

Alaska's Program Year 2006 WIA Annual Report



State of Alaska
Governor Sarah Palin
October 1, 2007



**ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF LABOR
& WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT**

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STATE OF ALASKA

DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

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October 1, 2007

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

Dear Madam Secretary:

On behalf of Governor Sarah Palin, I am pleased to submit Alaska's Workforce Investment Act Annual Report for Federal Program Year (PY) 2006. The report consists of the enclosed narrative report and the data being submitted separately under the Employment and Training Administration's Enterprise Information Management System.

During PY 2006, Alaska successfully integrated employment, education, training and support services in its continuing goal to provide Alaskan employers with a demand-driven, skilled workforce and Alaskans with good paying jobs and opportunities for career choice. Alaska's economy demands higher levels of education and technical skills from our workers than any time in the state's history. Consequently, pathways for Alaska's youth and adults to high wage, high demand careers are imperative. The state will continue to promote the linkage of private sector investment with public sector services and resources in an effort to create new employment opportunities.

The workforce investments realized in PY 2006 are among many in support of Alaska's citizenry. We are committed to meeting Alaska's workforce needs through innovation and creativity and appreciate the support and commitment from your partnership with Alaska.

Sincerely



Clark Bishop
Commissioner

Enclosure

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Workforce Investment Act Title I-B Programs in Alaska

Introduction and State Overview

Governor Sarah Palin made a pledge to “focus on improving the success of our students, to make our homes and communities safe and prosperous, and to create opportunities so that Alaskans, particularly those in areas of high unemployment, have a chance to actualize their potential and become more prosperous and competitive in a global marketplace.” This goal requires an alignment between workforce development, economic development and education efforts focused on creating an environment that produces good paying jobs and gives Alaskans the opportunities to develop the skills necessary to meet career choices.

To that end, the Alaska Legislature worked with the Governor to make important public policy choices that will positively impact Alaska's people and economy. The Alaska Gasline Inducement Act (AGIA), enacted in June 2007, will enable the state to support a cornerstone of Alaska's economy: resource extraction. The state is optimistic a qualified licensee to construct a gasline will be selected and submitted to the Legislature for approval in the spring of 2008. As a result, preparing Alaskans to work on the Alaska Gas pipeline remains the state's highest priority in workforce development.

Alaska's economy demands higher levels of education and technical skills from our workers than at any time in the state's history. Knowledgeable workers equipped with specialized skills gained through apprenticeship, job training, vocational

technical training or post-secondary education will fill the fastest-growing jobs. However, Alaska employers continue to face challenges including:

- An aging workforce,
- A highly competitive market for workers,
- The complexity of attracting young workers,
- Narrow pool of available, skilled workers from which to draw,
- Thousands of projected new jobs in the future, and
- Historical reliance on a transient workforce, of which approximately 20 percent are nonresident workers.

Alaska's Workforce Investment Board (AWIB) maintains a comprehensive vision focused on developing a workforce system to meet these challenges and that is useful, accessible and understandable to all of the system's customers. The AWIB's targeted industries for training investments in PY 2006 were:

- Health Care
- Construction
- Information Technology
- Education
- Natural Resource Development (oil, mining and petroleum)
- Transportation
- Hospitality and Tourism
- Seafood Harvesting and Processing

In program year 2006, Alaska adopted five principles for workforce

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development: forming partnerships, leveraging resources, developing sustainable activities, designing innovative programs and focusing on outcomes. Forming effective workforce development partnerships and leveraging resources as a means of sustaining effective programs is of paramount importance. Job training for Alaska's youth (education reform), helping businesses hire well prepared workers (economic development) and aggressive outreach to employers and job seekers promoting resources available through Alaska's 24 job centers (workforce develop-

enhance performance. The Job Center also functioned as a key partner in the development of an innovative approach to meeting the construction industry's need for workers. The Alaska Workforce Investment Board set a new course in workforce development when it issued a resolution promoting WorkKeys and endorsed the Departments of Labor and Workforce Development and Education and Early Development collaboration around this initiative. Finally, the state leveraged \$850,000 from the legislature to improve career awareness and workforce readiness among Alaska's youth.

Transforming Alaska's economy in PY 2007 will require that Alaskans move from a public transfer economy to an enterprise economy, and that the subsistence lifestyle be protected and supported with the backing of small business development, the use of state of the art communication, work flow technologies, and web-based business solutions. While state government cannot create economies, it can design the structures in which an economy operates and encourage economic growth. Partnerships with communities and private organizations must focus on improving the quality of life in Alaska, fostering independence and respect for cultural values, and maximizing on the spirit of new enterprise. Through further regional integration of workforce and economic development partners, the department will continue to play an integral role in advancing the competitiveness of Alaska's workers.

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ment) were a few of the strategies that helped to meet Alaska's workforce development objectives.

Several initiatives were also targeted to support the state's guiding principles and strategies. The department submitted grant proposals for high growth initiatives in advanced manufacturing and the Workforce Innovation and Regional Economic Development (WIRED) initiative. The department also successfully facilitated an application for a Community Based Job Training Initiative grant that was awarded to the University of Alaska in long term health care. The Job Center Operator realigned to improve services to adults and dislocated workers as well as to

Notable Highlights

The Governor's Committee on Employment and Rehabilitation of People with Disabilities held its annual awards ceremony September 28, 2006, in Juneau to honor individuals, organizations and businesses that have made a significant contribution to the employment of people

with disabilities. The Hewitt Memorial Award was awarded to Margie Thomson, who works at the Juneau Job Center as a Project Assistant with the USDOL Office of Disability Employment Programs' Customized Employment Grant.

The Hewitt Memorial Award recognizes a rehabilitation specialist whose work has been of extraordinary benefit to people with disabilities. Ms. Thomson has distinguished herself with the ability to bring diverse staff and customers into strong partnerships to promote employment opportunities for people with disabilities. Because of her leadership, new partnerships have emerged and blossomed at Job Centers throughout the state. Ms. Thomson serves as a reminder that it is not about disabilities and deficits, rather about the person and their unique strengths and abilities.

Throughout PY 2006, the department was raising the awareness of high school students, teachers and parents of the exciting career opportunities available in energy-related industries in Alaska. An essential message was conveyed that many of the high-demand, high-wage careers do not require a college education. While most of today's jobs and those in the near future will require some sort of training, much of the training is short-term and is readily accessible for students at any level. There are rewarding jobs all across the state, many in energy-related industries, which are waiting to be filled.

What to do after graduation is a common question asked by Alaska's high school seniors. A new program at the King Career Center in Anchorage is helping to provide some answers. The "One Stop Shop" is a collaborative effort between the department and the Anchorage School District, which opened on October 31, 2006. Students visit the One Stop Shop to learn the latest information on careers that are projected to grow in Alaska, specifically in the construction, mining, energy, and transportation fields. When students visit the One Stop Shop, department career guides can talk to them about résumés, help students register with the State of Alaska's Labor Exchange System (ALEXsys), seek referrals with vocational counselors, and assist with financial aid information.

On November 9, 2006, workforce development representatives joined with other

state and federal officials, labor leaders, and leaders of the state's petroleum industry to congratulate 97 new pipeline workers who had graduated from the Fifth Annual Alaska Pipeline Joint Crafts Training Program. These graduates were trained to work on Alaska's North Slope. Building a new pipeline for Pioneer Natural Resource's Oooguruk Project and replacing 17 miles of the Trans-Alaska Pipeline were just two projects requiring trained workers.

The intensive two-week training academy, the only one of its kind in the country, focused on crew development, safe work practices, quality craftsmanship and environmental awareness—all skills necessary in laying pipe efficiently in the Arctic. The Academy is unique in that it is inventing and pioneering new technologies and techniques specifically designed to address Alaska's arctic conditions.

The training was funded in part by a federal Pipeline Training Earmark grant of \$496,000. Additional funding was received through a \$1.6 million appropriation by the Alaska Legislature, as well as more than \$200,000 in-kind contributions from labor and industry.

In February 2007, the Employment Security Division, the department's One Stop Operator, realigned its organizational structure for service delivery of job training programs. This realignment strengthens Alaska's workforce and encourages economic development by providing quality career support and training services. The realignment also addresses performance outcomes and works toward increasing entered employment rates.

Finally, the Alaska Legislature appropriated over \$9 million in general fund dollars to support workforce development and training. From construction academies to youth employability skills, Alaskans from every corner of the state benefitted from the partnerships and from leveraged resources that have helped sustain valuable workforce development programs and activities.

Many of the high-demand, high-wage careers do not require a college education. While most of today's jobs and those in the near future will require some sort of training, much of the training is short-term and is readily accessible for students at any level.

Adult and Dislocated Worker Programs

Alaska recognizes that measuring performance is a powerful mechanism for managing outcomes. In PY 2006, a total of 616 individuals participated in the WIA Adult program as compared to 779 in PY 2005. This reduction paralleled the reduction in available WIA Adult Program funding. By leveraging additional resourc-

es, the department served adults using fund sources including the High Growth Job Training Initiative Grant (HGJTI), which served 403 participants, and the State Training and Employment Program (STEP), which served 1,589 participants.

As shown in the following chart, the earnings change in six months for WIA Adult Program participants exceeded the negotiated performance rate by \$8,395.50. Although the entered employment rate, employment retention rate, and credential rate are slightly lower than the performance goal, they are all well above the 80 percent threshold of the negotiated rate.

Alaska continues to focus on transitioning workers into high wage, high growth and demand-driven jobs. This is being accomplished and directly relates to the marked increase in the earnings change performance measure. The department is committed to continuing the talent development of Alaska's workforce. The energy industry, an economic sector that promises high job growth and demand for skilled, trained labor, is a major focus in Alaska and will continue throughout the near future. Additionally, changes in the service delivery system, such as the realignment of programs management in the One Stops, was designed to place case managers in closer communications with subject matter experts to help solve complex Individual Training Account issues relating to blended services and dual enrollment, and to improve performance.

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WIA Adult Program Year 2006 July 1, 2006 – June 30, 2007

Program Performance Measure	Negotiated Performance	PY 2006 Actual Performance	80% of Negotiated Performance
Entered Employment Rate	74.0%	72.2%	59.2%
Employment Retention Rate	84.0%	78.0%	67.2%
Earnings Change in Six Months	\$5,200	\$13,595	\$4,160
Credential Rate	63.0%	62.3%	50.4%

A total of 446 individuals were served in the WIA Dislocated Worker Program during PY 2006, down from 797 in PY 2005. This total does not include 98 National Emergency Grant (NEG) and 403 HGJTI participants. Due to a healthy economy, availability of other job training funds, and a surplus of skilled jobs openings, dislocation ac-

tivity has declined. This is the third consecutive year that the number of dislocated workers and lay off events decreased. The chart below shows the performance for the WIA Dislocated Worker Program in PY 2006.

WIA Dislocated Worker Program Year 2006 July 1, 2006 – June 30, 2007

Program Performance Measure	Negotiated Performance	PY 2006 Actual Performance	80% of Negotiated Performance
Entered Employment Rate	81.0%	74.2%	64.8%
Employment Retention Rate	89.0%	84.5%	71.2%
Earnings Change in Six Months	\$2,300	\$19,079	\$1,840
Credential Rate	74.0%	57.1%	59.2%

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. A three-month retention performance measure, for seasonal workers in locations where unemployment is greater than seven percent at the beginning of a calendar year, was approved. Application of this waiver favorably increased both WIA Adult and Dislocated Worker Program Employment Retention Rates by 2.4 percentage points.

In PY 2007, the state is considering an increase of the state limitations on adult funding per participant; converting additional WIA Dislocated Worker Program funds to the WIA Adult Program; and an increase in case manager training. The department anticipates increases in the number of participants in both pro-

grams and improvements in the entered employment, employment retention, and credential rates.

The department will continue to monitor and provide oversight and/or technical assistance activities to address minor deficiencies, such as the WIA Dislocated Worker Program Credential Rate, strive for performance excellence and improvement, make internal systematic improvements, and be responsive to new federal initiatives that require program enhancements or evolution.

SUCCESS stories

Lorraine Angeles, a displaced homemaker, came to the Peninsula Job Center for assistance in finding work to support herself and help in her effort to obtain support her family. Lorraine enrolled in a six month introductory office skills course to earn a Computer Information Processing Certificate. Lorraine said, "I surprised myself with the abilities I already had and developed while in training." She successfully completed the program and was recognized by the teachers and the director of the school for the skills she developed. Lorraine's training and support for some of her basic needs were paid through the Workforce Investment Act Dislocated Worker program.

Lorraine was hired to perform bookkeeping and administrative duties for a local company, Northland Drilling. She started at \$10 per hour and is now earning \$13.50 per hour. She visits the Job Center occasionally to give updates on her progress and frequently shares how grateful she is for the program and the positive coaching that has given her a boost in self confidence and a new lease on life.



SUCCESS stories



Partnership is the word that best describes the key to Denny Cooper II's successful return to work after meeting with the Peninsula Job Center vocational counselor. Denny was a dislocated worker from the oil industry and spoke with his vocational counselor about a position for a new method of performing inspections on the pipelines. Denny had done extensive research on the Non-Destructive Testing Technician jobs and training required for these positions. He knew exactly what he needed to do to obtain the Industrial Radiography and Radiation Safety Personnel (IRRSP) credential. His preferred employer was Acuren Inspection, Inc., a company that provides materials testing and inspection services to companies in the Alaska oil fields on the North Slope.

Denny's past experience in inspection made him a great candidate for skills upgrading that would get him back to work. Ultimately, he would like to work toward becoming an instructor himself.

Denny attended a series of trainings funded through the Workforce Investment Act Dislocated Worker program and Alaska's High Growth Job Training Initiative grant and was hired in June of 2007 by Acuren Inspection, Inc. at \$16.77 an hour. Since inspection work is so specialized, Acuren Inspection, Inc. employed their own trainer who certifies their inspectors in preparation for this credential.

Once Denny obtained employment, he began building hours toward eligibility to test for the Inspector's credential. Denny has been speaking with another company who may hire him during off-weeks from his job on the North Slope. Denny is thankful for the assistance and the encouragement provided by the Job Center staff.

WIA Youth Program

Alaska's WIA Youth program is an integral component of Alaska's workforce investment system. Comprehensive services were provided to 1,160 eligible in and out-of-school, at-risk youth in PY 2006. The emphasis in PY 2006 was to increase access for youth to high paying jobs in industries that are designated as AWIB priorities.

Over 69 percent of the youth enrolled were out-of-school. The enrollment of younger youth increased. Nearly 81 percent of the youth enrolled were between 14 to 18 years of age. The trend of serving a higher percentage of younger youth and a larger percent of out-of-school youth is indicative of the increased drop-out rate.

The WIA youth program provides a system that is focused on education and employment for youth who have dropped out of school. Youth grantees focus on encouraging youth to return to school if possible. The grantees also provide options for high school completion through diploma and GED programs, including connections to alternative schools and cyber-based programs. In-school youth are encouraged to remain in school and engaged in developing the skills needed to meet their career goals. The AWIB and the department proposed implementation of the WorkKeys model as a strategy to connect youth with careers.

WIA Youth Program Year 2006 July 1, 2006 – June 30, 2007

Program Performance Measure	Negotiated Performance	PY 2006 Actual Performance	80% of Negotiated Performance
Younger Youth (14-18)			
Skill Attainment	85.0%	84.7%	68.0%
Diploma/GED	65.0%	57.5%	52.0%
Retention and Placement	62.0%	55.9%	49.6%
Older Youth (19-21)			
Entered Employment Rate	71.0%	80.0%	56.8%
Credential Rate	53.0%	62.5%	42.4%
Retention and Placement	72.0%	76.2%	57.6%
Earnings Change in Six Months	\$3,700	\$3,898	\$2,960



Younger Youth Measures

An increased number of “neediest” youth who were basic skills deficient made it difficult to exceed skill attainment measures. The graduation rate for youth with a Diploma or GED for the WIA Youth Program was 57.5 percent. This could be due to the large number of younger youth high school drop outs served by the program.

Older Youth Measures

The department’s emphasis on jobs and the enhancement of employment opportunities provided through the department’s Career Guides and a new state program, Youth First, emphasized career pathway development that aided the state in exceeding all four of the Older Youth measures. The department’s publication *Hot Jobs in Alaska*, highlights high paying jobs and the required training. Copies were distributed to youth through the Alaska Job Center Network, schools, career fairs and other venues for youth.

The waiver from the Employment and Training Administration allowing Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) for youth provides high quality employment and training programs in Alaska. ITAs are also a benefit to the state’s performance in the Older Youth Retention measure. The new definition for credential has disqualified previously eligible credentials, making it more difficult to meet the employment and credential measure.

Other Youth Issues

Reaching out to difficult-to-serve youth from all parts of the state can mean reaching youth who may live under a bridge in Anchorage to rural youth who have never been enrolled in school. The number of youth in the juvenile justice and foster care systems has increased by over 30 percent. Services to Alaska Native youth have increased significantly.

The development of career academies is a creative approach in Alaska to serve youth. There is a direct correla-

SUCCESS stories



Kayla Peters loves to work and she works hard. She worked at a skateboard shop while in high school and found it hard to prioritize work and school. In frustration, she dropped out of school. It didn't take Kayla long to realize that by dropping out of school, her passion for skateboarding, playing guitar, singing and modeling would never be realized.

Kayla participated in the Workforce Investment Act Youth Services program to meet her goal of obtaining a GED. While attending classes at Southeast Regional Resource Center (SERRC), feeling the classes were too easy, she almost dropped out. With her mom's support and encouragement, Kayla accomplished her goal and was happy she did. Not only did she succeed in graduating, she was selected to be the student speaker!

Kyla's current job as an Administrative Clerk with the State of Alaska earning \$2,064 a month provides a road to pursue her passions and realize her dreams.

Annual training held in PY 2006 by the department focused on building partnerships between industry, higher education, secondary schools and tribal organizations.

tion between youth participating in the health care academy provided by the Matanuska-Susitna School District and those employed in the health care field. The school district has also seen an increase in youth entering post-secondary education

Annual training held in PY 2006 by the department focused on building partnerships between industry, higher education, secondary schools and tribal organizations. Highlights of the training program included an intensive session on serving foster youth and a session

on developing written career plans. Participation by Job Center staff from around the state and other youth program providers reflected the high level of integration between all youth programs, employers, organizations and educators.

The resource map project will add to the options available for youth. The infrastructure for the youth resource map, www.alaska-youth.org, a searchable website for resources for youth, parents and providers, was completed in PY 2006. The map will next be populated with statewide information.

WIA Statewide Activities

WIA Statewide Activities grants and programs are consistent with the AWIB's Strategic Plan, priority industries, and Alaska's Strategic Two-Year State Plan PY 07-08. This past year the focus was on funding the required activities as described in the federal regulations. Expendi-

tures for required activities include: disseminating the eligible training provider list; conducting evaluations in order to establish and promote high-level performance practices; and assisting in the establishment and operation of One Stop delivery systems.

Statewide Activities Categories PY 2006 Expenditures

One-Stop Delivery, Capacity Building, Staff Development and Technical Assistance	\$ 178,893
Evaluation	\$102,808
Incumbent Worker Projects	\$ 3,033
Eligible Training Provider List and Management Information System	\$ 390,518

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

TOTAL \$675,254

Allowable activities included: funding the One Stop academy, providing capacity building and technical assistance, supporting incumbent workers by establishing and implementing innovative programs and state administration costs.



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WIA Title 1-B Funding Breakouts	Available	Expended/Obligated	Percent Expended	Remaining Balance
Total All Fund Sources	\$13,450,893	\$10,205,151	76.00%	\$3,245,742
Adult Program Funds	2,294,949	2,053,806	89.50%	241,143
Adult Carry In Funds	474,570	446,908	94.20%	27,662
Dislocated Worker Program Funds	2,938,011	2,811,552	95.70%	126,459
Dislocated Worker Carry In Funds	521,427	41,895	8.00%	479,532
Youth Program Funds	2,356,513	2,146,337	91.10%	210,176
Youth Carry In Funds	305,328	268,545	88.00%	36,783
Local Administration Funds	843,275	723,612	85.80%	119,663
Local Administration Carry In Funds	363,983	21,049	5.78%	342,934
Rapid Response	560,300	519,033	92.63%	41,267
Rapid Response Carry In Funds	334,167	84,862	25.40%	249,305
Statewide Activities Funds	1,587,008	811,881	51.16%	775,127
Statewide Activities Carry In Funds	871,362	275,671	31.64%	595,691

Cost Analysis—WIA Title 1-B Registered Participants

	Participants*	Costs	Cost Per Participants
Adult	616	\$ 2,500,714**	\$ 4,059.60
Dislocated Worker	446	\$ 2,853,447**	\$ 6,397.86
Youth	1,160	\$ 2,414,882**	\$ 2,081.80
Total	2,222	\$7,769,043	\$3,496.42

* The software for calculating this data was received late and left insufficient time to restart the report development process. Data and analysis may be subject to revision.

** Only program costs are used.

Alaska invested in its youth through intensive career counseling and helping to create a heightened awareness in Alaska's families about career opportunities in the state.

The saying of "you get what you pay for" describes the change in Alaska's financial statement. The state's workforce investment financial resources were focused on preparing Alaskans for high wage, high demand occupations. These jobs are generally technical in nature and require a higher degree of skill and training than is obtained through short term, intensive training. The opportunity to build and manage a \$30 billion gas pipeline will change the face of Alaska's economy. Preparing the workforce for such a project requires highly skilled professionals, aggressive planning and investment.

Program year 2006 was a year of investment in quality training tied to employment outcomes. Alaska invested in its youth through inten-

sive career counseling and helping to create a heightened awareness in Alaska's families about career opportunities in the state. Investments in supportive services changed as the state worked to align resources and leverage funds. The recent decline in WIA funding has driven the state to leverage funds from other federal and state resources as a way to continue its investment in quality training.

The state's investment in quality technical training yielded an earnings change rate that exceeds negotiated measures. Alaska expects to maintain the high earnings rate as workers are trained through apprenticeship for employment on the Alaska gas line.



Rapid Response

Alaska's Rapid Response (RR) program continued to transform to align with industry needs and the One Stop delivery system. Alaska's rapid response team accomplished the goal of making program information readily available including the launching of the RR website: www.jobs.state.ak.us/rr/. An innovative approach to deliver a rapid response informational meeting was to create an easily accessible video available on the RR Web site. The ability to attend a virtual worker informational meeting is not intended to replace the in-person meetings; it is another option for the convenience of displaced workers and employers. The videos are posted on the Web site and DVDs will be produced for mailing to employers and individuals who do not have internet access or are not able to attend an on-site meeting.

RR coordinated with Alaska Job Centers to transform the way RR services are delivered at the worker informational meetings. The Mobile Job Center was brought on-site to the meeting location allowing workers immediate access to WIA and Wagner-Peyser services, including immediate access to jobs by registering online in the ALEXsys labor exchange system.

Team members honed their skills by working with 78 businesses and over 900 workers early in the program year. During the second half of the program year, a decrease in layoff events occurred. RR used the opportunity to develop programs that concentrate on layoff aversion and strengthening businesses.

A primary goal of rapid response is to help expanding businesses obtain the information and resources needed to remain competitive. In April 2006, RR began strategic planning for a layoff aversion project with the Small Business Development Center.

This project targets small towns and villages in Southeast Alaska to assist them in developing strategies to maintain competitiveness and profitability in an environment where the cost of transportation is high and to address competition from large chain stores such as Wal-Mart and Home Depot that have recently moved into the region. This collaborative approach will not only ensure a leveraging of limited resources, it will improve and support increased levels of technical assistance, training, cross fertilization and communications efforts.

SUCCESS stories

Mr. Christopher Bryner was a business manager with Sheldon Jackson College in Sitka, Alaska earning \$47,799.96 annually. He and his wife wanted to stay in Sitka after Sheldon Jackson College announced its closure, so he launched an intensive local area job search. Although Mr. Bryner attended initial Rapid Response informational meetings, he did not request assistance, as he felt he could handle the job search on his own.

A member of the rapid response team, who was at lunch, met Mr. Bryner in a small restaurant. After learning from the team member that he could obtain assistance to help in his effort to be marketable to employers, Mr. Bryner decided he wanted services after all.

Mr. Bryner attended several interviews for local jobs. His first job interview was for a placement that did not suit him. The second position was closer to his experience and interests and paid a better salary. Mr. Bryner attended the interview and asked if he was going to be considered for the job. The employer implied there were other qualified applicants he must consider. However, Mr. Bryner remembered the On-the-Job training possibilities that were available. He mentioned the possibility of the Workforce Investment Act program paying partial wages while he was being trained. The employer had participated in a similar arrangement in the past and was interested in this option. In early 2007, Career Development Specialist Barb Truitt finalized negotiations creating an On-the-Job training position for Mr. Bryner.

Mr. Bryner was hired with the Alaska Marine Safety Education Association as a Course Coordinator, at a wage comparable to his wage of dislocation. Mr. Bryner is pleased with the assistance he received and is happy he chose to stay in Sitka.

Trade Adjustment Assistance

In PY 2006, Alaska used the \$250,000 awarded for management information system upgrades to fine tune the Trade Act System (TAS).

Trade Act activity declined during PY 2006 and is a testimony to the good health of the state's economy. Some of the foreign-trade impacted companies that incurred major layoffs in the past now represent the top 20 of Alaska's 100 largest private-sector employers.

The oil and gas industry increased their workforce in 2006, and this trend will likely continue as the state and department plan for extensive oil and gas exploration and development. Major layoffs anticipated in the Kenai area last year from the Trade-impacted company Agrium U.S., Inc., and the secondarily-affected company, Peak Oilfield Service, fortunately did not occur. Alyeska Pipeline Service Company, another Trade-certified company, also saw only a handful of layoffs this last year. Of those that were laid off, Trade Act benefits such as training, supplemental payments, and the Health Care Tax Credit eased the transition for affected workers.

Those covered under the commercial salmon fishing industry petition represented Alaska Trade Act's largest group of training participants, with an application rate comparable to prior years. As the commercial fishing industry recovered, many fishers chose their traditional lifestyle of earning their living on Alaska's open waters as opposed to seeking TAA-funded training benefits.

In PY 2006, Alaska used the \$250,000 awarded for management information system upgrades to fine tune the Trade Act System (TAS). Extensive changes, based on new and evolving federal reporting requirements, were made to the system. The department will complete the remaining changes to the system in PY 2007 to include Workforce Investment Standard Performance Reporting (WISPR) requirements.

SUCCESS stories

In September of 2002, Alan lost his job as a pipe inspector with ASCG Inspection, Inc., a Trade Act-certified engineering company based out of Anchorage, Alaska. Following lay off, Alan worked at several part-time jobs in his field, but sadly was unable to obtain full time employment with the skills he had achieved and those required of the labor market at the time.

Alan contacted the Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) program staff who referred Alan to his nearest Job Center for assistance. An Individual Employment Plan was established that coordinated available training funds in order to assist with his re-entry into the job market on a more permanent basis. TAA funded all of his training expenses, some of his living expenses, and travel to training. The Workforce Investment Act Dislocated Worker Program provided professional direction and covered miscellaneous supportive costs generally not covered under TAA.

Alan chose the related field of Welding and Nondestructive Test Technician as his occupational goal, and began training at the University of Alaska in 2005. Alan graduated in May, 2007 with an associate degree in Applied Science in Welding and Nondestructive Testing Technology. Not only did he graduate in good standing, but he made the National Dean's List, an achievement for which Alan is understandably proud. In addition to his excellent grades, Alan has the added distinction of being a proven hard-worker, as he worked long hours at the University to help support himself during his training.

Alan's character and work ethic must have shown through during his job interview with Acuren USA, as he was hired as a Non-Destructive Testing Level II A Technician immediately after graduation. This is a permanent, full time, benefitted position with a starting wage rate of \$24.50.

SUCCESS stories

Wagner-Peyser

As the State continued to make improvements to the online Alaska Labor Exchange System (ALEXsys), an increased number of participants were able to access the system to register and file their resumé online from locations other than the Job Centers. Assisting customers in the Job Center Resource Rooms steadily increased, with staff assisted services increasing by 86 percent with over 46 percent of the referrals from WIA. As staff became more proficient with ALEXsys, the new labor exchange system, they were able to assist clients to construct useful online resúmes, which resulted in an improved quality of referrals to employers. The Job Center staff concentrated on training employers on how to use ALEXsys, which resulted in more employers posting their own job orders online and many employers performing their own employee search of the resume section of ALEXsys. The department continues to work on improvements to ALEXsys that will enhance services to all Alaskans.

Through staff reorganization, the Alaska Temporary Assistance Program (ATAP) Work Services team that provides employment assistance services to welfare-to-work clients, realigned to be a part of the Job Center employment services operations team. This change increased access to Job Center resource room job search activity allowing more clients to find suitable work in a shorter period of time. It also allowed team members to learn about the different programs available to clients. As a result, ATAP Welfare-to-Work customers received improved services.

The department deployed a second Mobile Job Center that travels to communities not accessible to Job Centers. The new vehicle was put on line to serve Southeast Alaska communities via the Alaska Marine Highway System, where there are no

roads connecting the communities. The other Mobile Job Center serves many locations throughout the Northern, South Central and Peninsula regions of the state. The staff from the Mobile Job Centers worked with community members to help them register on ALEXsys and visited schools to introduce youth to different employment opportunities and careers. Job Center partners find they too can use the Mobile Job Centers and have been traveling with department staff to serve their clients and help them find employment.

During this last year, the Job Center Teams traveled both in the mobile job centers and via other modes to bring state employment related services to several thousand high school students. In an effort to provide information to our future working Alaskans, staff shared information about youth employment and career opportunities. The teams worked in high schools, alternative schools and youth facilities providing workshops and introducing students to information about apprenticeships and vocational occupations.

An increased number of participants were able to access the system to register and file their resumé online from locations other than the Job Centers.

Richard Williams stopped by the Anchorage Mid-Town Job Center Seafood Office to share with staff how well his career had progressed since attending the Seafood Job Orientation the previous summer. He had just returned to Anchorage from Sitka Sound Seafoods on October 1, 2006.

Two days after completing Sea Grant Program in Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point and Sanitation, Richard attended a Job Center seafood orientation. Two days later, he interviewed with the HR recruiter, and was hired as a processor. He was quickly promoted into Quality Control, and soon after into the Supervisor position.

When the season ended in Bristol Bay, Richard transferred to the company's plant in Sitka. He hired two former co-workers who "had the right aptitude and were reliable". Richard provided both with training in Quality Assurance.

At the request of the plant manager, Richard wrote a 500 page procedural manual, detailing step-by-step instructions to enable new employees to effectively meet or exceed quality standards and requirements of the plant.



Veterans' Services

In the first few months of operation, the new Veterans' Job Lab served 234 veterans with a total of 295 dedicated hours.

ALEXsys improved the delivery of veteran services. One of the latest enhancements to ALEXsys is an automatic notification of a job order listing to registered veterans before releasing it to the general public. The feature generates an email notice to veterans who are registered in ALEXsys and meet the qualifications for the job as soon as the job is listed. This enhancement ensures a priority of services to veterans.

A new Veterans' Job Lab equipped and staffed by the Veterans' Administration Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VA VR&E) team is located in a private area of the Muldoon Job Center. In the first few months of operation, the lab served 234 veterans with a total of 295 dedicated hours. Of the 234 veterans who used the job lab, 66 were veterans referred for services by our VA VR&E partners and 168 were veterans who sought services on a walk-in basis. Services included all core services offered in the Job Center Resource Room as well as access to information specifically targeted to veterans.

Additionally, the department's Veterans Team in Anchorage partnered with the VA VR&E and State Vocational Rehabilitation partner to offer Job Center orientations for veterans. The two-hour orientation provides information on many of the services available and also includes referral to other resources when needed. The orientations are provided once each month.

The Veterans Program continues to build a working partnership with the Helmets to Hardhats (H2H) program. In one quarter of PY 2006, there were 110 new registrants in the H2H program in Alaska, a total of 14 veterans entered into apprenticeship programs during that same time period. Veterans that are interested in apprenticeship opportunities are encouraged by Job center staff to register with H2H. The H2H State Coordinator was contracted by the Job Center to provide veterans' information training on H2H and apprenticeship opportunities. The training was provided to all 24 Job Center teams.

SUCCESS stories



Marine Veteran Kris Wandall went from amphibious assault vehicles to a civilian job at Alaska Hovercraft.

Kris arrived in Bethel with his wife, who accepted a nursing position at the regional health center. Kris met with the staff at the Yukon-Kuskokwim Job Center and registered in ALEXsys, Alaska's web based job matching system. His military skills were specialized and a job match in the small community was going to be challenging.

Kris regularly visited the job center's resource room and staff soon became familiar with Kris and his skills.

When an employer arrived at the center looking for an operator for their business, and knowing that Kris's military skills made him well qualified to meet the employer's needs, staff promptly referred him for a job interview.

The next day found Kris delivering much needed cargo to villages along the Kuskokwim River in Southwest Alaska; and a standing request by the employer for other Veteran job seekers who could demonstrate the same work ethic as Kris.