Rate	81.5%	65.2%	Exceeded	86.2%	92.5%	73.9%
DW Employment Retention Rate	90.5%	72.4%	Met	89.9%	95.1%	89.7%
DW Average Earnings	\$23,500	\$18,800	Exceeded	\$24,486	\$25,388	\$21,881

Source: Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Division of Employment and Training Services

Youth Program

Alaska's WIA Youth program promotes economic development and stability through comprehensive employment, vocational, and academic services to eligible youth.

In PY 2014 the department provided \$1,554,276 to ten PY 2013 grant recipients for an extension of their projects to carry out the youth program functions. The grant recipients ranged from nonprofits to school districts, universities, and juvenile detention facilities, and focused efforts on both rural and urban populations. Rural participants benefited from desperately needed work experience opportunities in the Yukon Delta region and have greatly benefited from the development of strong partnerships with local schools, which positively impacted graduation rates. Homeless youth in urban areas benefited from a safe environment and received services designed to help them graduate from high school and gain work experience. Innovative strategies were implemented in juvenile detention centers to offer adjudicated youth occupational skills training, high school diploma attainment, and work experience.

During PY 2014, the WIA Youth program provided services to 499 youth experiencing barriers to employment and academic progression, 37 percent (184) of whom were out-of-school, and 63 percent (315) of whom were in-school. The total marks an 18 percent decrease from youth served in PY 2013 (610), with the majority of the decrease attributed to providing intensive follow-up services to exited youth participants. Additionally, enrollment of adjudicated youth at juvenile detention centers was reduced due to low numbers of enrollable youth within the treatment facilities. Youth in these treatment facilities are not recruited, but are placed in the facility due to an illegal offense.

Performance Measures

Overall, the program experienced a drop in total participants during the program year but maintained acceptable performance standards, reaching at least 80 percent of the negotiated performance standard. The most significant decrease in performance occurred within the Attainment of Degree or Certificate rate. The state is reviewing the Enrolled in Education designation and how it ties to credential reporting within the case management system, to ensure grantees are entering credentials in a manner that allows them to be captured by the system.

Table 2: WIA Youth Program Performance Measures

	PY 2014 Negotiated Performance	80% of Negotiated Performance	Exceeded/ Met/Not Met	PY 2014 Actual Performance	PY 2013 Actual Performance	PY 2012 Actual Performance
Placement in Employment or Education	57.5%	44.8%	Met	47.1%	57.5%	51.1%
Attainment of Degree or Certificate	62.0%	49.6%	Met	51.3%	72.8%	48.9%
Literacy and Numeracy Gains	38.0%	30.4%	Met	34.1%	48.8%	26.3%

Source: Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Division of Employment and Training Services

Customer Satisfaction

The need to measure and improve customer satisfaction is an essential part of providing services. Information received allows for data driven decision making, helps focus limited resources to where they are most needed, and drives process and procedure development. It provides an opportunity to learn about what is important to participants, what is working, and what can be improved upon.

The department gauges customer satisfaction by surveying participants at the time of their exit. The participant has the option of replying to the survey by email or using Survey Monkey via a hyperlink.

The customer satisfaction survey is a set of eight questions that gauge the level of satisfaction with the employment and training services received by the participants. The survey is broken into two parts: 1) satisfaction with services, including assessments and support services; 2) satisfaction with training services. Along with the standard questions, participants are encouraged to submit additional feedback on the services received and provide ideas on improvements to the program.

In PY 2014, 568 surveys were sent to exiting Adult, Dislocated Worker, NEG and Youth program participants. The response rate was 23 percent, an increase of nine percent from the previous year. Individual survey results in Table 3 show an average of 83 percent of surveyed participants agreed that services they received met their needs and expectations. Of the participants who attended a training program, 73 percent were satisfied with the training they received.

Table 3: Customer Satisfaction Individual Survey Results

Survey Question	Agree	No opinion	Disagree	N/A*
<i>Service related questions</i>				
Satisfied with the overall services I received	86%	5%	9%	
The services met my expectations	82%	8%	10%	
The services provided were ideal for my needs	81%	9%	10%	
<i>Training related questions</i>				
Overall, the training met expectations	73%	9%	5%	13%
The amount of training time was adequate	73%	9%	5%	13%
I received adequate support from the training organization	69%	10%	8%	13%
I'm confident the training will increase my employability	71%	6%	10%	13%
Would recommend this training to others	73%	5%	9%	13%

*Not applicable when the survey respondent did not attend training.

Source: Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Division of Employment and Training Services

All comments received via the survey are reviewed, and the majority of the comments show appreciation for the program services. Other comments bring to light issues that are addressed by the Program Coordinator. Results of the customer satisfaction survey are also provided to the Alaska Workforce Investment Board and the Alaska State Legislature.

Alaska Job Center Network

The Division of Employment and Training Services of the Department of Labor and Workforce Development oversees the Alaska Job Center Network, consisting of 17 One-Stop Job Centers that provide labor exchange services, employment and training services, unemployment insurance, and associated programs to advance opportunities for employment and provide economic stability for communities in Alaska. The delivery points for these services are located online at www.Jobs.Alaska.Gov.

One-Stop Job Center system services include the Alaska Labor Exchange System (ALEXsys), an online, no-fee system that connects job seekers with employers looking for skilled workers. Job search assistance, career counseling, recruiting, job referral, and placement assistance for job seekers, and re-employment services to unemployment insurance claimants are all provided. Free tax services are made available annually and provided through My Free Tax Initiative, with IRS tax certified free help via an online chat and phone feature. Accessing free tax preparation and the resulting refunds have been life changing for several Job Center customers and fits well into the Disability Employment Initiative Asset Development strategy.

Employer services focus on intensive outreach and include services over and beyond the entry of job orders. Intensive outreach and regular follow-up is provided to discern employer needs, advise of hire incentives, or advise of new developments that help ensure compliance with state and federal laws. More significant services include the matching of job seeker experience, skills, and other qualifications with job requirements and assisting employers with special recruitment needs.

Reviewing resumes and referring qualified individuals to good jobs, coordinating job fairs and mass recruitments, helping employers analyze hard-to-fill job orders and minimize or avoid layoffs, and establishing USDOL-recognized apprenticeship programs are other premium services provided. Job Center highlights and key accomplishments for program year 2014 include 809,751 online labor exchange visits in the ALEXsys system; 198,985 individuals utilized Job Centers services; and job listings in ALEXsys hit 67,678. In order to leverage Job Center staff time, an ALEXsys virtual call center was established and serves 17 job centers and 426 Alaska prefixes. This call center averages 18 calls a day for assistance with registrations, resumes, passwords, and various workforce related questions.

The Alaska Career Ready program includes the WorkKeys[®] assessments, which allow job seekers to earn the National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC). During the program year, 3,443 WorkKeys assessments were given to job seekers in the Job Centers and partner agencies, leading to 934 NCRCs earned.

Upgrades to systems for PY 2014 include the modernization of the employer section of ALEXsys, which focuses on allowing employers to find qualified candidates for their job openings. This

includes improved search functionality with filtering, saved searches, and optional automated search features. The implementation of Alaska's Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) automated filing system allows employers and consultants the ability to submit applications electronically, saving time and money when applying for the WOTC program. The WOTC program issued 1,307 employer certifications for PY 2014, and as a result, employers were eligible to claim \$3,361,600 in tax credits.

Veterans Services

Alaska is home to 74,000 veterans, who make up 10 percent of the state's population and experience a higher than average unemployment (5.9 percent) as compared to the national average (5.5 percent). Department policies ensure priority of service to veterans and covered persons; eligible veterans and covered persons are identified at the point of entry and are notified of programs and services available. Point of entry includes the Job Centers, websites, and other virtual service delivery resources.

All veterans and covered persons pursuing employment are registered in ALEXsys, where a Virtual Recruiter is utilized to notify veterans of job openings that meet their search criteria prior to access by the public. Job orders are open for 24 hours for veterans and eligible spouses to allow them to view and apply for the positions prior to being opened to the public.

Priority of service is delivered in various ways, including a weekly monitoring of veterans' program activities by department leadership. Veterans with a Gold Card are promptly directed to appropriate staff for assessment and case management services. Job Center resource rooms have dedicated computers for use by veterans, and priority preference is provided to veterans for workshops, training services, and other resources.

All Job Center employment and training staff receive training on the Jobs for Veterans Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act, and other legislation that impacts veteran priority, preference, and employability. Staff focus on 1) the assessment of veterans to facilitate delivery of services; and 2) conducting outreach to employers to promote hiring veterans. Outreach is provided in places such as VA medical centers and vet centers, homeless shelters, civic and service organizations, Veteran Stand Down events, veterans' job fairs, and military installations.

Five 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 & Training Services and Vocational Rehabilitation.

In January 2015, a Local Veterans' Employment Representative (LVER) was hired, and within the first six months, gave eight presentations to over fifty employers, attended seven job fairs, established or strengthened relationships with over forty employers, and placed at least thirteen veterans in meaningful employment.

The annual Veterans and Military Spouses Job Fair was held in November 2014 and approximately 130 employers, education, training, and apprenticeship providers attended the event, which served nearly 900 participants. Employers conducted 158 interviews, made 13 provisional job offers, and estimated that 449 hires would occur over the next year as a result of the job fair.

In PY2014, Alaska's Job Centers and online labor exchange served nearly 11,000 veterans, and over 650 of those were served by the five DVOPs in the state.

Adult Basic Education

The Adult Basic Education (ABE) program provides adult learners with instruction in the basic skills of reading, writing, mathematics, English as a Second Language, or General Educational Development (GED) preparation. The intent is to prepare adults for transition into the labor market or higher academic or technical training. ABE and GED services are provided by multiple grant recipients located throughout the state.

During the program year, ABE admitted 3,483 students seeking educational assistance, and 56 percent (1,947) studied in the programs for 12 or more hours and were considered full-time students. Of the 1,947 full-time students:

- 966 (50 percent) tested as having reading and/or math skills at the 8th grade level or below.
- 175 (9 percent) tested as having reading and/or math skills at the 9th to 12th grade level.
- 806 (41 percent) tested on the Basic English Skills Test (BEST) and studied English as a Second Language.
- 849 were post-tested and 49 percent showed educational gain.

The state of Alaska awarded 365 GED diplomas during the program year.

Unemployment Insurance

Alaska's Unemployment Insurance (UI) program remains one of the top in the nation to issue timely first payments of UI benefits and remains committed to implementing strategies to speed unemployment insurance claimants' return to work. To this end, the UI program continues to partner with Job Center staff to assist unemployed Alaskans in gaining employment.

Alaska recently launched a project to transition from the Reemployment Assessment (REA) program to the Reemployment Services and Eligibility (RESEA) program as outlined in the

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). A customer-centered design for service delivery to unemployed workers is being developed and the UI Program is an active partner on the team. This service model will be piloted in the Anchorage Job Center during program year 2015.

UI highlights for program year 2014 include:

- total UI benefit dollars paid was \$129,330,345;
- total number of Alaska workers who received at least one week of benefits was 42,474;
- average weekly benefit amount paid was \$243;
- a total of \$2,228,415 in fraud overpayments, \$783,923 in fraud penalties and \$2,086,113 in non-fraud overpayments were collected;
- 98% of all UI claimants used automated systems to file their bi-weekly claims; and
- UI claim centers responded to 174,634 phone calls.

WIA Funding

Table 4: Summary of WIA Program Funding Used and Year-end Balances for PY 2014

Funding Breakouts		Available	Obligated Expended	Percent Expended	Available Balance
WIA Youth	Current	1,650,407	1,111,359	67%	539,048
	Carry In	725,473	725,438	100%	36
WIA Adult	Current	1,563,795	1,128,738	72%	435,057
	Carry In	703,494	638,189	91%	65,305
WIA DW	Current	1,233,585	995,870	81%	237,715
	Carry In	464,418	136,630	29%	327,788
Local Admin	Current	494,199	413,462	84%	80,737
	Carry In	229,160	188,076	82%	41,084
Rapid Response	Current	118,777	6,332	5%	112,445
	Carry In	102,760	78,754	77%	24,006
Statewide	Current	277,301	185,541	67%	91,760
	Carry In	160,364	160,364	100%	0
Statewide Projects	Current	207,976	12,492	6%	195,484
	Carry In	0	0	0%	0
Totals		7,931,709	5,781,245	73%	2,150,465

Source: Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Division of Employment and Training Services

Cost Effectiveness

Alaska leverages its workforce development resources to achieve increased efficiency and effectiveness at all levels of the system. Programs are evaluated on an ongoing basis to determine cost effectiveness and achievement of desired outcomes. Efforts to prepare WIA participants for employment in high-growth industries continued during the program year, and these jobs require a higher degree of skill and training as well as aggressive planning and investment.

Table 5: WIA Program Funding Cost Analysis

PY 2014 Cost Analysis			
WIA Title 1-B Participants	Participants	Costs	Cost per Participant
Adult PY 2014	520	1,766,927	3,397
Dislocated Worker PY 2014	418	1,132,500	2,709
Youth PY 2014	506	1,836,797	3,630

Source: Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Division of Employment and Training Services

Table 6: WIA Programs Cost Effectiveness Metrics

Program Year	Participants*	Costs	C- E Ratio
2014	1,444	4,736,224	3,280
2013	1,632	3,385,741	2,074
2012	1,276	4,655,502	3,649
2011	1,555	5,844,543	3,758
2010	1,977	8,597,693	4,347
PY 2010-2014	7,884	27,219,703	3,453

*does not include self-service customers

Source: Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Division of Employment and Training Services

State Evaluation Activities

As required under Section 136 of the WIA, monitoring and evaluations related to programs and activities authorized by Title I-B of the act were carried out. Ten WIA Youth grantees and the Job Center Adult and Dislocated Worker programs were all monitored and evaluated during the program year. The goal is to identify how effectively the vision, strategies, and procedures of the U.S. DOL Employment and Training Administration and the department are being achieved. The results provide the basis for making statewide and regional judgments regarding the effectiveness of the WIA programs administered within Alaska's workforce development system.

During PY 2014, monitoring efforts focused on ensuring information input into the management information and reporting systems was accurate for evaluation activities. Information extracted from the system included total enrollments, case load sizes, training and credential attainment information, literacy/numeracy rates and employment and retention.

Program and Equal Opportunity monitoring is conducted annually for all WIA grant recipients and the on-site visits and desk side reviews afford opportunities to: ensure participant eligibility is being determined correctly; ensure participant services are delivered appropriately; evaluate internal policies and procedures that are used; gather information from staff that perform and supervise the work; compare all information gathered; and issue important feedback through a comprehensive final monitoring report to each grantee.

Evaluating processes ensures that grant recipients are in compliance with federal and state laws and regulations, grant agreements, division policies and procedures for the WIA title I-B programs, and core, intensive and training services are being provided appropriately as specified under WIA. Participant file reviews and in-person technical assistance help identify areas of program strength and those needing improvement.

Reports of evaluations conducted provide constructive feedback and encourage open lines of communication. They further identify planned technical guidance, assistance, training, and corrective actions. This leads to timely, individualized, and specific staff training; opportunities to fine-tune processes and procedures; and sufficient time for corrective action to be accomplished.

Waivers for Program Year 2014

Waiver to allow the Board to carry out the roles of a local board, WIA regulations at 20 CFR 661.300(f). Alaska's need to establish a single regional planning area was in response to excessive administrative costs, inconsistencies in services, and a desire to improve overall performance. In an effort to include local participation and points of view, other local elected officials from Alaska's boroughs and cities are consulted in planning efforts and invited to participate in the Regional Advisory Councils. The quality of dialogue by the AWIB has been raised with more focus on statewide strategies and their linkage to regional economic and workforce development needs.

PY 2014 Impact- The impact of functioning as a single regional planning area streamlined the process and timeliness of awarding grants by the elimination of multiple layers of administrative entities; established consistent eligibility standards across the state; and improved visibility and accountability of workforce investment programs.

Waiver of the fund transfer limit between Adult and Dislocated Worker programs, allowing the state flexibility to respond to the particular needs of customers and labor markets by transferring up to 50 percent of a program's funding to the other program.

PY 2014 Impact- There wasn't a need to implement this waiver during PY 2014.

Waiver of the requirement for a 50 percent employer contribution for customized training, enabling employer match limits for WIA participants in customized training according to the size of the business: at least 10 percent of the costs for employers with 50 or fewer employees; at least 25 percent of the costs for employers with 51-250 employees; and for employers with more than 250 employees, the current statutory requirement of 50 percent will continue to apply.

PY 2014 Impact- This waiver was not implemented during PY 2014.

Waiver of on-the-job-training (OJT) employer reimbursement limits, allowing employer reimbursement for WIA participants in OJT according to the total size of the business: up to 90 percent for employers with 50 or fewer employees; up to 75 percent for employers with 51-250 employees; and for employers with more than 250 employees, the current statutory requirement of 50 percent will continue to apply.

PY 2014 Impact- This waiver builds the Alaska Job Center Network's capacity to engage in this critical work based training model. Having the ability to base employer reimbursement amount on business size lessened the burden on smaller employers, encouraged their participation, and increased the chances that providers will be able to use this important tool toward placing job seekers in permanent, high-skill employment.

Waiver to account for seasonal employment in performance measures to address the challenge of serving seasonal workers. Alaska was granted a waiver of the WIA performance measure pertaining to retention in unsubsidized employment six months after entry into employment for those communities in the state with high unemployment rates in the off-season. A three-month retention performance measure for seasonal workers in locations where unemployment averages greater than eight percent from November through March each year was approved.

PY 2014 Impact- Application of this waiver helped favorably increase the Adult Employment Retention and the Dislocated Worker Employment Retention rates.

Waiver to extend the time limit on the period of initial eligibility for training providers on the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL).

PY 2014 Impact- Application of this waiver significantly increased the number of providers who remained on the ETPL. This, in turn, allowed participants more choices for improving their skills. The increased number of training providers had further benefit, as in-state training tends to be less costly and more successful. The waiver also reduced the administrative costs associated with maintaining the ETPL.

Waiver to allow the use of Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) to youth. Allows flexibility in provision of training services to youth by waiving prohibition for youth to receive ITAs, especially out-of- school youth who need specialized training to meet career goals.

PY 2014 Impact- Due to limited funding, very few ITAs were realized in PY 2014. The ITAs that were used provided industry specific training that led to the attainment of recognized credentials for youth participants. This has a positive effect on the Attainment of Degree or Certificate and Placement in Employment or Education Common Performance Measures.

Waiver for exemption to provide incentive awards. WIA Section 134(a)(2)(B)(iiii) and 20 CFR 665.200(e) for exemption from the requirement to provide local workforce investment area incentive grants.

PY 2014 Impact- The current funding level in the Governor's Reserve was insufficient to cover the cost of providing incentive awards to local areas. Due to receiving the waiver, the state was able to prioritize the use of limited funds for the required activities deemed most essential to the basic functions of the workforce investment system, initiate activities that will further the goals outlined in the [Alaska Integrated Workforce Development Plan](#), and target special populations such as veterans and those experiencing disabilities.

Waiver for exemption to provide additional assistance to areas that have a high concentration of eligible youth. WIA section 129(b)(2)(C) and 20 CFR 665.200(h) to exempt the state from the requirement to provide additional assistance to local areas that have a high concentration of eligible youth.

PY 2014 Impact- The waiver provided Alaska with more flexibility in directing Governor's Reserve Funds to activities that best preserve basic functions of the statewide workforce investment system, thereby maintaining services for all eligible individuals, including youth. The waiver allowed the department to provide technical assistance to all local areas instead of conducting administrative paperwork that would have minimal impact.

Alignment with the Job-Driven Training Agenda

Alaska's waivers had varying impacts and outcomes in regards to advancing the President's Job-Driven training elements. The waiver that had the greatest impact in general is the ability to establish a single regional planning area. This allows for the Alaska Workforce Investment Board to foster and create regional collaborations among Job Centers, education institutions, labor, and non-profits. Even though Alaska is a very large state geographically, it's certainly small when it comes to working closely with stakeholders. This provides opportunities to work with employers to determine local or regional hiring needs and design training programs that are responsive to those needs.

With the on-the-job training waiver, having the ability to base employer reimbursement amount on business size lessened the burden on smaller employers and offered more opportunities for work-based learning opportunities with employers including on-the-job training and internships as training paths to employment.

The waiver to extend initial eligibility on the eligible training provider list allowed participants more training options. With the implementation of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, and focus on job-driven training, the state will be able to make better use of training provider data to drive accountability, inform what programs are offered and what is taught, and offer user-friendly information for job seekers to choose the programs and pathways that are most appropriate for them.

Finally, having the ability to focus funds on participants who are most in need promotes an environment of seamless progression from one educational stepping stone to another so individuals' efforts result in progress. The waiver of limitations on transferring funds between the adult and dislocated worker programs removes funding barriers which may prohibit individuals from accessing job-driven training and supportive services.

Adult, DW, and NEG Success Stories

No ‘missed-opportunities’ with efficient, effective and responsive CSTS services!

TJ Damian came to the Anchorage Career Support and Training Services (CSTS) in March 2015 after moving to the city from the native village of Alakanuk. He had no formal training and possessed limited work experience that included working at the Alakanuk Native Store. TJ had a desire to work in the mining industry.

TJ’s initial assessment showed that he had an interest in the maintenance/mining field. He had been offered a position with Brice Incorporated but it was contingent upon successful completion of a two week Mining and Petroleum Training Service training offered through the University of Alaska. The training was located at the Delta Mine in Fairbanks and TJ did not have the resources to pay for the training tuition or travel to the training.

CSTS staff worked with a regional native corporation and other funding sources to assist TJ with the travel, housing, food and tuition for training.



TJ was enrolled in the Adult program on March 27, 2015 and was successfully exited on April 17, 2015 with employment at Brice Incorporated making \$16 per hour.

Displaced Homemaker to Registered Nurse in Alaska's growing Healthcare Industry



Anita Hunsucker, a displaced homemaker, came to the Anchorage Career Support and Training Services (CSTS) in August 2012. She was the widow of a retired military spouse who returned to the workforce to provide for her dependent children. She was working part-time as a secretary at her local church and taking classes towards a Bachelor in Nursing Science Degree at the University of Alaska, an excellent choice due to Alaska's growing healthcare industry.

An assessment of Anita's needs identified she required assistance with tuition, fees, and books in order to continue her schooling. With this help, Anita was able to successfully complete her schooling and obtained her Bachelor's Degree in May 2014.

She studied very hard and after two attempts, passed the National Council of State Boards of Nursing NCLEX-RN exam.

CSTS staff worked with Anita on updating her resume and creating cover letters. Staff provided tips for interviewing and practiced mock interviewing with her. As Anita had limited work experience, she was taught how to successfully search for work in the healthcare field and assisted in her job search efforts.

On February 9, 2015, Anita obtained an on-call job as a Registered Nurse (RN) making \$28.94 per hour at Alaska Psychiatric Institute. This position turned into a full-time, permanent position shortly thereafter, and she was exited from the dislocated worker program on March 12, 2015.

“Getting a Good Job Feels Great”

Randy Colman came to the Career Support and Training Services (CSTS) Kenai office in July of 2014. He had been laid off from a local oilfield company and was in the market to attain new skills, as his current skill set was not in demand and very few jobs existed statewide. At enrollment, he was struggling to make ends meet as a laborer in a part time job.

On his own, Randy had already completed crane training with a local provider. He realized soon after that employers were requiring potential workers to have a Commercial Driver’s License (CDL) to go hand in hand with their crane certifications. Randy realized he needed help to pay for the additional training required to obtain his goal.

As a Priority of Service Veteran, Randy was quickly determined eligible for the Dislocated Worker program and Dislocated Worker Training-National Emergency Grant, based on his layoff, and a plan was formed to assist with tuition and fees associated with a Construction Equipment CDL/A course. CSTS also arranged for room and board in the area of training to ensure stability.



Randy successfully graduated in October of 2014 with a Class A CDL, including all available endorsements and several heavy equipment certificates.

A collaborative effort between Wagner Peyser Employment Security and WIA CSTS staff ensured Randy received resume assistance, job referrals, and employment application reviews. This coordinated approach along with Randy’s hard work resulted in employment as a heavy equipment operator on the North Slope starting in December 2014. Randy’s new employer is also providing additional training and certifications on their cranes so he can move up the ladder. His starting wage was \$28.00 per hour on a rotational 4 week on- 2 week off shift. Randy more than replaced his earnings in a job he enjoys. In quoting his thank you card to CSTS, Randy says “Thanks again for everything. Getting a good job feels great.”

On-the-Job Training. A win-win!

Jeremy Porter was attending the University of Alaska Automotive Technology program and as part of his program he needed to find an externship at an automotive shop.

Around the same time, the owner of Agens Automotive approached the Anchorage Job Center Business Connection looking for a mechanic and was interested in pursuing an on-the-job training situation. Due to solid referral mechanisms, the Business Connection referred the mechanic shop to Career Support and Training Services (CSTS). After working with CSTS to find the right person for the internship, Jeremy was identified as a possible hire.



Jeremy's requirement for an externship, coupled with the need to financially support his family while attending school made this a win-win situation. The on-the-job contract was negotiated with the employer and included a provision to help Jeremy obtain his Automotive Service Excellence (ASE) certificate.

Jeremy successfully completed his on-the-job training, received his ASE certificate, and graduated from the University of Alaska. He continues to work for Agens Automotive and is earning \$18/hour.

Jeremy was enrolled in the Adult program on May, 22, 2014 and exited on May 20, 2015. Both Jeremy and Agens Automotive are grateful for the assistance they received.

Youth Success Stories

Mentoring can change lives.



Zackary Simpson had an extensive criminal history primarily due to drug addictions. Zack's first troubles with the law began in 2010 and continued up through 2014, with multiple felony drug possession convictions and a general inability to overcome his barriers.

Zack enrolled in the WIA Youth program through Nine Star Enterprises on September 1, 2013. He was homeless, using drugs, and unemployed. Zack was provided appropriate assessments and mentoring to help him begin working on his addictions.

This ongoing mentoring allowed him to achieve goals including completing high school and gaining work readiness skills through work experience opportunities with a local youth partner's cafe. He excelled in working with the customers by keeping a positive attitude and making them feel welcome. In turn, he started to feel better about himself. Zack committed to remaining drug free and was enrolled in the carpentry occupational skills training, which he completed from beginner to advanced levels. He was assisted with writing a resume and applying for jobs.

With this training, Zack secured a good job and is now in a financial position to no longer be in danger of homelessness. Through this involvement with the WIA Youth program, he has been able to address and possibly overcome his drug addiction, move away from his criminal behaviors and become an extremely productive, in-demand member of the workforce. His entire demeanor and viewpoint on himself has changed for the better.

It takes a village, and a youth program.



John Hunt is an 18 year old from Emmonak, Alaska - an area with high youth suicide and disenfranchisement rates and comes from a family who depends on a subsistence lifestyle. Training and employment opportunities are scarce and usually held by adult workers.

John enrolled in the WIA Youth program in 2011 through Yukon Delta Fisheries Association, and was provided paid work experience within the local fishery. His strong work ethic earned a promotion to safety officer

for the fisheries Salmon Roe Processing area. John was also provided the opportunity to enroll in welding training, paid for by partner resources, while attending high school.

John graduated high school, became a certified welder, and gained employment with the local boat manufacturing shop in Emmonak.

Additionally, he taught himself how to cut his own hair and now provides haircuts in his village as the only local barber in the community. He plans to expand and diversify his skills and attend barber school to become a certified barber.

With support from the WIA Youth program John was able to mature as an independent and enterprising asset to his community.



Veteran Success Story

Veteran Johnathan Wilson retired from the Army in 2014 after serving as an artilleryman, a sniper, and an academy instructor. He and his family wanted to retire in Alaska and visited the Mat-Su Job Center in November 2014, where he met with a DVOP who assisted him with his transition from the military to the civilian sector.

Mr. Wilson worked with the DVOP to review and demilitarize his resume and cover letter, practice interview techniques, and discuss wage negotiation strategies. Valuable online tools such as O*NET and www.mynextmove.org were utilized. Mr. Wilson was very high speed, self-sufficient, and an utmost professional when it came to listening and learning from others. He had a plan in place to secure housing and find a job prior to his military retirement, and then to attend college full time. Mr. Wilson was very proactive and knew what he needed to do to submit a complete application package. He secured housing within a week of being in Alaska and was contacted for a job interview mid-December.

This veteran now works for the Whaler's Casino Supply Company in the machine maintenance section. His position is full time, offers a full benefits package, and provides a starting salary of \$45,000 per year.

Mr. Wilson was very appreciative for the myriad of employment services he received while utilizing the Mat-Su Job Center and the intensive services he received from the DVOP.



Assurances

The Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development assures that all required elements for the PY 2014 WIA Annual Report are reported uniformly.