



Alaska
Workforce Innovation and
Opportunity Act (WIOA)
Combined Plan
Part 2: Operational Elements

DRAFT FOR
PUBLIC COMMENT

Department of Labor and Workforce Development
PO Box 111149
Juneau, AK 99811
1016 West Sixth Avenue, Suite 401
Anchorage, AK 99501
907-465-2700

Alaska WIOA Combined Plan Part 2 Draft

CONTENTS

III. OPERATIONAL PLANNING ELEMENTS..... 2

 (a) State Strategy Implementation. The Unified or Combined State Plan must include—..... 2

 (b) State Operating Systems and Policies..... 12

IV. COORDINATION WITH COMBINED STATE PLAN PROGRAMS..... 31

V. COMMON ASSURANCES (FOR ALL CORE PROGRAMS) 33

VI. PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR CORE PROGRAMS..... 34

 Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth Activities under Title I-B..... 34

 Wagner-Peyser Act Program (Employment Services) 54

 Adult Education And Family Literacy Programs..... 63

 Vocational Rehabilitation 69

VII. PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR COMBINED STATE PLAN PARTNER PROGRAMS
..... 119

 Senior Community Service Employment Program..... 119

APPENDICES..... 155

 Appendix 1: Performance Goals for the Core Programs..... 155

 Appendix 2: Acronyms..... 158

III. OPERATIONAL PLANNING ELEMENTS

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

(a) State Strategy Implementation. The Unified or Combined State Plan must include—

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

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

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

Organizationally, the Board is housed under the Commissioner’s office in the Department of Labor and Workforce Development. The Executive Director reports directly to the Commissioner.

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

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

Identifying areas of improvement is a top priority for the AWIB, and they are active in the assessment and evaluation of Alaska Job Centers (AJCs). As an example, in a recent evaluation of the Kodiak AJC, an AWIB member identified a need for better staff training in the area of Registered Apprenticeship. The Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development immediately responded to this feedback by developing and implementing training for frontline AJC staff about options for job seekers who may qualify for Registered Apprenticeship training.

The AWIB also actively engages in the development of training programs targeted for youth and other Alaska residents. The board participates in the evaluation of training and education grants, and through this process, emphasizes investment in training for individuals who experience barriers to employment, as well as utilizing labor market analysis to recommend investment in programs that prepare Alaskans for high-demand occupations in priority industries. The AWIB is developing a multi-year strategic plan, which will guide its work using the industry sector approach to workforce development.

To fulfill its role of guiding the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development through oversight of the department's training programs, the AWIB participates in the annual review of the effectiveness of the state's core WIOA programs, as well as reviewing and commenting on the state's strategic plan required under WIOA. Several members of the AWIB attended and participated in each of the regional meetings held this year to inform the writing of the state's Combined Plan. The full Board will review and approve the plan before it is submitted to the US Department of Labor.

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

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

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

The WIOA core programs will be delivered through 17 AJCs located throughout the state, ten vocational rehabilitation offices, six of which are collocated with AJCs, six Youth Program sub-recipients, and 17 Adult Basic Education (ABE) sub-recipients. SCSEP is co-located within the Division of Employment and Training Services (DETS) and works closely with its integrated partners to ensure that participants are co-enrolled with other appropriate services. Program staff are trained to refer customers to the programs and resources that best fit their needs.

The activities carried out by staff who administer these programs are designed to meet job seeker needs through intake, assessment, development of individual training plans, individualized plans for employment or an individual service strategy, case management, counseling, training, support services, and referral to partner programs and other community and educational resources. Referrals are made to a local ABE program for job seekers needing to improve basic math and reading skills to enter training or to attain a General Educational Development (GED) or to learn to speak English better, job search skill enhancement, resume development, interviewing practice, and connecting skilled workers with jobs that offer good wages.

Co-enrollment policy 07-505 ensures a commitment to the provision of co-enrollment in order to deliver customer-focused, integrated, and coordinated services. This includes the sharing of relevant customer program information and records such as referral information, assessment results, training plans, progress reports, and job development strategies. Co-enrollment is encouraged to coordinate cohesive and consistent services that complement and strengthen the services offered by each individual program.

Appropriate co-enrollment happens when:

- the participant would benefit from services, activities, or funding provided from the various funding streams;
- the participant meets the respective eligibility requirements of each program and the program is appropriate;
- the services provided are not duplicated, including assessments, the creation of employability plans, training, job placement assistance, and follow-up employment services; and
- The grant sub-recipient or staff is able to identify and track the funding streams that pay the costs of services provided to program participants.

All core programs and our combined plan partner program - Senior Community Service Employment Program - are housed under the Department of Labor and Workforce Development. Staff from each program have bi-monthly meetings to discuss operational strategies to ensure we are all working towards the same goals. We will continue these regular meetings and will identify areas where we need more alignment. Once these areas are identified, we will implement actions to make ensure they are addressed. These include cross-program training; Job Center staff training; department policy changes; increasing opportunities for communication; and frequent reviews of our performance outcomes.

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

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

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

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

The Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Work Services program is used as a primary engagement and recruitment mechanism to identify and enroll appropriate low-income Alaskans into Career and Training Services offered through WIOA Adult, Wagner-Peyser and other programs specific to client need and eligibility, such as services through the Disabled Veterans Outreach Program. At locations

throughout the state, department staff engages with the Division of Public Assistance (DPA) or their contractor's Work First/Families First program to identify individuals on their caseload to be co-enrolled with services offered through AJCs. In locations served through Tribal TANF, the partnerships exist and are being expanded with each of the seven programs in the state to ensure that collaboration and co-enrollment is promoted. These activities identify additional barriers to employment, allow for a complete employment plan with direct or partner supports to overcome barriers, and continue the progress towards sustainable employment for the individual.

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

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

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

- (C) *Coordination, Alignment and Provision of Services to Individuals.* Describe how the entities carrying out the respective core programs, Combined State Plan partner programs included in this plan, and required and optional one-stop partner programs will coordinate activities and resources to provide comprehensive, high-quality, customer-centered services, including supportive services to individuals including those populations identified in section II(a)(1)(B). The activities described shall conform to the statutory requirements of each program.

The DOLWD is the lead agency for the administration of the four core WIOA programs. The Department is also responsible for Veteran Services through the Jobs for Veterans State Grant, TAA, and UI.

Additionally, the SCSEP, operated as MASST, is also within the Department and is the Combined State Plan Partner Program. Whether through direct service or sub-recipient, the AJCs are primary access points for the majority of the services provided by the Department's programs.

The DOLWD manages Title V of the OAA for senior employment. The planned action to coordinate activities include following labor directives and guidance in developing the workforce needs. SCSEP is aligned with the state's commitment to economic development, and its workforce development programs rely on the broad strategic policy decisions of the AWIB.

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

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

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

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

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

Overall, the department's objective is to maintain a fully integrated workforce development system that ensures availability of workforce services to all customers, with a focus on veterans, military spouses, low-income individuals, public assistance sub-recipient, individuals and youth with disabilities, out-of-school youth, and older workers.

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

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

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

Employer services and programs available through AJCs include:

- veteran services provided by five full-time representatives located in areas with the highest percentage of Alaska veterans;
- youth services provided by six youth program recipients, which coordinate work experience opportunities with businesses to ensure young job seekers are prepared to enter the job market;
- apprenticeship specialists in AJCs who increase employer involvement in Registered Apprenticeship;
- OJT that offers employers the opportunity to hire and custom train employees and receive partial employee wage reimbursements;
- training based on current employer demands (including incumbent worker training) and the perceived needs of the future job market;
- rapid response (RR) services, including employee protection and layoff aversion strategies to companies facing layoffs and closures;
- seafood and other specialized recruitments, orientations, and interviews;
- fidelity bonding services that encourage employers to hire workers who may pose a financial risk to the employer; and
- referral to local ABE programs and other partner programs.

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

The department provides ACT WorkKeys job profiling, which enables employers to reduce employee turnover and training costs. A critical part of the service is identifying the gaps between job seekers' skills and what Alaska employers need. AJC staff subsequently work with job seekers to get training targeted toward rapid reemployment.

A key goal for the success of the Alaska Career Ready program is to develop a statewide Work Ready Committee that includes leaders from the private sector, employers, state government, state workforce agencies, economic development councils, chambers of commerce, K-12, and high-growth industry leaders. Through the Assessment and Evaluation Committee of the AWIB and industry sector partnerships, the department will increase communication and gain support from the governor's office on the ACT Certified

Work Ready Community model, which empowers states with data, process, and tools that drive economic growth.

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

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

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

The department is substantially revising its Web pages that are specific to employer needs. The Business Connection page will focus on the most commonly requested employer services under easily identifiable general headings with associated topics underneath. The overarching theme of the modification is to answer the question, "What is the benefit to the employer?" For example, the heading "Protect Your Workers" will lead employers to topics including TAA, Layoff Aversion Strategies, Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification requirements, and COBRA continuation of employee health care benefits. Other main headings include Post a Job, Employment and Labor Laws, Hire Leadership and Experience (Veterans), and Hire Incentives.

Plans to recognize employers who hire veterans will include public identification of the business by public service announcements, listings on the Business Connection and veterans' web pages, and window decals. The goal is to produce a decal, easily identifiable to all Alaska employers, showing that a particular business honors America's veterans by hiring them and that will inspire friendly competition among local and industry employers, generating greater momentum for veteran hire.

Business Connection and veteran staff plan to increase their presence at Society for Human Resources Management and local chambers of commerce meetings on a regular basis in Juneau, Anchorage, and Fairbanks.

The DVR partners with employers to promote the hiring of individuals with disabilities. DVR has implemented the dual customer model to deliver services to employers. DVR has created a Business Employment Services Team (BEST), which is tasked with providing employers four core services as

outlined in WIOA in order to secure competitive integrated employment for individuals with disabilities, which is part of our strategy to focus on serving those with disabilities.

Alaska remains focused on SCSEP service delivery by being integrated into both the state's workforce investment system and the senior service system. Employers have reported high satisfaction levels with SCSEP participants who have entered unsubsidized employment with them. Employers have reported that they have great work habits, problem solving skills, the ability to work with others, and adaptability to change with business needs. Alaska's long-term strategy is to continue to reach out to workforce development partners, the business community, and social service partners to ensure successful outcomes for workers and Alaskan businesses alike.

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

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

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

A comprehensive CTE plan was launched in 2010 and involved a broad cross-section of policy makers, educators, employers, state agencies, training institutions, and parent representatives. The AWIB and the Departments of Education & Early Development and Labor and Workforce Development, in coordination with the University of Alaska, continue to implement, review, and refine CTE strategies.

The CTE plan addresses the individual need for career preparedness as well as the broader social need for a training and education system that is efficient, effective, and coordinates with regional and state current and future workforce needs. CTE Plan strategies include:

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

One of the funding mechanisms for Alaska CTE is through the Technical and Vocational Education Program (TVEP), which provides state funding through a portion of unemployment taxes to designated

technical and vocational education entities to provide industry specific training, OJT, and classroom linked job training. Grant funds are appropriated by the Alaska Legislature and administered by the Departments of Labor and Workforce Development and Education & Early Development, and the University of Alaska. The AWIB establishes a list of industry priorities for training under this program.

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

Alaska no longer has separate “community colleges”; rather, the community college mission is carried out by the University System through its office of workforce development and the programs offered at its network of community campuses. The department is in regular contact with the University system and with our state’s area career and technical schools (as defined in the Carl Perkins CTE Improvement Act of 2006), both secondary and postsecondary. Members of the AWIB represent these providers (University workforce programs; postsecondary CTE; and secondary CTE) and provide information to the Board as they develop recommendations for coordination and alignment of our state’s workforce system. The department meets annually with secondary and postsecondary CTE coordinators and directors to align programs and discuss issues of mutual interest. In addition, the department meets bi-weekly with the state’s CTE plan lead partners to continue implementation of the CTE plan and CTE system.

- (F) *Partner Engagement with Other Education and Training Providers.* Describe how the State’s Strategies will engage the State’s other education and training providers, including providers on the state’s eligible training provider list, as partners in the workforce development system to create a job-driven education and training system.

The state routinely engages with partners and other education and training providers. An example is the recently developed Eligible Training Providers List (ETPL) policy and procedures. These were created in concert with education and training providers who provided feedback during AWIB board meetings and a public comment period. The largest provider, the University of Alaska, was integral in providing feedback during the drafting of the ETPL process. The AWIB played an active role in reviewing guidance, and the education and training board members provided critical feedback that was incorporated with the final products. The goal is to make the ETPL a robust product that offers training to meet the needs of Alaska’s high growth industries while making the ETPL process less cumbersome for education and training providers.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The department is an active partner in Alaska’s Postsecondary Access and Completion Network. The Network is working towards the goals of “65 by 2025” – that 65% of Alaskans will have a postsecondary credential or degree by 2025. The department works directly with other Network partners to ensure that Registered Apprenticeship programs, Industry Certificates, and Occupational Endorsements are included in the definition and that the corresponding outcome data are collected and reported.

- (I) *Coordinating with Economic Development Strategies.* Describe how the activities identified in (A) will be coordinated with economic development entities, strategies, and activities in the State.

According to the Alaska Department of Commerce, Community & Economic Development, Alaska has 11 economic development entities called “ARDORs” – Alaska Regional Development Organizations. Their mission is to prepare and implement regional development strategies (Alaska Statute 44.33.895). Through these strategies, local knowledge, and coordinated implementation, ARDORs champion economic development planning for Alaska’s regions and communities by leveraging baseline support provided by the State of Alaska.

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

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

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

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

- facilitating development of a healthy regional economy that results in sustainable business growth, new business investment, and economic diversification;
- identifying and working to eliminate regional economic development barriers;
- developing and implementing a comprehensive economic development strategy;
- coordinating regional planning efforts that result in new employment and business opportunities;
- working to enable multiple communities to collaborate and pool limited resources;
- strengthening partnerships with public, private, and non-government organizations; and
- providing technical assistance to encourage business startup, retention, and expansion.

The work plans are available on the Alaska Department of Commerce, Community & Economic Development website at <https://www.commerce.alaska.gov/web/ded/DEV/ARDORS/DevelopmentStrategies.aspx>.

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

- department staff are in regular contact with the ARDOR program manager to discuss workforce and economic development activities, needs, and opportunities;
- the Director of the Division of Economic Development, which houses the ARDOR program, is that department's designee on the AWIB, and brings the ARDOR voice to discussions;
- ARDORS participated in providing public input into the WIOA plan and will continue to provide input to the department on implementation of the plan; and
- ARDORS have been awarded several grants from the department for capacity-building for programs that tie directly in with education and training.

ARDORS also maintain robust partnerships with education, training, and economic development entities within their state-defined region to foster growth in that region.

(b) State Operating Systems and Policies

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

- (1) The State operating systems that will support the implementation of the State’s strategies. This must include a description of –
 - (A) State operating systems that support coordinated implementation of State strategies (e.g., labor market information systems, data systems, communication systems, case-management systems, job banks, etc.).

Alaska has databases containing much of the relevant data (wage records, student records from EED and U of A, Permanent Fund Dividend data, training program participant data from the Individual Case Management (ICM)). The department’s Research and Analysis section was awarded a Workforce Data Quality Initiative grant from United States Department of Labor (USDOL) to modernize our database management system and produce dashboards.

There is regular communication among core programs as the state works to incorporate labor market information and job seeker needs while capturing this work in various data systems.

The primary vehicle for disseminating workforce information to internal and external customers is the Internet. The AJC home page includes “Labor Market Information” as a main link with many other related links, including “Business/Employer Connection” and “Job Seeker Resources.” The site is used in all AJC resource rooms. Information is available to businesses and job seekers as well as staff and is a separate category that is more visible on the main page. The site is available to anyone with an Internet connection, including libraries, schools, work sites, and homes. The state also produces a monthly magazine, *Alaska Economic Trends*, which is prepared by the department’s Research and Analysis Section and distributed to businesses, and individual subscribers as well as published on the Web.

Alaska continues to leverage and support understanding of labor market information, particularly as it relates to high-wage, high-demand industries, to the one-stop operator responsible for determining and negotiating individual training accounts, and delivering the majority of WIOA title I-b Adult and Dislocated Worker services. Labor Market Information staff works with local office staff on request to explain how the state and local economies operate, how to assess occupational employment opportunities at the state and local level, and how to use the tools and information available on the Research and Analysis Section’s Web site to obtain training and navigate career transitions. In this era of consumer choice, labor market information creates informed consumers who are able to make better decisions about personal career development.

Alaska has developed operating systems that are essential in supporting state workforce development strategies. The AJC and workforce information web sites and the Alaska Career Information System, Alaska’s primary electronic workforce information delivery systems, link to America’s Career InfoNet, America’s Service Locator, O*NET OnLine, Alaska Labor Exchange System (ALEXsys), and America’s Job Bank. All are available in the AJC resource rooms and any location with an Internet connection.

Alaska’s core programs utilize separate systems for data collection and reporting. A data working group representing the core programs will meet on a regular basis to determine how the systems may be integrated.

WIOA Title I-B, Youth, Adult and Dislocated Worker programs use the ICM system, allowing AJC staff delivering adult and dislocated worker services and sub-recipients delivering youth services to maintain comprehensive records documenting interaction with participants. This includes planned and actual services for participants, training and supportive service-related costs, Individual Employment Plans, Individual Service Strategies, referrals to partner agencies, and funding amounts from each of the partner services involved in the participant’s service strategy.

Youth program funds are administered using EGrAMS for processing. EGrAMS is a web-based electronic grants system. The system provides consistent and standard user interfaces to handle the process from grant

application entry to closeout. The system uses a comprehensive security framework for user authentication and authorization.

Title II – ABE programs report individual student data into the Alaska Statewide ABE database. The database is available to ABE program staff only and is accessed through myAlaska, which is a state-managed system for Secure Single Sign-on and Signature or authentication, allowing citizens to interact with multiple State of Alaska services through a single username and password.

Title III - The Wagner-Peyser system - The DETS is supported by a fully developed automated service delivery and management information system called ALEXsys. ALEXsys is a Virtual AJC system that has been extensively modified and maintained in-state based on DETS business practices and federal requirements. ALEXsys is a valuable tool for clients looking for work, job search assistance, training, or career exploration. Registered employers can post jobs, view resumes of qualified candidates, and access a wide range of economic and labor market information. ALEXsys provides staff with the online tools to deliver, track, and report on Wagner-Peyser services for job seekers and employers. Automated interfaces are used to communicate and exchange information between ALEXsys and the UI, the Job Training services, ICM database, and UI wage systems to facilitate better delivery of services and fulfill federal reporting requirements.

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

AWARE VR consists of 17 modules, approximately 300 data pages (screens), more than 350 reports, and a central database with over 330 tables. From Aware VR, rehabilitation staff can perform all tasks and collect and access all data required to do the work of case management. AWARE software is updated regularly to meet Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) federally-mandated reporting requirements and to produce the data file for uploading to RSA. This software is being upgraded to include reporting elements for the Participant Individualized Record Layout and new data elements needed to collect new information for the proposed performance measures.

- (B) [Data-collection and reporting processes used for all programs and activities, including those present in one-stop centers.](#)

Core program staff and sub-recipients are responsible for the collection of data and subsequent entry into the applicable data systems. The core programs that are required to report wage data coordinate with the department's Research and Analysis section to automate the compiling of wage data. Strict data sharing agreements are adhered to when determining access levels and handling wage data and participant information to ensure compliance with confidentiality agreements. Wage data are used for reporting on the quarterly and annual reports. These data are also used in reporting pre and post training earnings change and various state level reports, including ad hoc reporting.

Data are collected from program participants in several ways. Some programs such as the Youth, Adult, Dislocated worker require that a paper application is completed; the information is then entered into the ICM system by the Career Planner. Wagner Peyser participants complete an on-line registration, and subsequent service information is either system generated based on the activities the participant undertook while working in the ALEXsys system, or entered by AJC staff.

ABE data are collected from ABE program staff that enter individual student data into the Alaska Statewide ABE Database. The data are used to manage programs, for program improvement, and for producing the reports required by Title II to be submitted to the federal government.

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

The USDOL provides the SCSEP Performance and Results Quarterly Progress Report (SPARQ) database system. The system is an efficient method for monitoring grantees' and sub-recipients' data collection, reporting, and performance. By having all SCSEP grantees and sub-recipients use a standardized database, USDOL is able to support the quality of the information used to assess the effectiveness of the SCSEP program. The database is designed to accomplish the following:

1. provide tools that help sub-recipients analyze participant eligibility and the causes of performance successes and failures;
2. match data elements against source documents to verify compliance with federal definitions, which provides sub-recipients the opportunity to correct any identified problems;
3. ensure that critical eligibility and performance data are used to meet Employment and Training Administration's (ETA) Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) responsibilities and that mandated performance goals are reasonably accurate by calculating an error rate for each data element validated;
4. minimize the burden on grantees by providing a web-based data validation system that displays individual participant records and provides built in random samples, validation worksheets, and automated validation reports, and
5. further minimize the burden on grantees by selecting the smallest possible validation samples necessary to calculate valid error rates.

(2) The State policies that will support the implementation of the State's strategies (e.g., co-enrollment policies and universal intake processes where appropriate). In addition, describe the State's process for developing guidelines for State-administered one-stop partner programs' contributions to a one-stop delivery system, including benchmarks, and its guidance to assist local boards, chief elected officials, and local one-stop partners in determining equitable and stable methods of funding infrastructure in accordance with sec. 121(h)(1)(B). Beginning with the state plan modification in 2018 and for subsequent state plans and state plan modifications, the State must also include such guidelines.

Numerous policies and procedures support the implementation of Alaska's strategies. With the implementation of WIOA, outdated policies were re-written to ensure WIOA compliance. This 'fresh start' afforded the core programs the chance to work together to eliminate duplication. Additionally, one-stop provider agreements and local Memorandums of Understanding are being reviewed to ensure alignment with this Combined Plan.

These policies are accessible on the department's public website and will be communicated to AJC staff and sub-recipients to ensure they have full understanding of the most current policies and methods for compliance. It is important to ensure that policies are reasonable and necessary and provide adequate flexibility while meeting Alaska's strategic goals and vision. All WIOA-related policies are listed in the table below. Policy documents for Adult, Youth, Dislocated Worker; Wagner-Peysers; and AWIB are available

here: <http://labor.state.ak.us/wioa/home.htm>. Vocational Rehabilitation policy documents are available here: http://www.labor.state.ak.us/dvr/policy_temp.htm.

| WIOA Adult, Youth, and Dislocated Worker and Wagner-Peyser Policies | |
|---|--|
| Eligible Training Provider List | #07-501 |
| Youth Program Eligibility | #07-502 |
| High Concentration of Eligible Youth | #07-503 |
| Cash Management for Grants | #07-504 |
| Co-enrollment | #07-505 |
| Equal Opportunity Discrimination Complaints | #07-506 |
| Grant Award and Appeal | #07-507 |
| Participant Performance Data Collection | #07-508 |
| Military Veteran Priority of Service | #07-509 |
| Program Complaint and Appeal | #07-510 |
| Property Management | #07-511 |
| Registrant Family Income | #07-512 |
| Sanctions for Non-Compliance | #07-513 |
| Self-Sufficiency | #07-514 |
| Work Experience | #07-515 |
| Alaska Job Center Universal Access for Individuals with Disability | #07-516 |
| Priority Populations- Adult Program | #07-517 |
| Funding Distribution - Within Local Area Allocation and Reallocation | #07-518 |
| Allocating Wagner Peyser Staff to Alaska Job Centers | #07-519 |
| Allowable Costs | #07-520 |
| Support Services | #07-521 |
| Incentives – Youth Program | #07-522 |
| Grant Monitoring | #07-523 |
| Local Area Designation | #07-XXX |
| Adult Basic Education Policies | |
| No ABE Policies Needed | |
| Alaska Workforce Investment Board Policies | |
| Conflict of Interest for State or Local Board member | Addressed in Ethics Act Procedures for Boards and Commissions AS 39.52.010 and 9 AAC 52.120 |
| Provide to the public access to meetings and information on activities of State and Local Boards | Addressed in Alaska Administrative Procedures Act – AS 44.62.310 |
| Criteria for appointment of local workforce investment board members. | Not Applicable. Alaska, as a single board state, meets the requirements for state board members and appointments. |
| Certification of Local Boards every two years | Not Applicable, as Alaska is a single board state. |
| Alternative Entity for State Board meets WIOA and legal requirements | Addressed in Administrative Order 182 , SB 142 and Alaska’s Unified Workforce Plan (2000-2005) |
| How State Board helps determine methods and factors of distribution and how state consults with chief elected officials in determining the distributions. | Refer to DETS Policy #07-518 |

| Vocational Rehabilitation Policies – available at http://www.labor.state.ak.us/dvr/policy_temp.htm | |
|--|----------|
| Co-enrollment | #07-505 |
| Ethics | #CS 1.0 |
| Confidentiality | #CS 2.0 |
| Informed Choice | #CS 3.0 |
| Appeals | #CS 4.0 |
| Application | #CS 5.0 |
| Eligibility | #CS 6.0 |
| Trial Work | #CS 7.0 |
| Significance of Disabilities | #CS 8.0 |
| Financial Participation | #CS 9.0 |
| Individualized Plan for Employment | #CS 10.0 |
| Vocational Rehabilitation Services | #CS 11.0 |
| Supported Employment | #CS 12.0 |
| Self-employment | #CS 13.0 |
| Closure | #CS 14.0 |
| Post-Employment | #CS 15.0 |
| Transition Services and Pre-Employment Transition Services | #CS 16.0 |
| Order of Selection | #CS 17.0 |

(3) State Program and State Board Overview.

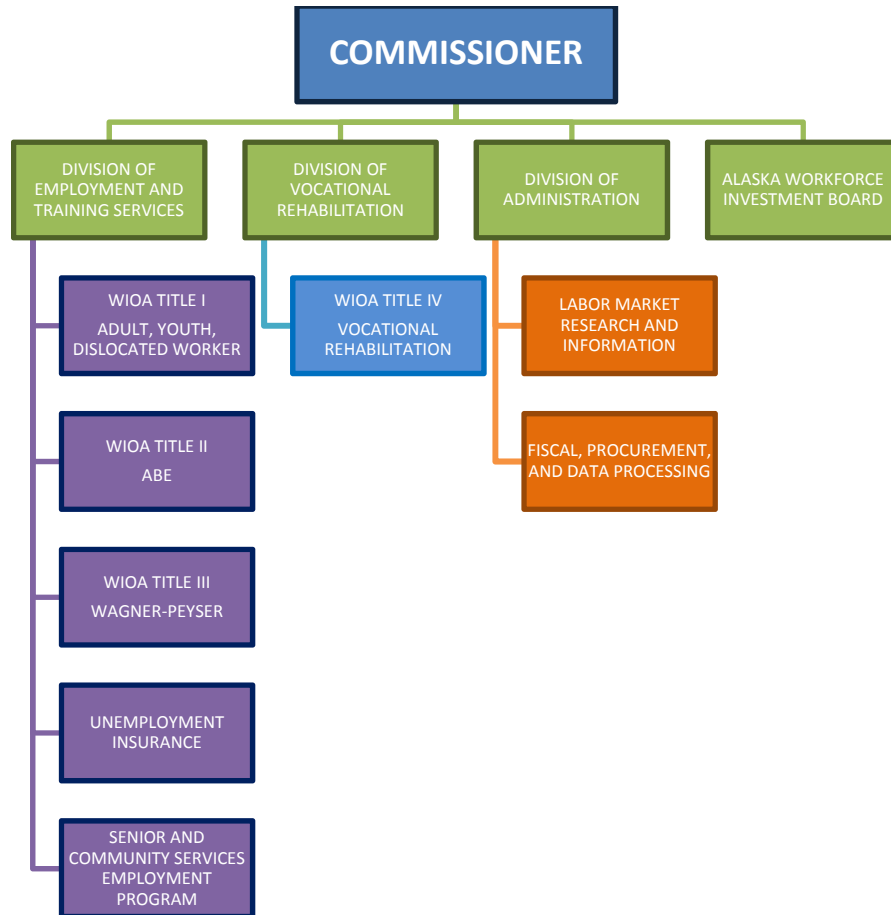
- (A) State Agency Organization. Describe the organization and delivery systems at the State and local levels for the programs covered in the plan, including the organizational structure. Include an organizational chart.

All WIOA core programs and SCSEP are housed within the Alaska DOLWD. WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth (Title IB), ABE (WIOA Title II), and Wagner-Peyser (WIOA Title III), and the SCSEP program are administered by the Division of Employment and Training Service: The DVR administers WIOA Title IV.

The AWIB oversees the WIOA core programs and several state employment and training programs including STEP, the Alaska Construction Academies, and the TVEP, with administrative support provided by DETS.

The DETS administers the Trade Act and Work Opportunity Tax Credit programs and operates the AJC, a proud partner of the American Job Center Network, which currently has 17 AJCs across the state. AJC staff provide Wagner-Peyser and Title IB career services, Title IB Adult and Dislocated Worker Individual Training Accounts and training related supportive services, STEP training and supportive services, SCSEP OJT, and services to employers through the AJC business connections.

Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development Organizational Chart for WIOA



- (B) State Board. Provide a description of the State Board, including---
- (i) *Membership Roster*. Provide a membership roster for the State Board, including members' organizational affiliations.

The AWIB is authorized by Alaska statute and comprised of members appointed by the Governor. The AWIB operates a single statewide board under an Alternative Entity State Board designation through the U.S. Department of Labor. Several of the Governor's cabinet members are seated on the AWIB, including the Lieutenant Governor and the Commissioners of Labor and Workforce Development; Health & Social Services; Education & Early Development; and Commerce, Community & Economic Development. Board membership also includes a representative from the University of Alaska system and representatives from postsecondary vocational education, secondary vocational education, ABE, and public education. Four members of the board represent business and industry, and four represent organized labor. Additional board members include one who has professional experience with individuals with developmental disabilities, a member who is a veteran, a member from an organization representing the employment and training needs of Alaska Natives, and additional members from the private sector. A complete member roster is shown below.

| Name | | Address | Phone | E-mail |
|---|--|---|----------------------|--|
| 1. Lt. Governor Byron Mallot | Lieutenant Governor State of Alaska | P.O. Box 110015 Juneau, AK 99811-0015 | 465-3520 269-7460 | byron.mallott@alaska.gov |
| Lt. Governor's Designee: Gerad Godfrey | Lt Governor's Office State of Alaska | 550 W 7 th Ave Anchorage, AK 99501 | 269-7450 | gerad.godfrey@alaska.gov |
| 2. Commissioner Heidi Drygas | Dept. of Labor and Workforce Development | P.O. Box 111149 Anchorage, AK 99501 | 465-2700 | heidi.drygas@alaska.gov |
| DOLWD Designee: Greg Cashen | Dept. of Labor and Workforce Development | P.O. Box 111149 Juneau, AK 99802-1149 | 465-2700 | greg.cashen@alaska.gov |
| 3. Commissioner Michael Hanley | Dept. of Education & Early Development | P.O. Box 110500 Juneau, AK 99811-0500 | 465-2800 | mike.hanley@alaska.gov |
| EED Designee: Curtis Clough | Dept. of Education & Early Development | P.O. Box 110500 Juneau, AK 99811-0500 | 465-8730 | curtis.clough@alaska.gov |
| 4. Commissioner Valerie Davidson | Dept. of Health & Social Services | P.O. Box 110601 Juneau, AK 99811-0601 | 465-3030 | valerie.davidson@alaska.gov |
| DHSS Designee: | Dept. of Health & Social Services | P.O. Box 1100601 Juneau, AK 99811-0601 | | |
| 5. Commissioner Chris Hladick | Dept. of Commerce, Com & Economic Development | P.O. Box 110804 Juneau, AK 99811-0804 | 465-5459 | chris.hladick@alaska.gov |
| DCCED Designee: Ethan Tyler | Dept. of Commerce, Com. & Economic Development | 550 W. 7 th Ave. Ste. 1770 Anchorage, AK 99501 | 269-4048 | ethan.tyler@alaska.gov |
| 6. University of Alaska Rep Fred Villa, 10/13/16 | Workforce Programs | P.O. Box 755200 Fairbanks, AK 99775 | 450-8008 450-8002 | fred.villa@alaska.edu |
| 7. Ken J. Peltier Post Secondary Education, Vocational Education, Industry 10/13/16 | Alaska Technical Training and Consultation | P.O. Box 2433 Palmer, AK 99645 | 244-0238 | alasken@kw.com alaskencountry@gmail.com |
| 8. Margaret (Peggy) Cowan Secondary Vocational Education, 10/13/17 | Education Consultant | 18005 Pt. Stephens Road Juneau, AK 99801 | 789-8450 | peggy.cowan.ak@gmail.com |
| 9. Mike Woods Public Education, 10/13/16 | Anchorage School District King Career Center | 2650 E NL Blvd Anchorage, AK 99508 | 742-8964 230-4136 | woods_Mike@asdk12.org |
| 10. David Alexander Adult Basic Ed, 10/13/19 | Nine Star Education and Employment Services | 16452 Noble Point Drive Anchorage, AK 99516 | 339-0810 301-4888 | davida@ninestar.com |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 11. Kathy Craft Prof Dev Disabilities, 10/13/16 | Alaska Health Workforce Coalition | 1116 Pickering Drive Fairbanks, AK 99709 | 388-9417 | kcraft@uaa.alaska.edu |
| 12. Mike Tucker Native Employment and Training Org, 10/13/19 | Knik Tribe | 4205 Charing Cross Circle Anchorage, AK 99504 | 529-5650 | mtucker@kniktribe.org |
| 13. Pearl A. Strub Business/Industry, 10/13/16 | Bristol Bay Economic Development Corporation | P.O. Box 493 Dillingham, AK 99576 | 842-4370 317-0844 843-2695 | pearl@bbedc.com |
| 14. Larry Bell, Chair Business/Industry, 10/13/17 | Nat. Electrical Contractors Assn. NECA | 712 W. 36 th Avenue Anchorage, AK 99503 | 561-1958 244-4166 | larry@alaskaneca.org |
| 15. Doug B. Ward Business/Industry, 10/13/16 | Shipyard Development Vigor Alaska | P.O. Box 9470 Ketchikan, AK 99901 | 225-7199 617-4726 | doug.ward@vigorindustrial.com |
| 16. Florian Borowski Vice Chair Business/Industry, 10/13/16 | Schlumberger | 6411 A. St. Ste. 400 Anchorage, AK 99501 | 748-3521 | fborowski@slb.com |
| 17. John MacKinnon Private Sector, 10/13/16 | Associated General Contractors of Alaska | 8005 Schoon Street Anchorage, AK 99518 | 561-5354 | john@agcak.org |
| 18 Kurt Kuhne Private Sector, 10/13/19 | Yuut | P.O. Box 869 Bethel, AK 99559 | 543-0992 545-0123 | kkuhne@yuut.org |
| 19. James Hastings Veteran, 10/13/19 | Alaska's Healing Hearts | 860 North Plymouth Cir. Wasilla, AK 99654 | 233-1527 232-2527 | ahh- james@outlook.com |
| 20. Marcus Trivette Private Sector, 10/13/19 | Brice, Inc. | P.O. Box 61202 Fairbanks, AK 99706 | 452-2512 978-3025 | marcust@briceinc.com |
| 21. Bruce Bustamante Private Sector, 10/13/16 | Anchorage Chamber of Commerce | 1016 W. 6 th Ave. Ste. 301 Anchorage, AK 99501 | 272-2401 351-0185 | bruce@anchoragechamber.org |
| 22. Kevin Pomeroy Organized Labor, 10/13/16 | Laborers Union Local 942 | 970 Gold Mine Trail Fairbanks, AK 99712 | 456-4584 322-0942 | kpomeroy@local942.net |
| 23. Corey Baxter Organized Labor, 10/13/16 | International Union of Operating Engineers 302 | 9309 Glacier Hwy Bldg A Ste 105 Juneau, AK 99801 | 586-3850 | cbaxter@iuoe302.org |
| 24. Doug Tansy Organized Labor, 10/13/18 | International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 1547 | P.O. Box 10126 Fairbanks, AK 99710 | 456-4248 590-4663 | dtansy@ibew1547.org |
| 25. Gary Dixon Organized Labor, 10/13/18 | Alaska Teamsters | 520 East 34 th Ave Anchorage, AK 99503 | 751-8591 250-0027 | gdixon@akteamsters.com |

- (ii) *Board Activities.* Provide a description of the activities that will assist State Board members and staff in carrying out State Board functions effectively.

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

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

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

One way to measure effectiveness is to analyze numbers and percentages of participants going to work. Alaska has the unique ability to match employment and wage records using our Permanent Fund Dividend (PFD) database. Our state has a history of working with our partners such as EED, the UA system, and sub-recipients to provide participant information, within the confines of privacy, that allow that sort of analysis.

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

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

Performance levels will be established through a negotiation process with the ETA on a bi-annual basis. A state team representing the core programs will review actual performance outcomes and determine proposed levels for each core program. This team will be responsible for coordinating with ETA to negotiate and report statewide performance levels as required by WIOA.

All core programs will be responsible for establishing a system for collecting, reviewing, and evaluating performance required by WIOA. Each core program will be responsible for compiling performance data for that program and will be responsible for submitting program reports as required. Each core program will be

responsible for establishing and implementing performance improvement plans, if needed, based on the evaluation of performance data.

Monitoring and assessments related to programs and activities authorized by WIOA will be an on-going activity. The goal is to identify how effectively the vision, strategies, and procedures of the USDOL Employment and Training Administration and the U.S. DOE Office of Vocational, Technical, and Adult Education and the department are being achieved. The results will provide the basis for making statewide and regional judgments regarding the effectiveness of the WIOA programs administered within Alaska's workforce development system.

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

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

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

- (B) [Assessment of One-Stop Program Partner Programs](#). Describe how other one-stop delivery system partner program services and Combined State Plan partner program included in the plan will be assessed each year. Such state assessments should take into account local and regional planning goals.

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

SCSEP has three common measures: entered employment, employment retention, and average earnings. It uses the USDOL Core Monitoring guide. This ensures that oversight and monitoring practices reinforce labor principles while ensuring program outcomes are achieved and a high level of integrity is maintained each year.

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

- (C) Previous Assessment Results.—Beginning with the state plan modification in 2018 and for subsequent state plans and state plan modifications, provide the results of an assessment of the effectiveness of the core programs and other one-stop partner programs and Combined State Plan partner programs included in the Unified or Combined State plan during the preceding 2-year period (i.e. the 2-year period of the plan modification cycle). Describe how the State is adapting its strategies based on these assessments.
- (D) Describe how the state will conduct evaluations and research projects on activities under WIOA core programs; how such projects will be coordinated with, and designed in conjunction with, State and local boards and with State agencies responsible for the administration of all respective core programs; and, further, how the projects will be coordinated with the evaluations provided for by the Secretary of Labor and the Secretary of Education under WIOA.

The department will work with the AWIB to identify key evaluation criteria and research projects to assess the core programs. These projects will align with the evaluations provided for by the Secretary of Labor and Secretary of Education under WIOA.

(5) Distribution of Funds for Core Programs. Describe the methods and factors the State will use in distributing funds under the core programs in accordance with the provisions authorizing such distributions.

- (A) For Title I programs, provide a description of the written policies that establish the State's methods and factors used to distribute funds to local areas for—
 - (i) Youth activities in accordance with WIOA section 128(b)(2) or (b)(3),
 - (ii) Adult and training activities in accordance with WIOA section 133(b)(2) or (b)(3),
 - (iii) Dislocated worker employment and training activities in accordance with WIOA section 133(b)(2) and based on data and weights assigned.

The state's distribution methods and factors for the Title I programs are detailed in Policy #07-518

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

Title II funds thirteen regional programs which serve as the main delivery system of ABE in Alaska. Two additional grants are given for Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education and for ABE in the Department of Corrections (DOC).

The thirteen regional programs are funded through a formula that specifies a base amount, a cost of living adjustment, and an adjustment for the number of adults in each region over the age of 18 who do not have a high school diploma. The two additional grants are funded in accordance with requirements stated in Title II.

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

The AKDOL will announce the availability of funds for Title II, ABE through:

1. the State of Alaska Public On-line Notice; and
2. direct emailing of applications to all known eligible providers that participated in the most recent statewide competition and to those known adult education providers that have programs but did not participate.

(C) **Title IV Vocational Rehabilitation**

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

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

(6) Program Data

- (A) Data Alignment and Integration. Describe the plans of the lead State agencies with responsibility for the administration of the core programs, along with the State Board, to align and integrate available workforce and education data systems for the core programs, UI programs, and education through postsecondary education, and to the extent possible, the Combined State Plan partner programs included in this plan. The description of the State's plan for integrating data systems should include the State's goals for achieving integration and any progress to date.
 - (i) Describe the State's plans to make the management information systems for the core programs interoperable to maximize the efficient exchange of common data elements to support assessment and evaluation.

All participants are enrolled in the ALEXsys system, which captures services delivered by the AJCs. The database used for SCSEP is maintained by USDOL.

A state work group with representatives from each core program is tasked with determining how data integration can most effectively and efficiently be completed. This work group has met several times to address how program data are collected and shared. As each of the core programs has already spent considerable financial and work force resources implementing unique software systems to provide data for federal reporting and to monitor quality improvement, complete interoperability poses challenges. However, many core programs have been sharing participant information for statistical purposes for many years; this data sharing will be continued, and will be expanded where feasible. As the need for new data elements is identified, methods of collecting that data such that all core programs have shared access to it will be a primary consideration.

The Alaska DOLWD has worked for years with the Alaska EED, the University of Alaska system, and a variety of training providers. These existing relationships, both within state departments and with training providers, will support the interchange and integration of data.

For program performance measures based on employment and wages, the department's Research and Analysis Section has integrated databases that are regularly used to determine, among other measures, employment status, wages, and continued residency in the state. Research and Analysis received a Workforce Data Quality Initiative grant used in part to modernize its data management systems and develop performance measure dashboards.

Although, as mentioned above, each core program has its unique software system, not all of those systems currently capture all of the common elements required for WIOA reporting. Modification of those software systems to capture all the necessary elements and integrate that data continues to be a high priority issue.

Pending a complete interoperability capability, an interim approach is the development of an interface that would allow access to the information from each core program as necessary for data reporting. Phase I of this effort, an interface between the primary WIOA database, ICM, and the Wagner Peyser labor exchange services ALEXsys database, has been initiated. Lessons learned from this initial effort will be applied to the addition of databases from other core programs. In the meantime, work group members are working within their respective programs to develop workflow processes, implementation plans, and memorandums of understanding, and to include the required work force and financial resources in their budgets for software upgrades and interface.

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

A State work group with representatives from each core program is evaluating the feasibility of a single point of data entry for any participant seeking services through the AJC. Some considerations are the practicality of using the existing applicant software systems to determine the program to which applicants should be referred; the possibility of having those referrals go to the specific programs electronically; and how this system either creates or alleviates barriers to receiving services.

An interface that would allow access to the information from each core program as necessary for data reporting is under development. Phase I of this effort, an interface between the primary WIOA database, ICM, and the Wagner Peyser labor exchange services ALEXsys database, has been initiated. One of the goals of this interface is to allow visibility into the services being provided to participants by other core programs. This will promote integrated service delivery, improved efficiency, and reduced duplication of services.

Lessons learned from this initial interface-development effort will be applied to the inclusion of databases from other core programs. Work group members are working within their respective programs to develop workflow processes, implementation plans, and memorandums of understanding, and to include the required work force and financial resources in their budgets for software upgrades and interface.

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

The State board will implement memorandums of understanding, as appropriate, to ensure that the required common data elements can be collected and stored, and to facilitate shared use by all core programs. This process can ensure that all the core programs are sharing resources to the fullest extent possible and that the process is transparent to the applicant. Inherent challenges in mandatory one-stop partners' data security

frameworks and the resultant barriers to sharing of data will be addressed as a database interface is developed.

This alignment will improve service delivery to individuals, including unemployed individuals, by helping to open lines of communication between staff, reduce duplication of service, and improve efficiency.

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

Planning Note: States should be aware that Section 116(i)(1) requires the core programs, local boards, and chief elected officials to establish and operate a fiscal and management accountability information system based on guidelines established by the Secretaries of Labor and Education. Separately, the Departments of Labor and Education anticipate working with States to inform future guidance and possible information collection(s) on these accountability systems. States should begin laying the groundwork for these fiscal and management accountability requirements, recognizing that adjustments to meet the elements above may provide opportunity or have impact on such a fiscal and management accountability system.

The report elements identified in WIOA section 116 (d)(2) are significantly similar to reports currently being generated by the department's DETS or other core program partner. Through a Workforce Data Quality Initiative grant, dashboard performance measures will be developed that will contribute to the WIOA reporting.

Elements not currently being reported will be evaluated when specific regulations are published that clearly state the extent and timing of those new data elements, and a determination will be made as to how and by which program those elements will be reported.

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

The existing primary WIOA database, ICM, collects participant data allowing the reporting of, among other items, training completion, entered employment, job retention, entered education, and earnings change. Longitudinal employment-related information has been collected for many years; training- and education-related information is currently collected for training programs that report data to the Alaska DOLWD and for education through the University of Alaska system. Employment or education elements not currently being collected will be evaluated when specific regulations are published that clearly state the extent and timing of those new data elements, and a determination will be made as to how and by which program those elements will be reported.

State performance indicators are aligned with economic development opportunities, focused on in-demand occupations, and aligned with the national policies of the USDOL, Employment and Training Administration.

Reports of employment- and education-related information will be evaluated to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the current services provided and the means for providing those services to inform continuous improvement.

Another topic under consideration is whether Alaska needs, and if it is financially viable, to have a common point of participant entry for current core program partner systems to reduce enrollment burden on clients and to them to see all core partner services available. Additional work groups will meet to set goals and timelines on topics including:

- measuring core programs' effectiveness in Alaska;
- increasing education for all core program partner staff on services all partner programs provide; and
- updating current partner programs' intake/referral processes to be more partner-integrated and determine whether it is financially viable and if benefits for certain parts may be automated to reduce barriers and burden to clients.

Alaska is a small state with two unique data sets that give it more options for developing indicators of performance. Determining who has left the state is made possible by accessing applications for the state's Alaska Permanent Fund Dividend, a program that distributes a share of oil-related state investment earnings each year. Alaska also has more detailed information about worker occupations because it has been the only state with a history of collecting that information as part of employers' mandatory quarterly reporting under state UI laws.

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

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

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

Alaska will carefully control individuals' data and release only aggregated data consistent with federal and state regulations and statutes. The department restricts access to microdata with file protocols, staff are familiar with working with confidential data, and they are required to take regular training with the Bureau of Labor Statistics to ensure they are using the most up-to-date procedures.

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

The analysts and economists who work with the data receive annual confidentiality training on state procedures and protocols and participate in annual data confidentiality training on federal-state cooperative

data programs with the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. In 15+ years of working with confidential K-12, university, and UI data, there has never been a breach of confidentiality or any type of accidental disclosure.

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

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

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

The Alaska DOLWD's DETS administers many programs, which are covered by the laws, regulations, and policies encompassing POS. These include the WIOA Adult, Youth, and Dislocated Worker programs, Wagner-Peyser, Trade Act programs, National Emergency Grants, the SCSEP, Helmets to Hardhats, and the DEI.

All WIOA and Wagner-Peyser staff routinely receive training including specifics about the Jobs for Veterans Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act, and other legislation that impacts veteran priority, preference, and employability. AJC efforts focus on the initial assessment of veterans to facilitate delivery of career and training services, as well as conducting outreach to employers to promote veteran hire. POS education efforts include signage at all AJC entry points. Additionally, all AJC staff provides initial contact, POS, and general information.

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

One feature of ALEXsys is the Veterans' Virtual Recruiter. This important tool sends messages to veterans when job orders meeting their pre-selected search criteria are in 'Open to Vets' status. This special status holds ALEXsys job orders for 24 hours so that staff can review them and alert veterans prior to releasing the job order to the public. ALEXsys also reminds employers that Alaska provides POS to veterans as required by law.

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

information for the managers. Regional Managers monitor AJC activities by frequent connection with the AJC managers and through weekly or monthly reports.

Some AJCs have DVOP specialists and Local Veterans' Employment Representative (LVER) staff funded by the JVSG. These staff members provide vital services to both veterans and employers seeking employment-related assistance. DETS complies with all federal guidance for JVSG staff and seeks to fully utilize the expertise of DVOPs and LVERs. DETS developed a referral process to direct veterans to the appropriate staff member to ensure a client-centered approach to the delivery of career and training services.

When job seekers indicate veteran status upon initial entry to an AJC, staff members are trained to engage them to determine if they are eligible for DVOP services. Veterans are asked a series of questions and handed a checklist that contains a list of the eligibility criteria to see a DVOP, which is reviewed with the veteran. If veterans indicate they meet one of the eligibility criteria, staff attempt to immediately connect them with a DVOP. If a DVOP is unavailable, eligible veterans will receive the DVOP's contact information and staff will ensure the appropriate DVOP receives the veteran's information so they can connect with one another.

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

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

Alaska's one-stop system has developed a comprehensive approach to ensure accessibility and inclusion of all customers, including those with disabilities, to all facilities, programs, and services. Physical and programmatic accessibility is continuously evaluated with formal Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) assessment conducted annually and continuous improvement strategies planned and implemented when needed. Alaska will continue to refine the current policies, training, and continuous improvement strategies to ensure compliance with WIOA and continued compliance with ADA.

The one-stop system's approach to ADA compliance includes:

- physical and programmatic accessibility;
- staff training and accountability;
- adaptive technology and other accommodations; and
- on-going survey of effectiveness and continuous improvement.

Physical and Programmatic Accessibility:

- “Job Center Universal Access for Customers with Disabilities” policy plays a vital role in establishing the working-level framework for outlining and improving the accessibility, capacity and accountability of AJCs to serve customers with disabilities. The policy covers both physical and programmatic accessibility within AJCs and outlines the assistive technologies available and required staff training;
- each location has appropriate signage identifying the policy that no individual with a disability shall be excluded, by reason of such disability, from participation in or be denied the benefit of the service, program or activities of the AJCs;
- all outreach and marketing materials developed for distribution from the AJCs to partners, job seekers and employers all contain notice of the availability of auxiliary aids and services for needed accommodations to access programs and services; and
- the State of Alaska maintains an ADA Compliance Program: <http://doa.alaska.gov/ada/>. Through the State of Alaska ADA Coordinator’s Office, all departments have their own identified ADA coordinator, who acts as technical assistance providers and liaisons for each unit within the department.

Training and accountability for all one-stop staff:

- as a result of two DEI grants, all AJC staff have received training as Disability Resource Coordinator I’s (DRC I). This involves training and awareness of programmatic and physical barriers to accessibility and covers training on completion of the “ADA checklist for Readily Achievable Barrier Removal”. The ADA checklist is completed annually at each facility and any needed corrective action is identified and implemented;
- the DRC I training is an integrated and mandated part of all new hire training for all AJC staff;
- each Regional office has a higher-level staff member trained to the Disability Resource Coordinator II (DRC II) level who is the disability and accessibility subject matter expert for the region. The DRC II functions as the technical assistance advisor for all staff on disability and accessibility related issues;
- the DRC IIs, Statewide lead for the DEI, and the Training Coordinator identify periodic and on-going training in specialized topics to augment standardized training and ensure continual learning and awareness in the area of improving access to all services within the AJC system for individuals with disabilities; and
- each AJC manager documents physical and programmatic complaints and ensures a corrective action plan is developed and addressed by the most appropriate and relevant method: policy change, training, or addressing physical barriers.

Adaptive technology and other accommodations:

- each AJC has assistive technology (AT) available that includes screen readers, magnifiers, adaptive software, virtual sign language interpretation, closed caption on scrolling program and services video, TTY phones and personal voice amplification device;
- “Tips for Improving Access to Workshops and Training” has been developed and is in process of being shared with staff. This document offers guidance and suggestions on increasing accessibility and success for individuals attending AJC workshops and training sessions and is broken down by disability type. The document outlines ways the facilitator or trainer can incorporate

accommodations and adaptations into the class that will ensure an optimal learning environment for all; and

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

On-going survey of effectiveness and continuous improvement:

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

- (9) **Addressing the Accessibility of the One-Stop Delivery System for Individuals with Limited English Proficiency.** Describe how the one-stop delivery system (including one-stop center operators and the one-stop delivery system partners) will ensure that each one-stop center is able to meet the needs of limited English proficient individuals, such as through established procedures, staff training, resources, and other materials.

The state provides staff training, materials, and resources to meet the needs of Limited English Proficient individuals, including direct referral to the Alaska Immigration Justice Project Language Interpreter Center.

The department also has an established a contract with language interpreter services to be provided telephonically.

IV. COORDINATION WITH COMBINED STATE PLAN PROGRAMS.

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

Designated staff representing each core program and our partner program SCSEP have met weekly or bi-weekly since August 2015 to implement joint planning and coordination efforts. Working groups were formed and met more often to work on various issues more in-depth, including data coordination, policy development, performance accountability, ETPL, and One-Stop operator designation.

The department sponsored three meetings for the public to attend and provide input on the plan, with program staff also participating in these meetings.

This submission to the combined state plan provided the SCSEP another opportunity to work directly with its partners in education, industry, workforce development, economic development, and the public. SCSEP attests that it and its sub recipient partners have been involved in the WIOA joint planning and its policies.

The planning process has been ongoing for months and the writing of this WIOA strategic workforce development plan emphasizes sector partnerships, career pathways, cross-program data and measurement, and job-driven investments to required and interested partners. Three public meetings were held in November of 2015 in Juneau, Fairbanks, and Anchorage to provide information to and seek feedback from the public to help develop Alaska's combined plan. Alaska's WIOA state plan stresses the importance of education, training, credentials, and skill attainment. The combined plan works towards economic self-sufficiency of workers by aligning workforce development with education and economic development.

Another example of joint planning and coordination of core programs with other programs is the Alaska State Plan on Aging under the OAA that was approved on August 11, 2015 for July 1, 2015 through June 30, 2019. DOLWD SCSEP was an active partner in that plan, too. It was the product of a nineteen-month statewide process that began with the Alaska Commission on Aging (ACoA) first elder/senior listening session in Copper Center in September 2013. Five other listening sessions around the state followed, each presenting a series of topic questions for seniors, family members, service providers, and public members to consider and provide input. The planning process also included a statewide senior survey and provider survey to identify the top issues of concern to seniors. Findings from the elder/senior listening sessions, the senior survey, provider survey, and the ongoing input from agency partners were the building blocks from which state plan goals, strategies, and performance measures were constructed.

The State of Alaska assures that SCSEP will maintain the integrity and purpose of services provided under Title V of the Older American Act and that Alaska SCSEP stand-alone plan was written with coordination of core programs and other OAA programs was approved by USDOL on March 20, 2015. Alaska remains focused on joint planning and coordination of service delivery in that it has integrated SCSEP into both the state's workforce investment system as well as the senior service system. Alaska's long-term strategy for older workers is to continue to reach out to both workforce development partners, the business community, education, and health and social services partners to ensure successful outcomes for older workers and Alaskan businesses alike.

V. COMMON ASSURANCES (FOR ALL CORE PROGRAMS)

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

VI. PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR CORE PROGRAMS

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

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

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

(a) General Requirements

(1) Regions and Local Workforce Development Areas.

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

In 2003, then-Governor Frank Murkowski issued Administrative Order No. 210, designating the State of Alaska as a single state workforce investment area and the AWIB as the state's sole workforce board under the WIA of 1998 (<http://www.gov.state.ak.us/admin-orders/210.html>). That same year, the US DOL Employment and Training Administration formally recognized the state of Alaska as a single local workforce development area and a single regional planning area and designated the AWIB to act as both the statewide board and the local board. We have operated under these designations since that time.

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

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

1. is consistent with local labor market areas;
2. has a common economic development area;
3. has the federal and non-federal resources, including appropriate education and training institutions, to administer activities under the Youth, Adult and Dislocated Worker formula programs under WIOA subtitle B; and
4. has the fiscal, administrative, and reporting capacity and systems in place to report on participant outcomes as required by WIOA and the Alaska WIOA Combined Plan (to be submitted March 2, 2016).

Under WIOA definitions, a single “local area” cannot contain more than one “region.” Therefore, Alaska as a single local area must also be considered a single planning region. However, operationally, we base our planning and labor market analysis on our six existing state-defined “economic regions,” Southeast; Southwest; Southcentral; Interior; Northern; and Gulf Coast, as each one has different economic and workforce needs.

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

The policy sets out the procedure for appeals as follows:

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

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

The lead agencies of the core programs are working together and with the AWIB on an infrastructure funding process that will be included as a required part of the partner memorandum of understanding (MOU). When such process is finalized, it will detail an associated appeal process that complies with WIOA.

(2) Statewide Activities.

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

Alaska will ensure the required statewide employment and training activities are carried out as required by WIOA. This includes the provision of RR and the provision of additional assistance to areas that experience disasters, mass layoffs, or plant closings, or other events that precipitate substantial increases in the number of unemployed individuals.

Additionally, statewide activities funds will support the State strategic vision and goals outlined in Section II (B) State Strategic Vision and Goals of this Combined Plan. This includes, but is not limited to, the development of career pathways; convening and engaging industry sector partnerships; and the expansion of apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeships programs.

Innovations in the delivery of AJC services will be targeted as well as development and training of AJC staff to ensure opportunities for Veterans and individuals with barriers to employment to obtain suitable employment in in-demand occupations is realized. Military Veteran POS policy 07-509 and Priority for Services – Adult Program policy 07-515 support these requirements.

Required monitoring and oversight activities will be conducted and are supported by Grant Monitoring Policy 07-525.

Eligible Training Provider List Policy 07-501 ensures the compiling and dissemination of the Eligible Training Provider List, which includes information on performance and cost of attendance.

Additional effort will be put into the compilation of a state list that includes non-traditional training services and eligible providers of apprenticeship programs, providers of OJT, customized training, incumbent worker training, internships, work experience opportunities, and transitional jobs.

Business services will be a focus including effective outreach, partnerships, and services, including implementing effective strategies to serve workers and job seekers.

Information on physical and programmatic accessibility for individuals with disabilities is supported by statewide activities funding and reinforced by the AJC Universal Access for Individuals with Disability Policy 07-516.

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

The state intends to use the Governor's set-aside funding to enhance services to one or more of our priority populations, beginning with youth and adults with disabilities. We will use these funds to leverage with existing programs and initiatives, such as our state's recent DEI Grant for Youth and our American Apprenticeship Initiative for Health Care. As mentioned in the Strategic Elements portion of the state plan, the department will support projects such as 1) the Department of Health and Social Services' development of the "Disability Benefits 101" online tool and subsequent training for AJC staff and other counselors in using the tool with clients; 2) expansion - to other sites, to out-of-school youth, and to other industries -- of "Project SEARCH," which provides in-school youth who are in Special Education classes the chance to do extensive job-shadowing and career exploration at local health care facilities during their senior year in high school; and 3) support for activities to implement Alaska's "Employment First" legislation in collaboration with the Departments of Health and Social Services and Education & Early Development.

RR is a primary gateway to the workforce system for both dislocated workers and employers and is a component of a demand driven system. The central purpose of RR is to help laid-off workers quickly transition to new employment. RR acts as both a provider of direct reemployment services and as a facilitator of additional services and resources.

The service strategy of the dislocated worker program is to facilitate readjustment to a job loss by providing services that will assist workers with their transition back into the workforce. The program provides pre-layoff activities and linkages to the AJCs and to UI. These services are available to workers who have lost their jobs as a result of a mass layoff, permanent business closing, or a natural or other disaster that resulted in mass job losses.

When notification of a plant closing or mass layoff is received, the RR Statewide Coordinator from the DOLWD will assist in developing a coordinated response to the dislocation event and coordinate an on-site meeting to assist workers facing a job loss. The following services are provided to employers and affected workers:

- engaging in on-site or telephonic contact with the employer, worker representatives, union representatives(s) (if applicable), local Alaska service providers, the UI Agency, and others as deemed necessary to assess the company's layoff plans; determine the potential for averting the layoffs; and gather background information on the affected workforce to determine training and other needs of the workforce to facilitate rapid re-employment;
- providing information on UI benefits, AJC Services, and employment and training opportunities;

- providing technical and financial support for establishing a Joint Adjustment (labor-management) Committee;
- providing emergency assistance to serve the affected workers at a particular site, including state and federal funds; and

re-employment Services: AJCs throughout the state oversee the delivery of re-employment services. These services are designed to prepare participants for re-entry into the workforce and are categorized as follow:

- Basic Career Services: Basic career services are available to all dislocated workers and may include program information and basic assessment, general information, individual job development, advanced job club, advanced screened referrals, group activities, job search.
- Individualized Career Services: Individualized career services are designed for dislocated workers who have been unable to obtain employment through core services and have been determined to be in need of more individualized services. Individualized career services may include comprehensive specialized assessment, individual employment planning, counseling, case management, literacy activity, out of area job search, relocation assistance, and work experience.
- Training: Training in specific, in-demand occupations may be available to dislocated workers who have not been able to find employment through intensive services. Training services may include occupational skills training, OJT, Registered Apprenticeship, incumbent worker training, pre-apprenticeship training, skill upgrading and retraining, and adult education and literacy training provided in combination with any other training services.

Layoff Aversion

Plant closings and mass layoffs can occur for a variety of reasons in periods of both economic expansion and decline. These reasons may include financial difficulty, mergers and acquisitions, loss of market share, consolidations, foreign competition, product or service obsolescence, shift in parent company focus, or other factors. Opportunities may exist to save jobs and avoid resulting hardships imposed on individuals and communities when a plant or business closes.

- **Early response is critical. Adequate Lead Time is Essential**
In order for RR to work effectively, early intervention is critical. For a layoff aversion effort to succeed there must be sufficient time to organize an effective response.
- **Layoff Aversion is a Cooperative Effort**
An important initial step in RR is to address the reason for the plant closing or mass layoff before it happens or reaches crisis stage. If there is an indication that the business is closing or mass layoff might be averted, the RR team can provide technical assistance and work with all parties involved to develop solutions.

Alaska has strengthened its response team by building trust in our employers and having our business connection staff working with employers not only on building their business by hiring good qualified workers, but to notify them of our RR services if they should ever need them. Staff are trained on potential indicators that a business might be in trouble and need RR support.

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

The Statewide Raid Response Coordinator and team are responsible for the planning and delivery of services to enable dislocated workers to transition to new employment as quickly as possible in cases of a natural disaster. The Coordinator will organize and develop a coordinated response with federal, state, local agencies and media to ensure the dislocated workers receive the services they need, for example, information on unemployment benefits, housing, AJC services, and re-training if necessary. The state has a proven history of responding not only to our major cities but also to our rural areas where there are vast distances between villages and no roads connecting them. Some of these villages experienced flooding and wildfires. The RR team members are trained staff who are knowledgeable about the labor markets around the state and are on call to respond to any layoff situation.

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

With the implementation of the TAA Reauthorization Act of 2015 (TAARA 2015), the TAA program was reauthorized for six years (retroactive to January 1, 2014). Under TAARA 2015, petition certification is available not only to manufacturing worker groups, but also to eligible service sector and secondary worker groups. In addition, a new version of the Health Coverage Tax Credit benefit is available to TAA program participants. These changes allow for petition certification of a broader range of businesses and, following certification of a primary worker group, outreach can be directed towards any secondary worker groups that may be impacted thereafter. In effect, TAA staff are able to seek out potential worker groups by looking directly ‘upstream’ at a business’s suppliers and ‘downstream’ to any impacted businesses that provide services to a petition-certified employer.

Alaska’s petitions have historically been certified for worker groups in the oil, fishing, and logging industries. Program participants from those industries continue to receive training funds from certifications that were issued through previous iterations of the program. Future participation in the program and petition certification will hinge on continued research into trade changes and shifts in production, awareness of state and global business trends, and maintaining strong relationships with local employers. Our continued team approach to service delivery through the myriad of our employer and job seeker services is the best opportunity we have to gain program participation and achieve service delivery success.

Alaska’s RR, Dislocated Worker, TAA, and Wagner-Peyser programs are all operated through the statewide network of 17 local AJC offices. TAA’s Central Office staff maintain awareness of global trade and state business activities while working with Business Connection staff in the local AJCs to stay up-to-date on ground level employer activity and layoffs. This network of responders ensures that immediate action is taken when necessary to assist employers and workers who are impacted by trade and may be facing layoffs.

Following notification of potential layoffs, Central Office staff coordinate all of the RR activities, assist the employers or workers with filing TAA petitions and bring a variety of local and state service providers together for interagency RR meetings individually tailored to meet each employer’s needs. TAA staff foster this team approach throughout service delivery to human resources personnel and business owners prior to, during, and following layoffs. TAA staff may assist worker groups with filing a petition, file petitions on the workers’ behalf, and appeal determinations when necessary. Upon certification of a petition, TAA staff

conduct extensive outreach in-person, over-the-phone, and via mail (as options are available) to ensure that all workers receive detailed information regarding what programs and services are available, when they are available, and how to participate in those services.

Every worker group that files a TAA petition is offered RR early intervention services regardless of whether the TAA petition is certified or denied. Following the certification of a petition, TAA continues to serve as an integral part of the RR team and provides information regarding any benefits that may be available to the dislocated or affected workers. TAA funds pay for the time and efforts of the TAA coordinator to serve as a part of the RR team. If the TAA petition is denied, RR funds are used to fund continued service delivery by staff to the affected workers. RR funds are also utilized for periodic staff training.

Co-enrollment of TAA participants in the WIOA Dislocated Worker program as well as other programs for which they are deemed eligible is the standard practice. Alaska requires comprehensive assessment to develop an appropriate Individual Employment Plan and TAA services. All TAA customers are required to be referred to WIOA for co-enrollment. WIOA career planners emphasize the benefits of co-enrollment to allow the maximum benefit from all available resources. The TAA coordinators and WIOA career planners develop and share Individual Employment Plans for all customers, which identify barriers to employment and how they will be addressed. Individuals requiring additional assistance due to low income, a disability, or homelessness will be given POS. All veterans and eligible spouses also receive POS.

Both WIOA and Wagner-Peyser/Employment Service staff conduct reemployment services. The TAA program utilizes Wagner-Peyser in finding jobs for workers, and often partners with Vocational Rehabilitation, veterans' services (both internal and the Veteran's Administration), and fidelity bonding, if appropriate. Some of the services provided are workshops in resume writing and interviewing skills. All TAA customers have access to any resources provided by Wagner-Peyser and all customers co-enrolled with WIOA are able to partake in any workshops provided by WIOA staff. Case management continues until the worker has found suitable employment. Effective communication between TAA and WIOA staff is a constant priority. These shared components align to make up the third element of the governor's vision of developing and preparing Alaskans for good jobs that provide economic stability.

Administrative, fiscal, and data integrity are facilitated by the Trade Act System (TAS). The TAA coordinator enters worker information into TAS, the system from which the Trade Act Participant Report is obtained. All required data are collected and recorded in TAS throughout the life of the program for each individual. The coordinator oversees every aspect of each plan. The collected data are verified against USDOL/ETA/TAA's quarterly Data Integrity Result, and cross-checked in the new WIOA ICM system against ALEXsys.

(b) Adult and Dislocated Worker Program Requirements

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

DETS has several special training programs for targeted groups such as Transitioning Service Members (TSMs) and incarcerated persons. To ensure TSMs achieve a successful transition from the military to the civilian sector, DETS partners with military transition centers to provide high-quality training for employment in targeted industries. To accomplish this, DETS leverages multiple resources including Adult WIOA, Dislocated Worker grants, National Emergency Grants, and STEP grants. In PY14, DETS assisted in training TSMs on base in becoming commercial truck drivers. This is a high-demand occupation in

Alaska and in PY15, DETS is working to expand TSM training to other in-demand industry sectors including healthcare.

DETS also works with correctional centers across Alaska to provide employment and training services to individuals soon-to-be released from incarceration. DETS recently partnered with the Alaska DOC to receive contact information for individuals as they prepare for release. DETS staff recognize that suitable employment is a significant factor in reducing the recidivism rate, and they make every effort to contact these individuals to assist with their transition. DETS staff also provide employment workshops in correctional centers to guide soon-to-be job seekers with their employment search. Like services to TSMs, services under this initiative also leverage multiple resources and model our new focus on mobile service delivery of AJC services.

All special training programs follow specific grant requirements and federal guidance. Training is provided by organizations on the ETPL and by specially-trained AJC staff, who ensure training is high quality and meets the needs and expectations of employers through participant feedback, training success analysis, and soliciting information from employers.

(2) *Registered Apprenticeship*. Describe how the State will incorporate Registered Apprenticeship into its strategy and services.

Governor Bill Walker issued Administrative Order No. 278 on November 10, 2015, which requires that Registered Apprentices perform at least 15 percent of the labor hours on any construction project of at least \$2.5 million that is advertised for bids by the Department of Transportation and Public Facilities or the Department of Administration.

The department has hired an Apprenticeship Coordinator (AC) to work with employers and the US Office of Apprenticeship to expand the number of RA programs in the state. This expansion will target health care as a focus industry for RA; however, the AC will work with employers in all industry sectors.

As part of our work with industry sector partnerships, i.e., Construction/Resource Extraction; Maritime; and Health Care, we will work with each sector partnership to identify and develop or expand RA programs for the industry. Each of these sectors has a workforce development plan that will be used as the basis for ongoing sector work in developing RA programs.

The Alaska Health Workforce Coalition has recently identified targeted occupations for which RA could be appropriate, e.g., Home Health Aides, Medical Assistants, Substance Abuse Counselors, Surgical Technicians, Medical Lab Technicians, Pharmacy Assistant, and Physical Therapy Aide. The Coalition will work with the department and the AC to develop RA programs for those occupations in a variety of health care employers across the state. The state is also establishing a Joint Health Care Training Cooperative to act as the RA sponsor for health care apprenticeships.

Information on Registered Apprenticeships will be included in the regular ongoing training for all one-stop Center staff, as well as training for new staff. AJCs will each have a Registered Apprenticeship Specialist who can provide more in-depth services to both jobseekers and employers on Registered Apprenticeships.

The Alaska Health Care Academy and the Alaska Construction Academies will provide quality pre-apprenticeship programs. The Construction Academies have been in existence for a decade and have become a model for high-quality pre-apprenticeship training at a variety of locations across the state. The Alaska Health Care Academy will be developed and implemented by AVTEC (Alaska Vocational Technical Education Center), starting with one location in Anchorage and branching out to additional locations over the next four years.

AVTEC will also expand its existing maritime offerings to provide pre-apprenticeship programs.

The department will work with AVTEC, the University of Alaska system, and other private postsecondary providers to become members of the Registered Apprenticeship-College Consortium. The University of Alaska system will review its Associate of Applied Science in Apprenticeship Technologies Degree and work to eliminate barriers for awarding of credit for completion of an RA program. The state will work to develop a system to offer employer incentives for use of RA.

- (3) *Training Provider Eligibility Procedure.* Provide the procedure for determining training provider initial and continued eligibility, including Registered Apprenticeship programs (WIOA Section 122).

Alaska has a detailed procedural guide for determining training provider eligibility, including Registered Apprenticeship and OJT programs.

The procedural guide provides information on ETPL background, responsibilities, types of eligible training, exemptions, and out of state training information. The guide provides training program expectations including program quality, program outcomes, and the expectation that industry recognized credentials will be utilized. The ETPL application process is described in the procedural guide and includes how initial and continued eligibility is determined.

The Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education plays a critical part in the ETPL process, and information regarding their requirements is included in the procedural guide.

The guide goes into detail about the minimum data requirements and state required performance levels. These are explained and the calculations for performance measure's and methodological protocols are clearly listed. Information on training program denials, removal from the list and the appeal process is included and supported by ETPL policy 07-501.

Registered Apprenticeship and other work based training programs are outlined in the ETPL Procedural guide. All Registered Apprenticeship program are contacted to determine if they wish to be listed on the ETPL but they are not required to provide completer data. As long as the Registered Apprenticeship program is in good standing with the USDOL National Apprenticeship Office, it is automatically eligible to be listed on the ETPL.

ETPL initial and continued eligibly is based on training program performance. Program performance is determined by utilizing information provided by the training provider and from State UI wage records and is determined by using the following methodology.

Initial Eligibility

Participant Specific Performance:

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

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

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

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

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

Provider Specific Performance:

The degree to which the provider is in partnership with business. This may be done by producing letters of support from business or other documentation showing a partnership between the training provider and business. **Performance Goal:** Training provider is able to produce at least three letters from businesses showing that the business would hire job seekers with the type of credential provided by the training program.

The ability of the training provider to offer programs that lead to a recognized post-secondary credential. **Performance Goal:** Credentials offered by the provider are regionally, and/or nationally recognized, stackable and portable, or specific to an in-demand industry or occupation.

Information that addresses the alignment of the training services with in-demand industry sectors and priority occupations, as determined by the AWIB. A list of in-demand industry sectors and occupations can be located on the AWIB website <http://labor.alaska.gov/awib/>. **Performance Goal:** The provider must be able to associate the type of training to occupations located on the in-demand industry and priority occupation list. If the type of training is not associated with these occupations, an exemption from this measure may be provided if the training program is used to address participants who possess barrier to employment, specialized occupations, or unique employer requests.

Continued Eligibility

Participant Specific Performance:

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

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

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

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

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

Program Specific Performance:

The ability of the training program to be accessed throughout the state, including rural areas and through the use of technology; **Performance goal:** the training program is available via distance learning, if applicable, or deliverable in rural locations.

The degree to which training program relates to in-demand industry sectors and occupations in the State. A list of in-demand industry sectors and occupations can be located on the AWIB website <http://labor.alaska.gov/awib/>; **Performance goal:** the training program relates to occupations located on the in-demand industry and priority occupation list. If the training is not associated with these occupations, an exemption may be provided if the program is use to address participants who possess a barrier to employment, specialized occupations or unique employer requests.

The use of industry-recognized certificates and credentials; **Performance Goal:** The credential provided by the training program is regionally and/or nationally recognized, stackable and portable, or specific to an in-demand industry or occupation.

The ability for individuals who are employed and individuals with barriers to employment to access the training program; **Performance Goal:** the definition of individuals with barriers to employment can be found in the definition section. Individuals who are employed or individuals with barriers to employment, who receive training services, will be determined by the participant data elements provided by the training provider.

The timely and accurate submittal of eligible training provider performance reports as required under WIOA sec. 116(d)(4). **Performance Goal:** training program completer reports are complete, accurate and submitted by August 31 each year.

Performance levels to be achieve for initial and continued eligibly:

| | |
|--|---------|
| Employment Rate 2 nd Quarter after Exit | 65% |
| Employment Rate 4 th Quarter after Exit | 65% |
| Median Earnings 2 nd Quarter after Exit | \$5,025 |
| Credential Attainment Rate | 65% |
| Program Completion Rate | 65% |

Alaska’s ETPL policy, applications and the procedural guide are located on the Division website at – <http://labor.state.ak.us/wioa/home.htm>.

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

Policy #07-517 supports the adult priority populations. Staff responsible for the administration of WIOA Title I-B funds must give priority to recipients of public assistance, to low-income individuals, and individuals who are basic skills deficient in the provision of individualized career services and training services.

Veterans and eligible spouses continue to receive POS for all DOL-funded job training programs, however as described in [TEGL 3-15](#), when programs are statutorily required to provide priority for a particular group of individuals, such as the WIOA Adult program priority population described above, priority must be provided in the following order:

1. First, to veterans and eligible spouses who are also included in the groups given statutory priority for WIOA adult formula funds. This means that veterans and eligible spouses who are also recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, or individuals who are basic skills deficient would receive first priority for services provided with WIOA adult formula funds;
2. Second, to non-covered persons, meaning individuals who are not veterans or eligible spouses, who are included in the groups given priority for WIOA adult formula funds;
3. Third, to veterans and eligible spouses who are not included in WIOA adult program's priority groups; and
4. Last, to non-covered persons outside the groups given priority under the WIOA adult program.

The delivery of services to priority populations will be monitored through annual monitoring of the adult formula program by the AWIB.

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

The state's Method of Funding Distribution policy #07-518 outlines that the transfer of 100 percent of funds between Adult and Dislocated Worker for employment and training is allowable and requires the approval of the DETS Director. Transferring of funds to or from the Youth program is not allowed. Reasons for the transfer of funds may happen when the quarterly expenditure evaluation indicates that a service area is under/over expending its funds; or there is an increased local demand for employment and training services for either a group of adults or a group of dislocated workers including when a plant closing or mass layoff occurs.

- (c) Youth Program Requirements. With respect to youth workforce investment activities authorized in section 129 of WIOA,—

- (1) Identify the State-developed criteria to be used by local boards in awarding grants for youth workforce investment activities and describe how the local boards will take into consideration the ability of the providers to meet performance accountability measures based on primary indicators of

performance for the youth program as described in section 116(b)(2)(A)(ii) of WIOA in awarding such grants.¹

The State criteria for awarding grants will include a competitive grant solicitation process, managed using the department's online EGrAMS; available grants can be accessed via the State's online public notice web site at <https://aws.state.ak.us/OnlinePublicNotices/>.

The State may develop or utilize auxiliary resources to advertise grant solicitations as necessary. Solicitations for program operators will occur bi-annually or, in certain situations, based on service delivery needs.

The DOLWD DETS manages the grant solicitation process, while the AWIB reviews the applications and offers recommendations to the Labor Commissioner, who is the final arbiter for approving or denying applications.

Per section 116 (b) (2) (A) (ii) of WIOA, performance is based on the criteria listed below. The AWIB will assess each applicant on their ability to meet performance outcomes based on how well each applicant's infrastructure, project resources, partnerships and program model enables their program to meet WIOA Youth performance measures:

1. percentage of program participants who are in education or training activities, or in unsubsidized employment during second quarter after exit;
2. percentage of participants who are in education or training activities or in unsubsidized employment during fourth quarter after exit;
3. median earnings of participants in unsubsidized employment during second quarter after exit;
4. percentage of participants who obtain a recognized post-secondary credential, secondary school diploma or equivalent during participation or within one year after program exit; and
5. percentage of participants who during a program year are in education that leads to a recognized postsecondary credential or employment and who are achieving measurable gains towards those goals.

- (2) Describe how the state will ensure that all 14 program elements described in WIOA section 129(c)(2) are made available and effectively implemented. .

Under WIOA Section 129(c) (2), comprehensive youth services consist of 14 program elements. All applicants must demonstrate the ability to deliver all program elements as well as identify partners and resources used to carry out each element listed below:

1. tutoring, study skills training, instruction, and evidence-based dropout prevention and recovery strategies that lead to completion of the requirements for a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent or for a recognized postsecondary credential;
2. alternative secondary school services, or dropout recovery services, as appropriate;
3. paid and unpaid work experiences that have as a component academic and occupational education;

¹ Sec. 102(b)(2)(D)(i)(V)

4. occupational skill training;
 5. education offered concurrently with and in the same context as workforce preparation activities and training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster;
 6. leadership development opportunities;
 7. supportive Services;
 8. adult mentoring for the period of participation and a subsequent period, for a total of not less than 12 months;
 9. follow-up services for not less than 12 months after the completion of participation, as appropriate;
 10. comprehensive guidance and counseling, which may include drug and alcohol abuse counseling and referral, as appropriate;
 11. financial literacy education;
 12. entrepreneurial skills training;
 13. services that provide labor market and employment information about in-demand industry sectors or occupations available in the local area, such as career awareness, career counseling, and career exploration services; and
 14. activities that help youth prepare for and transition to postsecondary education and training.
- (3) Provide the language contained in the State policy for “requiring additional assistance to enter or complete an educational program, or to secure and hold employment” criterion for out-of-school youth specified in WIOA section 129(a)(1)(B)(iii)(VIII) specified in WIOA sections and for “requiring additional assistance to complete an education program, or to secure and hold employment” criterion for in-school youth specified in WIOA section 129(a)(1)(C)(iv)(VII).

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

1. lacks the employability skills to become or retain employment; or
2. lacks access to training opportunities due to geographic challenges; or
3. requires special accommodations for education or employment due to their disability, or
4. has cultural dissonance; or
5. is defined as a migrant youth; or
6. is currently attending an educational program; and
 - has previously dropped out of an educational program; or
 - has poor attendance patterns in an educational program during the last 12 calendar months; and
 - has below average grades;
5. is not attending an educational program; and
 - has no vocational/employment goal; and
 - has a poor work history (including no work history), or has been fired from a job in the last six calendar months;

- 6. has completed full high school attendance; and
 - o failed comprehensive high school graduation tests; and
 - o was denied an Alaska high school diploma; and
 - o requests and requires intensive tutoring and/or remedial education to prepare for and retake the comprehensive examinations or the General Education Development (GED) Diploma examination.
- (4) Include the State definition, as defined in law, for not attending school and attending school as specified in WIOA Section 129(a)(1)(B)(i) and Section 129(a)(1)(C)(i). If State law does not define “not attending school” or “attending school,” indicate that is the case.

State law does not define “attending school” and “not attending school” but Alaska Statute [14.30.010](#) (a) states: “Every child between seven and 16 years of age shall attend school at the public school in the district in which the child resides during each school term.”

The State defines dropout in [4 AAC 06.895 \(m\) \(3\)](#) as: "dropout" means an individual who was enrolled in the district at some time during the school year whose enrollment terminated; "dropout" does not include an individual who (A) graduated from high school or completed a state- or district-approved education program, as evidenced by receipt of a secondary school diploma from school authorities; (B) transferred to another public school district, private school, or state-or district-approved education program; (C) is temporarily absent due to suspension; (D) is absent due to an illness or a medical condition; or (E) died.

- (5) If utilizing the portion of the basic skills deficient definition contained in WIOA Section 3(5)(B), include the specific State definition.

The state’s definition of basic skills deficient is as follows:

a) Basic Skills Deficient means, with respect to an individual:

- 1. Who is a youth, that the individual has English, reading, writing, or computing skills at or below the 8th grade level on the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE); or
- 2. Who is a youth or adult; that the individual is unable to compute or solve problems, or read, write, or speak English, at a level necessary to function on the job, in the individuals family, or society.

(d) Single-area State requirements. In States where there is only one local workforce investment area, the governor serves as both the State and local chief elected official. In such cases, the State must submit any information required in the local plan (WIOA section 106(d)(2)). States with a single workforce area must also include:

- (1) Any comments from the public comment period that represent disagreement with the Plan. (WIOA section 108(d)(3).)

In the final Plan submitted to the USDOL, the department will include any public comment that represents disagreement with the plan.

- (2) The entity responsible for the disbursement of grant funds, as determined by the governor, if different from that for the State. (WIOA section 108(b)(15).)

The Alaska DOLWD is responsible for the disbursement of grant funds.

- (3) The type and availability of WIOA title I Youth activities, including an identification of successful providers of such activities. (WIOA section 108(b)(9).)

The WIOA Youth Program is federally funded to provide a comprehensive system of training and support services for In School and Out of School youth ages 14 to 24 in preparation for the workforce. The program partners with for profit, nonprofit youth-serving organizations, and core partners to carry out delivery of workforce development activities across the state to include the following:

- objective assessment;
- development of service strategies and goals directly linked to one or more of the performance indicators;
- activities leading to the attainment of a secondary school; diploma or its recognized equivalent, or a recognized postsecondary credential;
- preparation for postsecondary educational and training opportunities;
- strong linkages between academic instruction
- occupational education that lead to the attainment of recognized postsecondary credentials;
- preparation for unsubsidized employment opportunities, in appropriate cases; and
- effective connections to employers.

Workforce activity partners will be identified on the Department's Employment and Training Services youth training programs website.

- (e) Waiver Requests (optional). States wanting to request waivers as part of their title I-B Operational Plan must include a waiver plan that includes the following information for each waiver requested:
- (1) Identifies the statutory or regulatory requirements for which a waiver is requested and the goals that the State or local area, as appropriate, intends to achieve as a result of the waiver and how those goals relate to the Unified or Combined State Plan;
 - (2) Describes the actions that the State or local area, as appropriate, has undertaken to remove State or local statutory or regulatory barriers;
 - (3) Describes the goals of the waiver and the expected programmatic outcomes if the request is granted;
 - (4) Describes how the waiver will align with the Department's policy priorities, such as:
 - (A) supporting employer engagement;
 - (B) connecting education and training strategies;
 - (C) supporting work-based learning;
 - (D) improving job and career results, and
 - (E) other guidance issued by the Department.
 - (5) Describes the individuals affected by the waiver, including how the waiver will impact services for disadvantaged populations or individuals with multiple barriers to employment; and
 - (6) Describes the processes used to:
 - (A) Monitor the progress in implementing the waiver;
 - (B) Provide notice to any local board affected by the waiver;
 - (C) Provide any local board affected by the waiver an opportunity to comment on the request;

- (D) Ensure meaningful public comment, including comment by business and organized labor, on the waiver.
 - (E) Collect and report information about waiver outcomes in the State's WIOA Annual Report.
- (7) The Secretary may require that States provide the most recent data available about the outcomes of the existing waiver in cases where the State seeks renewal of a previously approved waiver.

Waiver request to allow the State Board to carry out the roles of a local board.

- (1) Identifies the statutory or regulatory requirements for which a waiver is requested and the goals that the State or local area, as appropriate, intends to achieve as a result of the waiver and how those goals relate to the Unified or Combined State Plan;

Statutory requirements: 20 CFR 661.300(f).

Goals:

- streamline Alaska's governance structure;
- streamline the process and timeliness of awarding grants by the elimination of multiple layers of administrative entities;
- establish consistent eligibility standards across the state; and
- improve accountability of workforce investment and opportunity programs.

One of the main goals of our Combined Plan is to improve the efficiency and performance of Alaska's workforce system. Allowing the state board to act as the local board for our single local area state streamlines the governance structure at the state level, which provides the foundation for efficiency and performance across the system.

As of 2003, ETA allowed the state to do away with the two previous local areas (Anchorage/Mat-Su and Balance of State). Since that time, we have been a single workforce area state, and we are requesting to remain so. The impact of functioning as a single local area with a single regional planning area and a single state board has improved and will continue to improve Alaska's workforce system.

- (2) Describes the actions that the State or local area, as appropriate, has undertaken to remove State or local statutory or regulatory barriers;

The Governor has designated Alaska as a single state local area and a single planning region. There are no state or local barriers to implementation of this waiver.

- (3) Describes the goals of the waiver and the expected programmatic outcomes if the request is granted;

The waiver will continue to streamline Alaska's governance structure and make it responsive to the uniqueness of our state's economy and geography, especially given our current fiscal challenges.

The waiver will also streamline the process for awarding grants by eliminating multiple layers of administrative entities and processes. The AWIB, functioning as both the local and the state board, and housed under the Commissioner of Labor, will work closely with the department in determining grant criteria, reviewing grant applications, and evaluating sub-recipients.

The waiver will allow us to continue implementing consistent standards across the state, instead of having multiple boards with a variety of eligibility and performance standards in different parts of the state.

The waiver will result in improved accountability of workforce investment programs, as the single board will oversee all workforce programs and will bring consistency to the evaluation and oversight process.

- (4) Describes how the waiver will align with the Department's policy priorities, such as:
 - (A) supporting employer engagement;
 - (B) connecting education and training strategies;
 - (C) supporting work-based learning;
 - (D) improving job and career results, and
 - (E) other guidance issued by the Department.

The majority of AWIB members are representatives of business. They come from a variety of industries and from all parts of the state, and they are committed to bringing the voice of employers to the table and to reaching out to others in their respective industries to engage them in the workforce system. Many members of the Board are new, as is the Board's Executive Director. The Board is currently working on Board training and on developing a strategic plan, which will include using the industry sector approach to workforce development. Using that approach, they will be focusing not only on employer engagement but on connecting education and training strategies through building career pathways; supporting work-based learning; and improving career results for all job seekers and employers alike.

- (5) Describes the individuals affected by the waiver, including how the waiver will impact services for disadvantaged populations or individuals with multiple barriers to employment; and

All WIOA-eligible participants, as well as employers, are positively impacted by this waiver. Participants and employers need not look to a different local area in the hopes of finding more resources, because the state functions and reports as a single statewide designation.

- (6) Describes the processes used to:
 - (A) Monitor the progress in implementing the waiver;
 - (B) Provide notice to any local board affected by the waiver;
 - (C) Provide any local board affected by the waiver an opportunity to comment on the request;
 - (D) Ensure meaningful public comment, including comment by business and organized labor, on the waiver.
 - (E) Collect and report information about waiver outcomes in the State's WIOA Annual Report.

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, local elected officials from Alaska's boroughs and cities are notified about planning efforts and invited to provide input to the AWIB in two main ways: 1) outreach by Board members to their local officials; 2) opportunities for input at each Board meeting, which are held at various locations around the state. The AWIB will be focusing on statewide strategies and their linkage to the state's regional economic and workforce development needs.

The Governor will monitor the progress of this waiver by reviewing information provided by the department and the Board on costs, processes for awarding grants, eligibility standards, and performance on

accountability measures. This information will also be used to report about the waiver outcomes in the state's annual WIOA reports.

Waiver Request for High Concentration of Youth

- (1) Identifies the statutory or regulatory requirements for which a waiver is requested and the goals that the State or local area, as appropriate, intends to achieve as a result of the waiver and how those goals relate to the Unified or Combined State Plan;

WIOA Section 129(b)(2)(F) and 20 CFR 652 §682.200(k) – requirement for provision of additional assistance to areas that have high concentrations of eligible youth.

The goal is to ensure that the Governor has the flexibility to prioritize the use of reserve funds for the required activities deemed most essential to the basic functions of the workforce investment system and to initiate youth activities in areas with the most need.

One of the main goals of our Combined Plan is to improve the efficiency and performance of Alaska's workforce system. This waiver will provide the state with flexibility in directing the Governor's reserve funds to those activities that best preserve functions of our system.

- (2) Describes the actions that the State or local area, as appropriate, has undertaken to remove State or local statutory or regulatory barriers;

There is no state, local statutory or regulatory barrier. The AWIB carries out the roles and responsibilities of the local area encompassing the state. The AWIB supports this waiver request to allow for flexibility in directing funds to areas that have the most need for additional support to serve youth participants.

- (3) Describes the goals of the waiver and the expected programmatic outcomes if the request is granted;

The WIOA allotment for Governor's reserve funds restricts the state's ability to effectively fund and carry out all of the required statewide workforce investment activities, as the majority of the State is high concentration of youth eligible. The State requests the flexibility to fund special projects to address the State's specific youth needs rather than being tied to the high concentration of youth criterion. The goal in seeking this waiver is to ensure that the Governor has the flexibility to prioritize the use of reserve funds for the required activities deemed most essential to the basic functions of the workforce investment system and to initiate youth activities that will further the goals outlined in Alaska's Combined State Plan. Based on the formula allocation factor that allocates one-third of program funds on the basis of relative number of disadvantaged youth, funding is already directed at workforce areas with high concentrations of eligible youth.

This intent mirrors that of the WIOA: to simplify and streamline an integral part of a reformed workforce development system. The flexibility this waiver will provide will positively impact all stakeholders and customers involved in WIOA youth program services.

- (4) Describes how the waiver will align with the Department's policy priorities, such as:
 - (A) supporting employer engagement;

- (B) connecting education and training strategies;
- (C) supporting work-based learning;
- (D) improving job and career results, and
- (E) other guidance issued by the Department.

The waiver aligns with the Departments priorities and will provide Alaska with more flexibility in directing Governor's Reserve Funds to activities that support the workforce investment system in maintaining services for all eligible individuals, including youth. The flexibility of the waiver will allow for projects that support employer engagement, connect education and training strategies, support apprenticeship and other work based learning strategies, and will ultimately lead to improving job and career results.

- (5) Describes the individuals affected by the waiver, including how the waiver will impact services for disadvantaged populations or individuals with multiple barriers to employment; and

All youth program participants will be affected in a positive way. The waiver will allow the flexibility to use the Governor's Reserve Funds for projects targeting specific youth needs in all areas, not just in areas of high concentration of youth. Youth program participants generally possess multiple barriers to employment, which can be addressed in innovative ways with these funds.

- (6) Describes the processes used to:
 - (A) Monitor the progress in implementing the waiver;
 - (B) Provide notice to any local board affected by the waiver;
 - (C) Provide any local board affected by the waiver an opportunity to comment on the request;
 - (D) Ensure meaningful public comment, including comment by business and organized labor, on the waiver.
 - (E) Collect and report information about waiver outcomes in the State's WIOA Annual Report.

The AWIB will monitor the implementation and results of this waiver ensuring performance information is recorded accurately, one-stop operations are made more efficient and responsive to customers, and the youth programs receive additional technical assistance. Alaska will also ensure accountability for Federal funds in connection with this waiver by reviewing monthly expenditure, performance and other reports through regular contact with the U.S. Department of Labor, Employment & Training Administration, Region VI State Liaison, and through its monitoring and performance accountability system. Notice of public comment regarding this waiver will be issued and all waiver outcomes will be included in Alaska's WIOA Annual Report.

TITLE I-B ASSURANCES

| The State Plan must include assurances that: | |
|---|---|
| 1. | The State has implemented a policy to ensure Adult program funds provide a priority in the delivery of career and training services to individuals who are low income, public assistance recipients or basic skills deficient; |
| 2. | The State has implemented a policy to ensure local areas have a process in place for referring veterans with significant barriers to employment to career services provided by the JVSG program's Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) specialist; |
| 3. | The State established a written policy and procedure that set forth criteria to be used by chief elected officials for the appointment of local workforce investment board members; |
| 4. | The State established written policy and procedures to ensure local workforce investment boards are certified by the governor every two years in accordance with WIOA section 107(c)(2); |
| 5. | Where an alternative entity takes the place of a State Board, the State has written policy and procedures to ensure the alternative entity meets the definition under WIOA section 101(e) and the legal requirements for membership; |
| 6. | The State established a written policy and procedure for how the individuals and entities represented on the State Workforce Development Board help to determine the methods and factors of distribution, and how the State consults with chief elected officials in local areas throughout the State in determining the distributions; |
| 7. | The State will not use funds received under WIOA Title I to assist, promote, or deter union organizing in accordance with WIOA section 181(b)(7); |
| 8. | The State distributes adult and youth funds received under WIOA equitably throughout the State, and no local area suffers significant shifts in funding from year-to-year during the period covered by this plan; |
| 9. | If a State Workforce Development Board, department, or agency administers State laws for vocational rehabilitation of persons with disabilities, that board, department, or agency cooperates with the agency that administers Wagner-Peyser services, Adult and Dislocated Worker programs and Youth Programs under Title I; |
| 10. | The State agrees to report on the impact and outcomes of its approved waivers in its WIOA Annual Report; and |
| 11. | The State has taken appropriate action to secure compliance with the Uniform Guidance at 2 CFR 200 and 2 CFR 2900, including that the State will annually monitor local areas to ensure compliance and otherwise take appropriate action to secure compliance with the Uniform Guidance under section WIOA 184(a)(3); |

Wagner-Peyser Act Program (Employment Services)

(a) Employment Service Professional Staff Development.

- (1) Describe how the State will utilize professional development activities for Employment Service staff to ensure staff is able to provide high quality services to both jobseekers and employers.

Employment Service (ES) staff funded under Wagner-Peyser receive professional development training during their first year of employment and on an as-needed basis to ensure staff are prepared to provide high-quality employment and training services to job seekers, workers, and employers. Areas of staff training include policies, procedures, and information on employment and training-related programs and services like RR, Fidelity Bonding, various tax credits, federally-funded training, and disability awareness. ES staff also receive training on customer service skills, conducting a job search, POS for veterans, and how to use the ALEXsys to assist both job seekers and employers.

All ES staff participate in the Alaska Foundations of Workforce Professional Certification program. These are professional competency courses developed around the National Association for Workforce Development Professionals core competency defined areas.

ES staff who work closely with employers are provided with the Business and Employer Services – Professional Certification professional development program. These professional competency courses were developed around the National Association for Workforce Development Professionals seven core defined areas of competency for Business and Employer Services. Employer services staff also receive regular training including: employer outreach, hire incentives, incumbent worker training, Registered Apprenticeship, the benefits of hiring veterans, and adherence to state and federal regulations that affect employers.

Staff performance is monitored closely; as needs arise, training is provided to correct areas of deficiency. Such training can include one or more of the following: classroom instruction, webinars, and one-on-one training.

- (2) Describe strategies developed to support training and awareness across core programs and the Unemployment Insurance program and the training provided for employment services and WIOA staff on identification of Unemployment Insurance (UI) eligibility issues and referral to UI staff for adjudication.

Alaska uses several strategies to ensure that core program, WIOA, and UI staff are trained to recognize and respond to UI eligibility issues. All ES and WIOA staff have a working knowledge and awareness of the UI requirement that claimants must register for work in ALEXsys, maintain an online resume, and conduct weekly work searches. UI Technical Unit staff routinely provide UI eligibility issue training to ensure ES staff is able to recognize barriers and forward potential issues to UI staff to investigate through a dedicated email address. UI policy, procedure, and instructional manuals are also available to all ES staff. Only UI staff are authorized to make the eligibility determination regarding resolution of potential UI issues. ES/WIOA staff located in the AJCs can guide claimants toward understanding and satisfying the UI requirements listed above and assist them to contact the UI Claim Center for in-depth answers regarding UI eligibility.

Cross-training of staff occurs regularly, allowing employer services staff to easily assist in the ES resource rooms to help job seekers. In addition to field staff training by UI and ES Technical Unit staff, for continuity and clarity, AJC managers also receive training and are responsible for ensuring that their staff are aware of and adhere to new procedures, regulations, and service delivery models. Having all ES, UI, and Career Support and Training Services (CSTS) staff in one division greatly increases the atmosphere of sharing a common goal for common customers.

Alaska's RR team is one of the best examples of an integrated workforce system. This team is comprised of staff from different units that work toward a common goal. The RR team is led by the ES Technical Unit and comprised of UI, ES resource room, CSTS, TAA, and ES Employer Services staff. The team is trained collectively so that each person learns and understands the roles of the other team members and how the services offered by each unit to the employers and workers complement and build off each other.

Another example of different units working together is the Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) team led by a combination of UI and ES Technical Unit staff. These staff work together to develop strategies that ensure UI claimants, particularly veterans and those deemed most likely to exhaust UI benefits, receive a combination of meaningful financial and job-search support while they are in transition. Development of these strategies necessitates a sound level of understanding of both programs. If the claimant appears to need training, ES staff contacts WIOA staff for an eligibility and suitability assessment. If the claimant is also a veteran, veteran specialist staff are also contacted to offer tailored assistance in terms familiar to their fellow veterans. They also work with ES staff to match the veteran with jobs and take advantage of state and federal hire incentives offered to employers who hire veterans.

- (b) Explain how the State will provide information and meaningful assistance to individuals requesting assistance in filing a claim for unemployment compensation through one-stop centers, as required by WIOA as a career service.

UI claimants and employers are priority customers at Alaska's one-stop centers. All one-stop centers have phone banks for UI purposes. The phone banks are in a separate dedicated queue for one-stop customers. One-stop customers are given priority over the general queue and are answered immediately by knowledgeable UI claim center staff. ES staff promptly assist claimants and employers to meet filing requirements for UI purposes as well as providing dedicated resources such as computers, telephones, facsimile machines, and printed materials regarding filing for UI benefits and eligibility requirements. ES staff have general knowledge and awareness of UI eligibility requirements and report potential issues to UI staff for follow-up.

- (c) Describe the State's strategy for providing reemployment assistance to UI claimants and other unemployed individuals.

Wagner-Peyser-funded Employment Service (ES) staff located in Alaska's 17 AJCs serve all job seekers and employers. In addition, Alaska has made UI claimants a priority population. As such, AJC staff are charged with improving claimants' services, training options, and support programs. In addition, one of the state's top priorities is the RESEA program. The goal of the program is to reduce the number of UI benefit weeks paid to claimants by fast-tracking them into the right combination of reemployment services, resources, and opportunities designed to promote rapid reemployment. RESEA is offered in Alaska's six largest AJCs, which also have the highest percentage of UI claimants: Anchorage-Midtown, Mat-Su, Juneau, Fairbanks, Kenai, and Ketchikan. RESEA focuses on targeted assistance to two types of UI claimants - recently-separated veterans and the most-likely to-exhaust UI benefits. For selection criteria, UI uses wage data and a DOLETA-approved statistical model that uses claimant characteristics and economic indicators to assess the likelihood of a claimant exhausting UI benefits.

Staff and public awareness of the mandatory nature of RESEA and the substantial benefits that participation offers to claimants is the key to the program's success. Alaska accomplishes this task using several channels.

Formal and on-going training is provided to staff in all AJCs participating in RESEA. As a best practice, field staff who have conducted past reemployment service programs participate in the development of new staff training materials particularly during the transition period from one reemployment services version to another. Their input is crucial, as they are the ones who become the experts at eliciting and reading the reemployment needs of the claimants they interview.

Each week, UI mails notifications to selected claimants who have received a first payment of mandatory participation in RESEA and advises self-registration and completion of requirements immediately to ensure continued eligibility for UI benefits. In addition, to alert AJC RESEA staff, UI auto-transmits RESEA selection data to the ALEXsys. To ensure that all selected claimants receive notification of the mandatory participation, AJC RESEA staff also receive an electronic list with the contact information of selected claimants; staff personally call each claimant to remind them of their responsibility to participate in the program to promote rapid reemployment and to facilitate immediate registration into the mandatory in-person workshop to ensure all RESEA obligations are fulfilled timely. Extensive outreach will use the media, press releases, reminder postcards, and booklets strategically placed in military installation resource rooms.

Each claimant selected for RESEA is required to participate in a 90-minute, in-person, reemployment services and eligibility assessment workshop with RESEA staff. Based on the eligibility assessment, the orientation to AJC resources, the claimant's work search efforts combined with real-time labor market information, and the assessment of the unique reemployment needs of each claimant, an Individual Reemployment Plan is developed with the claimant. The claimant actively participates in the development of the Individual Reemployment Plan, lending credence to the likelihood it will be completed. Recommended services are explored and at least one service is provided during the 90-minute session while others may be referred for completion at a later date using other reemployment and training resources including those funded under Wagner-Peyser, Dislocated Worker, Adult, and JVSG.

A large percentage of claimants selected for RESEA will be military veterans, a group who are always a top priority in Alaska. Some of the veterans will be recently separated from the military and others will be veterans who meet the criteria associated with the most-likely-to-exhaust UI benefits. The latter are veterans who are homeless, disabled, or have other significant barriers to reemployment. In the three RESEA AJCs with on-site DVOP staff, a personal introduction and warm hand-off to the DVOP will be the norm. In other AJCs, RESEA staff will telephonically introduce the RESEA participant to the DVOPs who serve veterans itinerantly for that region.

- (d) Describe how the State will use W-P funds to support UI claimants, and the communication between W-P and UI, as appropriate including the following:
- (1) Coordination of and provision of labor exchange services for UI claimants as required by the Wagner-Peyser Act;

Alaska's UI program is dedicated to providing unemployed workers fast and accurate payment of UI benefits. With the seasonal nature of much of the state's workforce and Alaska's vast remoteness, UI benefits serve to not only bridge the economic gap for the individual worker, but also as a stabilizing influence on local economies. Workers who have become unemployed or are working less than fulltime are encouraged to apply for UI benefits as soon as possible. Application for a UI claim is easy and can be conducted using the same familiar online account (myAlaska) that Alaska residents use to file their Permanent Fund Dividend and access other state services. In addition to UI staff, ES staff are familiar with myAlaska and can guide claimants through the application process.

To help claimants with their job search efforts, Alaska uses Wagner-Peyser funds to maintain the ALEXsys, which provides registered job seekers access to state and local jobs advertised by Alaska employers. Both UI and ES online systems require a claimant's email address; both UI and ES staff can assist a claimant in establishing an email address for these purposes.

The application for the UI claim generates comprehensive information to the claimant including their rights and responsibilities, eligibility requirements, how to file biweekly claims, and how payment may be received.

Unless specifically exempted by UI, all claimants must be physically able and available to seek and accept suitable, fulltime work. ES staff have a basic understanding of this requirement.

(2) [Registration of UI claimants with the State’s employment service if required by State law;](#)

In Alaska, unless specifically exempted by UI, claimants filing for benefits are responsible for registering for work in and posting at least one online resume on ALEXsys within seven days of filing a new or reopened claim for UI benefits. Claimants must maintain the online resume and ensure it is current and accessible to employers by regularly checking that it is in online status. The registration and resume stay active while the claimant is actively engaged in job search and referral activities in ALEXsys and while receiving reemployment services from AJC staff. Instructions for registering in ALEXsys are provided to all claimants in the UI Claimant Handbook. The online UI Filing Guide also provides registration instructions and includes a live link to ALEXsys.

(3) [Administration of the work test for the State unemployment compensation system, including making eligibility assessments \(for referral to UI adjudication, if needed\), and providing job finding and placement services for UI claimants; and](#)

Claimants required to register and post an on-line resume in ALEXsys are also required to perform work search contacts for each week they claim UI benefits. For the claimant and UI staff, applications for jobs posted on ALEXsys serve as an easily-verifiable record of the number of job searches being conducted each week. The record also provides ES and RESEA staff with a way to ascertain the suitability and validity of claimant work searches. This information is one component that helps build the foundation for a solid reemployment plan. Work search efforts can be recorded and accepted on any template as long as the record is verifiable; however, both UI and ES provide a formal Work Search Log with clear instructions and encourage claimants to use it. If it becomes apparent to ES or RESEA staff that a claimant is not seeking work or has refused suitable work, ES staff will promptly notify their UI counterparts to alert them of the potential issue. In addition, all UI staff are trained to maneuver through ALEXsys to verify that a claimant is registered, has an online resume, and is conducting work searches.

(4) [Provision of referrals to and application assistance for training and education programs and resources.](#)

ES, RESEA, UI, State Training and Employment Program (STEP), and CSTS staff all work for the same Division - DETS. CSTS staff make the eligibility and suitability for training determinations. Referrals to training typically come from ES and RESEA staff. UI staff are also aware that some claimants may be eligible for WIOA or other federally-funded training and may advise the claimant to contact the appropriate AJC for more information. Referrals may also come from partners such as ABE, SCSEP, or DVR. In this way, Alaska maintains the “no wrong door” approach to serving job seekers, including claimants.

Job seekers interested in training are guided through the process by CSTS staff that also help them with their applications to training providers approved on the Eligible Training Provider List.

(e) [Agricultural Outreach Plan \(AOP\).](#) Each State agency must develop an AOP every four years as part of the Unified or Combined State Plan required under sections 102 or 103 of WIOA. The AOP must include—

(1) *Assessment of Need.* Provide an assessment of the unique needs of farmworkers in the area based on past and projected agricultural and farmworker activity in the State. Such needs may include but are not limited to: employment, training, and housing.

(A) An assessment of the agricultural activity in the State means: 1) identifying the top five labor-intensive crops, the months of heavy activity, and the geographic area of prime activity; 2) Summarize the agricultural employers’ needs in the State (i.e. are they predominantly hiring

local or foreign workers, are they expressing that there is a scarcity in the agricultural workforce); and 3) Identifying any economic, natural, or other factors that are affecting agriculture in the State or any projected factors that will affect agriculture in the State.

Alaska is not a significant Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker (MSFW) state and has a limited agricultural industry, primarily confined to the Matanuska-Susitna Borough. Although Alaska's agricultural activity is low, Per 20 CFR 653.18 (d) (1), we will apply to have a SMA with less than full-time duties to monitor Alaska's commercial agricultural activity.

In recent years, Alaska has had only one employer utilize the H-2A Temporary Agricultural program to pursue visas for foreign workers. In order to apply for these visas, the employer is required to recruit for U.S. workers. Pending a demonstrated shortage of available U.S. workers, the employer is then able to gain certification of the H-2A visas. Many of Alaska's other agricultural employers continue to use word of mouth, placement of job orders in our Alaska Labor Exchange system (ALEXsys), or other methods of public recruitment to pursue workers.

The DOL provides outreach and assessments through our 17 AJCs. These offices are part of the state's one-stop system, serving as either a comprehensive one-stop center or an affiliated one-stop. Staff will establish a list of available resources and develop partnerships with local organizations to serve MSFWs. Resources can include: Chamber of Commerce, TANF, health programs, community food banks, and entities that provide Adult Literacy, ESL, and GED services to MSFWs. The DOLWD will work with grantees, MSFW organizations, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture to help summarize the unique needs of farmworkers in Alaska.

(B) An assessment of the unique needs of farmworkers means summarizing MSFW characteristics (including if they are predominantly from certain countries, what language(s) they speak, the approximate number of MSFWs in the State during peak season and during low season, and whether they tend to be migrant, seasonal, or year-round farmworkers). This information must take into account data supplied by WIOA Section 167 National Farmworker Jobs Program (NFJP) sub-recipients, other MSFW organizations, employer organizations, and State and/or Federal agency data sources such as the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) Employment and Training Administration.

- (b) Alaska is not a significant Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker (MSFW) state and has a limited agricultural industry, primarily confined to the Matanuska-Susitna Borough. Although Alaska's agricultural activity is low, Per 20 CFR 653.18 (d) (1), we will apply to have a SMA with less than full-time duties to monitor Alaska's commercial agricultural activity.
- (c) In recent years, Alaska has had only one employer utilize the H-2A Temporary Agricultural program to pursue visas for foreign workers. In order to apply for these visas, the employer is required to recruit for U.S. workers. Pending a demonstrated shortage of available U.S. workers, the employer is then able to gain certification of the H-2A visas. Many of Alaska's other agricultural employers continue to use word of mouth, placement of job orders in our Alaska Labor Exchange system (ALEXsys), or other methods of public recruitment to pursue workers.
- (d) The DOL provides outreach and assessments through our 17 AJCs. These offices are part of the state's one-stop system, serving as either a comprehensive one-stop center or an affiliated one-stop. Staff will establish a list of available resources and develop partnerships with local organizations to serve MSFWs. Resources can include: Chamber of Commerce, TANF, health programs, community food banks, and entities that provide Adult Literacy, ESL, and GED services to MSFWs. The DOLWD will work with

grantees, MSFW organizations, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture to help summarize the unique needs of farmworkers in Alaska.

- (2) *Outreach Activities.* The local offices outreach activities must be designed to meet the needs of MSFWs in the State and to locate and contact MSFWs who are not being reached through normal intake activities. Describe the State agency's proposed strategies for:
- A. Contacting farmworkers who are not being reached by the normal intake activities conducted by the employment service offices.

DOL Staff will conduct outreach by referring MSFWs to both seasonal agricultural employment and nonagricultural employment. This will provide additional career opportunities and lengthens the period of employment for MSFW workers. We can also provide outreach to MSFWs for participation in local fairs targeted to them and their families. DOL can develop multi-lingual posters for the MSFWs on our services at the job centers.

- B. Providing technical assistance to outreach workers. Technical assistance must include trainings, conferences, additional resources, and increased collaboration with other organizations on topics such as one-stop center services (i.e. availability of referrals to training, supportive services, and career services, as well as specific employment opportunities), the employment service complaint system, information on the other organizations serving MSFWs in the area, and a basic summary of farmworker rights, including their rights with respect to the terms and conditions of employment.

Staff will coordinate with the growers to match the labor needs of employers with workers qualified to fill the jobs. Staff can aid by scheduling visits throughout the agricultural community. DOLWD staff can provide assistance and support on outreach to MSFWs to include onsite review of local services provided to MSFWs. Our local job centers can consider conducting workshops in other languages (Spanish), introducing migrants to office technology, and offering translation assistance within local communities.

The new SMA will perform a variety of advocacy activities, including, but not limited to, overseeing the operation and performance of the MSFW complaint system, reviewing reports of outreach workers, participating in public meetings throughout the state, and meeting with farm worker groups and employers to promote DOLWD services.

To urge those farmworkers to go to the local one-stop center to obtain the full range of employment and training services, we will make sure outreach contacts with MSFWs are made primarily during the peak activity period. Using available resources, contacts will be made at locations where MSFWs live and congregate. Written and oral presentations can be provided in the language(s) readily understood by workers.

The menu of services may include the following:

- Information regarding the full array of services offered in the one-stop job centers;
- Referral to agricultural, H-2A orders, and non-agricultural employment;
- Referral to training;
- Referral to supportive services;
- Career counseling;

- Unemployment Insurance information;
- Information on the DOL complaint system;
- Job development; and
- Summaries of farm worker rights

If a MSFW cannot or does not wish to visit a physical one-stop location, outreach staff can help the customers complete an application for services, provide referrals to employment opportunities for which they are qualified, assist them in preparing complaints, or make appointments for needed services. Staff can then carry out follow-up contact with MSFW customers.

- C. Increasing outreach worker training and awareness across core programs including the Unemployment Insurance (UI) program and the training on identification of UI eligibility issues.

The department will provide increased outreach and worker training and awareness across core programs including unemployment insurance.

- D. Providing State merit staff outreach workers professional development activities to ensure they are able to provide high quality services to both jobseekers and employers.

The department will provide merit staff workers with professional development activities in order to provide jobseekers and employers high quality service.

- E. Coordinating outreach efforts with NFJP sub-recipients as well as with public and private community service agencies and MSFW groups.

The department will coordinate outreach efforts with agencies such as the US Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources, and with the State of Alaska Research & Analysis division.

- (3) *Services provided to farmworkers and agricultural employers through the one-stop delivery system.* Describe the State agency's proposed strategies for:
- A. Providing the full range of employment and training services to the agricultural community, both farmworkers and agricultural employers, through the one-stop delivery system. This includes:
 - i. How career and training services required under WIOA Title I will be provided to MSFWs through the one-stop centers;
 - ii. How the State serves agricultural employers and how it intends to improve such services.
 - B. Marketing the employment service complaint system to farmworkers and other farmworker advocacy groups.
 - C. Marketing the Agricultural Recruitment System to agricultural employers and how it intends to improve such publicity.

The Wagner-Peyser program provides services for job-seekers and employers. Services for job-seekers include but are not limited to: an extensive online job bank for researching job openings; referrals to job

openings, training or other employment services; job search consulting and workshops; aptitude, interest and proficiency tests; career guidance; area business job fairs; special services to veterans, migrant seasonal farm workers and individuals with disabilities; and re-employment services to claimants identified through the state's Unemployment Insurance system as high-risk for exhausting benefits prior to re-employment and recently released Veterans.

DOL staff will assist agricultural employers with their labor needs. When local workers are not available, we will provide technical assistance to growers to aid them in accessing other workers. Our local office staff will assist farm labor contractors in preparing application for certification with the U.S. Department of Labor.

Employers are also valued customers of the Wagner-Peyser program. Program funds are leveraged to expand employer participation in the statewide workforce investment system. Some examples include: a One-stop staff structure specifically dedicated to business services; connecting employers to system resources; One-stop facilities to provide a professional atmosphere for employers to conduct customized recruitment and hiring events; processing of job orders; and recruiting/matching applications from local, state, and national labor pools. Our Business Services specialists in the job centers are trained to work with and understand the skill needs of employers so they can make quality referrals of job seekers who meet those needs.

(4) Other Requirements.

- (A) Collaboration. Describe any collaborative agreements the SWA has with other MSFW service providers including NFJP sub-recipients and other service providers. Describe how the SWA intends to build upon/increase collaboration with existing partners and in establishing new partners over the next four years (including any approximate timelines for establishing agreements or building upon existing agreements).

Alaska has no documented MSFWs in Alaska and we have not captured that information in previous years. The state will apply for a part-time SMA who will work with other entities such as the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources, and the State of Alaska Research & Analysis section to find those MSFWs to engage with them and provide them services. We will also work with those entities to develop a way to capture data on Agricultural employees and MSFWs in the state.

- (B) Review and Public Comment. In developing the AOP, the SWA must solicit information and suggestions from NFJP sub-recipients, other appropriate MSFW groups, public agencies, agricultural employer organizations, and other interested organizations. In addition, at least 45 calendar days before submitting its final AOP, the SWA must provide a proposed plan to NFJP sub-recipients, public agencies, agricultural employer organizations, and other organizations expressing an interest and allow at least 30 days for review and comment. The SWA must: 1) Consider any comments received in formulating its final proposed AOP; 2) Inform all commenting parties in writing whether their comments have been incorporated and, if not, the reasons therefore; and 3) Transmit the comments and recommendations received and its responses with the submission of the AOP.
- i. The AOP must include a statement confirming NFJP sub-recipients, other appropriate MSFW groups, public agencies, agricultural employer organizations and other interested employer organizations have been given an opportunity to comment on the AOP. Include the list of organizations from which information and suggestions were solicited, any comments received, and responses to those comments.

Alaska currently does not have a SMA established, but will begin the process of applying to have a part-time statewide SMA. Alaska has no established NFJP grantees, MSFW groups, or agricultural employer organizations identified to review and comment on this submission. When Alaska does apply to have a SMA and after we have established the above groups, we will ask for suggestions and comments.

- (C) **Data Assessment.** Review the previous four years Wagner-Peyser data reports on performance. Note whether the State has been meeting its goals to provide MSFWs quantitatively proportionate services as compared to non-MSFWs. If it has not met these goals, explain why the State believes such goals were not met and how the State intends to improve its provision of services in order to meet such goals.

Alaska will establish reports and procedures in order to capture information on MSFWs and agricultural employers to meet our future goals and assessment of progress.

- (D) **Assessment of progress.** The plan must include an explanation of what was achieved based on the previous AOP, what was not achieved and an explanation as to why the State believes the goals were not achieved, and how the State intends to remedy the gaps of achievement in the coming year.

Alaska will establish reports and procedures to capture information on MSFWs and agricultural employers to meet our future goals and assessment of progress.

- (E) **State Monitor Advocate.** The plan must contain a statement confirming the State Monitor Advocate has reviewed and approved the AOP.

Alaska does not have a SMA at this time but will apply to for a part-time statewide SMA.

WAGNER-PEYSER ASSURANCES

| The State Plan must include assurances that: | |
|---|---|
| 1. | The Wagner-Peyser Employment Service is co-located with one-stop centers or a plan and timeline has been developed to comply with this requirement within a reasonable amount of time. (sec 121(e)(3)); |
| 2. | The State agency is complying with the requirements under 20 CFR 653.111 (State agency staffing requirements) if the State has significant MSFW one-stop centers; |
| 3. | If a State Workforce Development Board, department, or agency administers State laws for vocational rehabilitation of persons with disabilities, that board, department, or agency cooperates with the agency that administers Wagner-Peyser services, Adult and Dislocated Worker programs and Youth Programs under Title I; and |
| 4. | State agency merit-based public employees provide Wagner-Peyser Act-funded labor exchange activities in accordance with Department of Labor regulations. |

Adult Education And Family Literacy Programs

The State Plan must include a description of the following as it pertains to Adult Education and Literacy programs under title II, the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act.

- (a) Aligning of Content Standards. Describe how the eligible agency will, by July 1, 2016, align its content standards for adult education with State-adopted challenging academic content standards, as adopted under section 1111(b)(1) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended (20 U.S.C. 6311(b)(1)).

The Alaska ABE Program adopted College and Career Readiness (CCR) standards for Adult Education. The CCR, the product of a project funded by Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education, are a set of content standards reflecting broad agreement among experts about what is desirable for adult students to know to be prepared for the rigors of postsecondary education and training. CCR are a manageable set of the Common Core State Standards and were determined to be the most indispensable for college and career readiness and most important to adult students

In 2012, the Alaska State Board of Education & Early Development adopted new academic standards for English Language Arts and Mathematics. Alaska did not adopt the Common Core State Standards because the state did not want to agree to accept the standards in their entirety without the ability to change them in the future. The adoption process involved two years of working on the new standards with rural and urban Alaskans, including representatives of universities, career and technical programs, industries, and teachers of diverse student populations. The State ABE Director was included in this process. The proposed standards were compared to standards across the country in terms of content and rigor. The final standards are similar to those adopted in other states, while allowing Alaska the right to adjust them in the future. The state ABE Director attended meetings in November of 2010 and was part of the team that analyzed the state's standards to the Common Core State Standards. Very few differences were found between the Common Core State Standards and the standards adopted by the Alaska Board of Education. Therefore, the CCR standards for Adult Education align with the Alaskan standards.

- (a) Local Activities. Describe how the State will, using the considerations specified in section 231(e) of WIOA, fund each eligible provider to establish or operate programs that provide adult education and literacy activities, including programs that provide such activities concurrently. The Unified or Combined State Plan must include at a minimum the scope, content, and organization of local activities.

Adult Education and Literacy Activities (Section 203 of WIOA)

Adult education;

Literacy;

Workplace adult education and literacy activities;

Family literacy activities;

English language acquisition activities;

Integrated English literacy and civics education;

Workforce preparation activities; or

Integrated education and training that—

1. Provides adult education and literacy activities, concurrently and contextually with both, workforce preparation activities, and workforce training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster, and
2. Is for the purpose of educational and career advancement.

All of the considerations for awarding grants and contracts under Title II section 203 (2) will serve as the basis for funding a state wide network of regional ABE programs that meet the requirements of Title II. All eligible providers' grant applications will address the required thirteen considerations listed in 203 (2) (e).

Eligible providers for ABE grants may include organizations that have demonstrated effectiveness in providing adult education and literacy activities. The list includes, but is not limited to, organizations such as: a local education agency (LEA), a community-based organization, a literacy organization, or an institution of higher education. It is anticipated that Alaska ABE providers will include local programs administered by university campuses, school districts, and public or private nonprofit agencies.

Historically approximately 4,000 to 5,000 adults have been served annually through funding from the Alaskan ABE Program, with approximately 60% of them being full time students within a given fiscal year. Thirteen regional programs serve as the main delivery system of the programs, with two additional grants for Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education and for the DOC.

The thirteen regional programs are funded through a formula that was implemented in FY1998 and is regularly updated as new data becomes available. The formula provides equitable funding of adult education throughout the state. Under the formula, the state is divided into 13 geographical regions. Any eligible organization may apply for a competitive grant to provide adult education instruction throughout their region. The formula for distributing funds includes the following:

1. A base amount of \$50,000;
2. A cost of living adjustment derived from the Alaska School District Cost Factor used by the Alaska EED to fund school districts; and
3. An amount derived from the number of adults over the age of 18 who did not have a high school diploma or its equivalent. The latest update to this portion of the formula was done using data from the United States Census Bureau's American Community Survey.

Funding amounts for the Department of Corrections ABE program and Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education program will be in accordance with the requirements stated in Title II.

The local programs all offer multi-level classes for ABE and, depending on the region's population, ESL. Class times are both during the day and, if needed, in the evening. Programs also offer instruction to prepare students for Alaska's high school equivalency test - the GED®, for the citizenship test, and for various assessment tests required by some post-secondary institutions. Distance education math classes, computer-based learning programs, and career and college awareness classes are also offered.

The majority of Alaska's ABE students test into the programs as ABE Intermediate Low, ABE Intermediate High, ESL Beginning Literacy, and ESL Low Beginning. However, the local programs serve all students from ABE Beginning Literacy through Advanced ESL. Many programs provide one on one instruction or instruction in very small classes. The distance math provides three levels of math ranging from a foundational level through to College and Career Ready. Twice a week the class is taught via distance instruction with follow-up lessons taught by the local teacher. In addition to academic skills, programs provide some level of career pathway activities. The focus of many of the ABE students is achieving a high school credential as the first step on their career pathway.

Special Rule. Each eligible agency awarding a grant or contract under this section shall not use any funds made available under this title for adult education and literacy activities for the purpose of supporting or providing programs, services, or activities for individuals who are under the age of 16 and are enrolled or required to be enrolled in secondary school under State law, except that such agency may use such funds for such purpose if such programs, services, or activities are related to family literacy activities. In providing family literacy activities under this title, an eligible provider shall attempt to coordinate with programs and services that are not assisted under this title prior to using funds for adult education and literacy activities under this title for activities other than activities for eligible individuals.

(c) Corrections Education and other Education of Institutionalized Individuals. Describe how the State will establish and operate programs under section 225 of WIOA for corrections education and education of other institutionalized individuals, including how it will fund, in accordance with the requirements of title II subtitle C, any of the following academic programs for:

- Adult education and literacy activities;
- Special education, as determined by the eligible agency;
- Secondary school credit;
- Integrated education and training;
- Career pathways;
- Concurrent enrollment;
- Peer tutoring; and

Transition to re-entry initiatives and other post release services with the goal of reducing recidivism. Each eligible agency using funds provided under Programs for Corrections Education and Other Institutionalized Individuals to carry out a program for criminal offenders within a correctional institution must give priority to serving individuals who are likely to leave the correctional institution within 5 years of participation in the program.

One grant is awarded for ABE instruction in the Alaskan Correctional Centers. The State DOC is the majority funder of this effort as the ABE Grant only averages \$40,000 per year. ABE is taught in all correctional centers, and where demand for the classes is more than available classes, priority is given to serving students who are within five years of release. Less than 10 DOC students a year study ESL, with the majority studying basic reading and math with the primary goal to pass the GED[®]. When inmates are released to Halfway Houses they then return to the community programs in order to continue their ABE studies. All ABE programs in Alaska enter students into the Statewide ABE Database, a system that helps to make transferring students from program to program flawless. Before inmates are released, they participate in re-entry classes, which include workforce preparation activities. In many Alaskan communities, the “community” ABE staff and the corrections ABE staff collaborate concerning students, class content, and program processes. Once a year, the State ABE Director trains the Corrections ABE staff.

(d) Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education Program. Describe how the State will establish and operate Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education programs under Section 243 of WIOA, for English language learners who are adults, including professionals with degrees and credentials in their native countries.

Describe how the State will fund, in accordance with the requirements of title II, subtitle C, an Integrated English Literacy, and Civics Education program and how the funds will be used for the program.

The state establishes and operates Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education programs in accordance with Title II section 243. Programs receiving money from this section will prepare adults who are English language learners for and help them to get jobs in unsubsidized employment in in-demand industries and occupations that lead to economic self-sufficiency. To perform these activities, the ABE programs will work with the local workforce development system to carry out the activities of the program.

The programs focus instruction on literacy and English acquisition and on the rights and responsibilities of citizenship and civic preparation. Preparation for citizenship will be taught. The career and college awareness course will be taught and augmented with sections of textbooks, for example Ventures from Cambridge Press, which also teach workplace skills. English language acquisition learners with professional degrees in their native countries will learn how the Alaskan universities and DOLWD AJCs can help them to continue their careers.

All Title II funded program students will participate in career pathways training. Students will be encouraged to be co-enrolled in other workforce development programs to receive services concurrently from several

partners, where appropriate. All programs funded with Title II money will work with their local AJC staff to ensure that ABE students know what is available there to help them on their career pathway trajectory.

- (e) State Leadership. Describe how the State will use the funds to carry out the required State Leadership activities under section 223 of WIOA.

Describe how the State will use the funds to carry out permissible State Leadership Activities under section 223 of WIOA, if applicable.

Required activities include aligning adult education with other WIOA core programs and AJC partners, establishing high quality professional development programs to improve instruction, providing technical assistance to the local programs, and providing monitoring and evaluation of the quality of the local programs.

ABE will continue working with the other WIOA partners to build a career pathway model, which includes adult education as a vital entry point for Alaskans needing to improve their basic academic skills. ABE participates in WIOA partner meetings concerning the state's strategic vision for WIOA and to better understand what the state's in-demand jobs and current employment trends are.

Professional development includes two yearly meetings in Anchorage, Alaska where staff from all ABE programs receive training. Dissemination of information about models and proven promising practices is a part of the twice-yearly training. In addition, Alaska ABE is looking into on-line training to further help teachers. Currently teachers are participating in trainings offered by Center for Applied Linguistics, GEDTS[®], and the Alaska Career Information System. During FY17, the state will be investigating more on-line training and analyzing how it would augment the professional needs of Alaska's ABE instructional staff.

Providing technical assistance to the local programs is an ongoing, every day activity for the State of Alaska ABE Director.

Programs funded under WIOA Title II will be monitored using a formal monitoring document, which will be regularly updated. In addition, programs' statistics are monitored on a regular basis and desk audits of student records are conducted. Success of the local programs in meeting the performance indicators negotiated with the Office of Career Technical and Adult Education is routinely monitored with each program. A plan for increased technical assistance for programs not meeting the negotiated levels will be developed. In FY16 and FY17 research will be conducted into possible performance funding as additional incentive. Certainly, by not improving their performance, programs will be at a disadvantage as future funding is judged on past effectiveness of the program to improve the literacy of individual students.

Examples of potential leadership activities that are permissible state leadership activities include development and implementation of technology applications and assisting eligible providers in developing and implementing programs that achieve the objectives of Title II.

- (f) Assessing Quality. Describe how the eligible agency will assess the quality of providers of adult education and literacy activities under title II and take actions to improve such quality, including providing the activities described in section 223(a)(1)(B) of WIOA.

The process for monitoring the ABE programs is explained above as a required state leadership activity. A plan for increased technical assistance for programs not meeting the negotiated levels will be developed. Also in FY17, research will be conducted into possible ways to include performance funding in the grants. Certainly if programs do not improve their performance, they will be at a disadvantage for future funding from the State ABE Program. Title II Sec. 231(e) (3) "past effectiveness of the eligible provider in improving the literacy of eligible individuals."

ADULT BASIC EDUCATION AND LITERACY PROGRAMS CERTIFICATIONS AND ASSURANCES

| | |
|--|--|
| States must provide written and signed certifications that: | |
| 1. | The plan is submitted by the State agency that is eligible to submit the plan; |
| 2. | The State agency has authority under State law to perform the functions of the State under the program; |
| 3. | The State legally may carry out each provision of the plan; |
| 4. | All provisions of the plan are consistent with State law; |
| 5. | A State officer, specified by title in the certification, has authority under State law to receive, hold, and disburse Federal funds made available under the plan; |
| 6. | The State officer who is submitting the plan, specified by the title in the certification, has authority to submit the plan; |
| 7. | The agency that is submitting the plan has adopted or otherwise formally approved the plan; and |
| 8. | The plan is the basis for State operation and administration of the program; |
| The State Plan must include assurances that: | |
| 1. | The eligible agency will expend funds appropriated to carry out title II of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) only in a manner consistent with fiscal requirements under section 241(a) of WIOA (regarding supplement and not supplant provisions); |
| 2. | The eligible agency will ensure that there is at least one eligible provider serving each local area, as defined in section 3(32) of WIOA; |
| 3. | The eligible agency will not use any funds made available under title II of WIOA for the purpose of supporting or providing programs, services, or activities for individuals who are not “eligible individuals” within the meaning of section 203(4) of WIOA, unless it is providing programs, services or activities related to family literacy activities, as defined in section 203(9) of WIOA; |
| 4. | The Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education program under section 243(a) of WIOA will be delivered in combination with integrated education and training activities; |
| 5. | The Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education program under section 243(a) of WIOA will be designed to (1) prepare adults who are English language learners for, and place such adults in, unsubsidized employment in in-demand industries and occupations that lead to economic self-sufficiency and (2) integrate with the local workforce development system and its functions to carry out the activities of the program; and |
| 6. | Using funds made available under title II of WIOA to carry out a program for criminal offenders within a correctional institution, the eligible agency will give priority to serving individuals who are likely to leave the correctional institution within five years of participation in the program. |
| States must provide written and signed certifications that: | |
| 1. | The plan is submitted by the State agency that is eligible to submit the plan; |
| 2. | The State agency has authority under State law to perform the functions of the State under the program; |
| 3. | The State legally may carry out each provision of the plan; |
| 4. | All provisions of the plan are consistent with State law; |
| 5. | A State officer, specified by title in the certification, has authority under State law to receive, hold, and disburse Federal funds made available under the plan; |
| 6. | The State officer who is submitting the plan, specified by the title in the certification, has authority to submit the plan; |

| | |
|---|---|
| 7. | The agency that is submitting the plan has adopted or otherwise formally approved the plan; and |
| 8. | The plan is the basis for State operation and administration of the program; |
| The State Plan must include assurances that: | |
| 1. | The eligible agency will expend funds appropriated to carry out title II of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) only in a manner consistent with fiscal requirements under section 241(a) of WIOA (regarding supplement and not supplant provisions); |
| 2. | The eligible agency will ensure that there is at least one eligible provider serving each local area, as defined in section 3(32) of WIOA; |
| 3. | The eligible agency will not use any funds made available under title II of WIOA for the purpose of supporting or providing programs, services, or activities for individuals who are not “eligible individuals” within the meaning of section 203(4) of WIOA, unless it is providing programs, services or activities related to family literacy activities, as defined in section 203(9) of WIOA; and |
| 4. | Using funds made available under title II of WIOA to carry out a program for criminal offenders within a correctional institution, the eligible agency will give priority to serving individuals who are likely to leave the correctional institution within five years of participation in the program. |

1. [SF424B - Assurances – Non-Construction Programs](http://www2.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/appforms.html)
(<http://www2.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/appforms.html>)
2. [Grants.gov - Certification Regarding Lobbying](http://www2.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/appforms.html)
(<http://www2.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/appforms.html>)
3. [SF LLL Form – Disclosure of Lobbying Activities \(required, only if applicable\)](http://www2.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/appforms.html)
(<http://www2.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/appforms.html>)

Vocational Rehabilitation

The Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Services Portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan ² must include the following descriptions and estimates, as required by section 101(a) of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by WIOA:

- (a) Input of State Rehabilitation Council. All agencies, except for those that are independent consumer-controlled commissions, must describe the following:
- (1) input provided by the State Rehabilitation Council, including input and recommendations on the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, recommendations from the Council's report, the review and analysis of consumer satisfaction, and other Council reports that may have been developed as part of the Council's functions;
 - (2) the Designated State unit's response to the Council's input and recommendations; and
 - (3) the designated State unit's explanations for rejecting any of the Council's input or recommendations.

The State of Alaska has a State Rehabilitation Council consistent with Section 105 of the Act and 34 CFR 361.17. In Alaska, the State Vocational Rehabilitation Committee (SVRC) serves as the State Rehabilitation Council. The SVRC meets quarterly at various locations throughout the State and invites local partner agencies, employers, and public testimony to speak and/or present at the meetings. This enables the SVRC to gain a comprehensive, first-hand understanding of the statewide vocational rehabilitation program. One of the meetings is held in a very rural/remote community to ensure the SVRC has a chance to learn about the unique socio-economic and cultural elements of rural/remote Alaska. Knowledge gained through these experiences assists DVR to continuously improve its service delivery.

The SVRC made no formal, written recommendations to DVR during FY2015. Through discussion and questioning of DVR practices and programmatic results, the SVRC provides on-going support to DVR and offers suggestions that do not always rise to the level of a formal recommendation. The following are examples of the more notable, informal recommendations made by the SVRC during FY2015. These suggestions were discussed in detail regarding the applicability and impact they would have on DVR and services to consumers. All suggestions were considered and reviewed to determine if they warranted being accepted, modified in part or whole or rejected. Examples of informal recommendations include:

- both the SVRC Evaluation and the Policy and PR subcommittees reviewed the revised Consumer Satisfaction Survey questions and presented their analyses to the full committee. The full committee then reviewed the proposed questions and made some suggestions. **DVR's Response:** DVR reviewed the proposed changes and made changes as appropriate. The new Consumer Satisfaction Survey was sent out in June and has been used every month thereafter;
- after reviewing the public testimony from previous meetings, the Evaluation Subcommittee found there may be a disconnect between the expectations of individuals coming in for VR services and what services were available. They recommended that DVR consider additional staff training, possibly bringing in other agencies to provide information on other available supports. **DVR's Response:** DVR will consider if additional staff training and/or bringing in other agencies to provide information might help reduce the confusion about its services;

² Sec. 102(b)(2)(D)(iii) of WIOA

- the SVRC recommended that DVR provide updates on its PETS services as a regular agenda item at future SVRC meetings. **DVR's Response:** DVR agreed to provide this information in a variety of ways, such as through the Chief of Services and transition specialist reports, or having PETS providers and participants as guest speakers;
- started an award series recognizing Alaskan employers who, through their actions, policies and procedures, recognize the value employees with disabilities bring to their business and who make exceptional efforts to employ people with disabilities. The first awards were presented at the Society of Human Resources Managers Conference in Anchorage in September, 2015;
- collaborated DVR on the development of the State Plan and the State Plan for AT;
- will collaborate with DVR on the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment due in 2016, which will include analyzing all collected information for the purpose of defining strategic goals for upcoming years;
- review and gave input on the on-going consumer satisfaction survey of individuals who received services under an Individualized Plan for Employment;
- held meetings in Anchorage, Fairbanks, Juneau and Kenai to hear from partner agencies on their experience working with the local DVR office, hear presentations from local business and economic development representatives and to hold public forums where consumers shared their experiences with DVR services;
- conducted outreach efforts to recruit new members to the SVRC;
- Educated and provide information on DVR and the employment of people with disabilities to the Alaska State Legislature; and
- convened a one-day meeting focusing on AT. Participants included AT providers, the AT subcommittee, individuals who use AT, and others.
- Heard presentation from:
 - previous Director Walsh on the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act's expected impacts on DVR;
 - in Fairbanks, the Fairbanks North Star Borough Chief of Staff and Economic Development Special Assistant to the Mayor on economic opportunities and challenges; the Fairbanks Economic Development Corporation of the Fairbanks Economy; the Alaska mental Health Trust Authority on their Employment Initiative;
 - in Anchorage, Assistive Technologies of Alaska Director on implementing the AT Act Grant; The Alaska Center for the Blind Director; the program director for the post-secondary transition project, "Tapestry;"
 - in Kenai, the interim Director of Hope Community Resource, the Rehabilitation Director for Frontier Community Services and Peninsula Community Health Services on their work as PETS providers for DVR; Mayor Navarre on Kenai's economic development and the Kenai Borough School District; and
 - in Juneau, met with the Department of Labor's legislative liaison for guidance on speaking with and educating legislators. Members were invited to speak with and meet several legislators.

(b) Request for Waiver of Statewideness. When requesting a waiver of the statewideness requirement, the designated State unit must identify the types of services to be provided by the program on a non-statewide basis. The waiver request must also include written assurances that:

- (1) a local public agency will provide the non-Federal share of costs associated with the services to be provided in accordance with the waiver request;
- (2) the designated State unit will approve each proposed service before it is put into effect; and
- (3) requirements of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan will apply to the services approved under the waiver.

DVR will not be requesting a waiver of Statewideness.

(c) Cooperative Agreements with Agencies Not Carrying Out Activities Under the Statewide Workforce Development System. Describe interagency cooperation with and utilization of the services and facilities of agencies and programs that are not carrying out activities through the statewide workforce development system with respect to:

- (1) Federal, State, and local agencies and programs;
- (2) State programs carried out under section 4 of the Assistive Technology Act of 1998;
- (3) Programs carried out by the Under Secretary for Rural Development of the Department of Agriculture;
- (4) Non-educational agencies serving out-of-school youth; and
- (5) State use contracting programs.

DVR continues to work with the population within the Anchorage Mental Health Court. The mission of the Mental Health Court is to divert people with mental disabilities, charged with misdemeanor offenses, from incarceration and into community treatment and services including mental health counseling and vocational rehabilitation as appropriate. The hope is to prevent further contacts with the criminal justice system.

DVR is a partner of the Alaska Tribal Vocational Rehabilitation Consortium, composed of eleven American Indian Vocational Rehabilitation Services (AIVRS) sub-recipients, with a current MOU and Contingency Plan in place. DVR continues to be a member of the Consortia of Administrators for Native American Rehabilitation.

DVR actively participates with and has a cooperative agreement with the Alaska Integrated Employment Initiative (AIEI), which is made up of a consortium of agencies committed to working together to improve employment outcomes for youth and young adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) and the Employment First Initiative.

DVR continues to work with Access Alaska, Anchorage to coordinate case management services for individuals with Traumatic Brain Injury.

DVR maintains working partnerships with a variety of community providers and partner agencies throughout Alaska, such as the Division of Behavioral Health (DBH) and the Division of Senior and Disabilities Services Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Unit, to enhance the coordination, number of referrals and quality of services provided to individuals receiving supported employment (SE) services, independent living, and other waiver based services.

DVR has representation on the Alaska Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) Steering Committee. This is an interagency group including the Alaska Court System, Alaska DOC, Division of Juvenile Justice (DJJ), DPA, DBH, AIVRS programs, and DVR. The goal of the group is to increase the state's capacity to help individuals with FASD to become successfully independent.

DVR participates in offender re-entry initiatives occurring in Juneau, Anchorage and Matanuska-Susitna Borough, as well as a statewide re-entry committee. These efforts are intended to improve the transition of the inmate population returning into society, especially as it relates to successfully finding and retaining good employment.

DVR continues to work with the Department of Administration, Division of Personnel and Labor Relations, the Governor's Council on Disabilities and Special Education and the State of Alaska as a Model Employer for Individuals with Disabilities. This work included completing an extensive survey of state employees to create a baseline of how many individuals working for the state self-disclosed they have a disability, as defined currently by ADA, and some indicators on how the State of Alaska is making reasonable accommodations for those employees. DVR continues to see considerable progress in expanding and improving the Provisional Hire program under the State of Alaska as part of this effort and has seen Provisional Hire placements double in the past two years.

DVR continues to have an Interagency Agreement in place with the Department of Veterans Affairs Vocational Rehabilitation & Education (VR&E) to cooperate, coordinate and collaborate to create a powerful force within the rehabilitation community to increase vocational opportunities for Veterans of the military service in the United States, regardless of the level of disability by including DVR as a partner in a comprehensive system of case management. DVR's Chief of Services attends monthly meetings with VR&E to strengthen collaboration and coordination of services for this population.

(d) Coordination with Education Officials. Describe:

- (1) The designated State unit's plans, policies, and procedures for coordination with education officials to facilitate the transition of students with disabilities from school to the receipt of VR services, including pre-employment transition services, as well as procedures for the timely development and approval of individualized plans for employment for the students.

DVR currently has a Transition Services policy, but plans to draft a new policy once final regulations are released. In the interim, DVR has released Business Practice Revisions, which provide specific guidance to staff in order to carry out the Pre-Employment Transition Services within WIOA. Once new policies are finalized, DVR will coordinate with education officials to facilitate the transition of students with disabilities from education services to the provision of VR services including Pre-employment Transition Services as well as services to youth with disabilities seeking subminimum wage. DVR ensures individualized plans for employment are developed within 90 days and prior to graduation.

- (2) Information on the formal interagency agreement with the State educational agency with respect to:
 - (A) consultation and technical assistance to assist educational agencies in planning for the transition of students with disabilities from school to post-school activities, including VR services;

DVR has cooperative agreements with all levels of educational institutions within the State including local school districts, the EED, and the University of Alaska statewide system. The purpose of these agreements is to outline the responsibilities of all entities involved with either the transition from high school or the education of those individuals with disabilities.

DVR participates in the annual Alaska Statewide Special Education Conference. This conference attracts over 400 special education administrators, teachers, and para-professionals from across the state. DVR utilizes this conference to provide information and training on coordinating services and referral information. The 2016 Alaska Statewide Special Education Conference will feature a two day Basic SE Training; cross-training designed to provide teachers and paraprofessionals with tools and strategies for developing and supporting students in work experience activities.

- (B) transition planning by personnel of the designated State agency and educational agency that facilitates the development and implementation of their individualized education programs;

EED, Division of Special Education, and DVR have an interagency agreement that is designed to facilitate the transition of students with disabilities from receipt of educational services in school to the receipt of vocational rehabilitation services.

The agreement includes:

- DVR's assurance of the development and implementation of an IPE for each student determined to be eligible for vocational rehabilitation services before the student leaves school;
- designation of a regional DVR contact that is responsible for clarifying questions and concerns relating to the implementation of the agreements with local school districts; and
- DVR's assurance that the core tenets, principles, and career goals stated in each student's individual employment plans (IEP) will be incorporated into the development of their Individualized Plan for Employment. EED's Special Education Unit also provides funding for members of the State Vocational Rehabilitation Committee to travel to events related to transition students such as the annual statewide special education conference.

- (C) roles and responsibilities, including financial responsibilities, of each agency, including provisions for determining State lead agencies and qualified personnel responsible for transition services;

DVR and EED are currently jointly funding the Alaska Transition Outreach Project (ATOP). ATOP annually provides six Transition Camps in predominately rural school districts where access to transition resources is limited. Transition Camps are coordinated with school districts to provide a three 3-5 day conference for students with disabilities that incorporates the pre-employment transition services of job exploration, work readiness training, self-advocacy and information on accessing post-secondary education and training.

DVR is planning to expand the ATOP project to reach an additional six sites, to include coordination with the DJJ and Office of Children's Services (OCS) and tribal vocational rehabilitation partners.

- (D) procedures for outreach to and identification of students with disabilities who need transition services.

DVR is working with EED to update its current cooperative agreement to include WIOA requirements, especially in regards to the provision of Pre-Employment Transition Services. Activities to date include 1) a DVR/EED survey of all school districts to identify the needs of students in regards to PETS and the gaps in school district services and 2) joint participation in intensive technical assistance through a three year partnership agreement with National Technical Assistance Center on Transition.

DVR implemented the simplified Secondary Transition Referral form in 2014 in coordination with the Department of Education. Efforts to encourage referrals through this refined process include DVR/EED joint training to special education directors at the annual Special Education Director Training and to teachers at the Alaska Statewide Special Education Conference. The form provides teachers with an easy and efficient way to connect a student with the VR counselor serving their school and provides the teacher with an avenue to request a joint conference with the student and counselor. Teachers can access the

referral form directly through links on the Department of Education's IEP form, EEDs transitions resources web page and DVR's Transition Tools for Teachers web page.

DVR is planning to expand the ATOP project to reach an additional six sites, to include coordination with the DJJ and OCS and tribal vocational rehabilitation partners.

- (e) Cooperative Agreements with Private Nonprofit Organizations. Describe the manner in which the designated State agency establishes cooperative agreements with private non-profit VR service providers.

DVR has signed agreements with community rehabilitation programs (CRPs) to provide specific vocational rehabilitation services. Only CRPs who meet the qualifications described in DVR's Standards for CRPs and the CRP application, and have a signed agreement with DVR, are eligible to provide such services. CRP applications may be submitted at any time, but every three years all CRPs are required to reapply. The agreement has recently been revised and includes optional cost of living differentials, additional CRP services, and new minimum training, education, and experience requirements for each specific service DVR purchases from CRPs. The CRP payment rate structure has been finalized and requires that all rates be justified based upon staffs' education, training and experience. This past fiscal year the number of approved CRPs increased significantly by approximately 30%. During this period the regional technical assistance and training center that provided the majority of CRP training in Alaska, stopped providing CRP training. The absence of this training provider spurred a stronger partnership between DVR and the UAA. DVR collaborated and partnered with UAA to ensure ongoing training is available to CRPs throughout the state. UAA is in the process of gaining national accreditation from the Association of Community Rehabilitation Educators, (ACRE) to provide employment services training. DVR requires CRPs complete a minimum of 40 hours of ACRE accredited training to meet the minimum requirements to provide basic vocational rehabilitation services.

The service provider application and agreement:

- Requires a fingerprint background check for all CRP staff who may have unsupervised contact with DVR consumers as well as a summary of the education and employment experience of each staff person who works directly with DVR consumers.
- Establishes specific fees for each service including an optional cost of living differential for CRPs that serve consumers in remote areas.
- Outlines the conditions and guidelines under which the division and the CRP will provide services for individuals with disabilities specifying the responsibilities of each party, the scope of services, the evaluation criteria, and reporting and billing requirements.
- Outlines standards for service providers including: organizational structure; personnel; fiscal management; health, safety, and accessibility; and indemnity and insurance requirements.

DVR's CRP Specialist is responsible for approving the agreements. Changes in key personnel and fees are reported to and negotiated with DVR. Following the principles of informed choice, information on the CRPs including their services and fees are available to DVR's consumers and are posted on DVR's internet.

- (f) Arrangements and Cooperative Agreements for the Provision of Supported Employment Services. Describe the designated State agency's efforts to identify and make arrangements, including entering into cooperative agreements, with other State agencies and other appropriate entities in order to provide SE services and extended employment services, as applicable, to individuals with the most significant disabilities, including youth with the most significant disabilities.

DVR, the DBH, the Governor's Council on Disabilities and Special Education, the University of Alaska Affiliated program (the Center for Human Development), and the Division of Senior and Disability Services (DSDS) continue to collaborate in order to provide extended services to those SE consumers leaving the VR program.

The Governor's Council on Disabilities and Special Education functions as the State Council on Developmental Disabilities and builds capacity, plans for systems change, and advocates for change for people with disabilities. System change focuses of system changes include housing, employment, early intervention, special education, lifelong learning, independent living, and inclusion in the community. DVR's Assistant Chief of Rehabilitation Services is appointed to this council. DSDS maintains the developmentally disability register, which is in essence the wait list for long-term support services. DVR is in the process of renewing a MOU with DSDS.

The Mental Health Board and the Governor's Advisory Board on Alcohol and Drug Abuse have combined to plan and advocate for policies, programs and services that help Alaskans who have a mental illness or substance abuse issues. DVR's Assistant Chief of Rehabilitation Services will be an active member of this board. In addition, DVR has an on-going commitment to quality SE services as evidenced by the recent formation and active participation in several cross-agency SE related initiatives such as the Alaska Integrated Employment Initiative. DVR has sustained the principles of the system change customized employment grant that focused on wrap-around services for the most severely disabled.

As mentioned in Attachment 4.8(b)(1), DVR is working with different organizations focusing on groups which often require SE services, such as those individuals with traumatic brain injury, and those diagnosed as FASD. The traumatic brain injury service delivery system is focused on collaboration with the Alaska Brain Injury Network. The FASD Steering Committee recognizes the long-term effects FASD has on those affected and the increasing need of long-term supports.

- (g) Coordination with Employers. Describe how the designated State unit will work with employers to identify competitive integrated employment and career exploration opportunities in order to facilitate the provision of:
- (1) VR services; and
 - (2) transition services, including pre-employment transition services, for students and youth with disabilities.

DVR partners with employers to promote the hiring of individuals with disabilities. DVR has implemented the dual customer model to deliver services to employers. DVR has created a BEST that is tasked with providing employers four core services as outlined in WIOA.

Training and Technical Assistance in:

- Understanding ADA and its application to a workplace situation; referral to the ADA partners project
- Disability awareness training provided to HR, managers, staff, boards, and other interested groups
- Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs regulations
- U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission regulations
- Balancing the application of federal, state, and local employment laws and regulations

Creating Opportunities for Placement by:

- Develop opportunities for both adults and youth to provide a full range of unpaid work experiences informational interviews, job shadows, and OJT's
- Through implementation of PETS, develop work-based learning experiences for students with disabilities
- Recruitment supports, assist in workforce development including placement, OJT, Schedule A, Provisional Hire
- OJT, Job Coaching, External training (not at worksite)

Network Development through:

- Connecting with community partners and employers, locally and nationally.
- The BEST has connected over 50 employers with the Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs staffers, the Governor's Council on Disabilities & Special Education, the AJC's Business Connection, and the VA VR&E's employment support team.

Linking to Financial Support offered through:

- Work Opportunity Tax Credit
- Workplace accessibility assessment
- Other employer incentives

(h) Interagency Cooperation. Describe how the designated State unit will collaborate with the State agency responsible for administering each of the following programs to develop opportunities for competitive integrated employment, to the greatest extent practicable:

(1) the State Medicaid plan under title XIX of the Social Security Act;

DVR currently has a Cooperative Agreement with the DPA; however, the agreement is substantially outdated. DVR has begun discussions with the DPA Director to begin drafting a new cooperative agreement that will outline how both agencies can coordinate the delivery of employment related services to individuals with disabilities.

(2) the State agency responsible for providing services for individuals with developmental disabilities; and

DVR does not have a current cooperative agreement in place with the Division of Senior and Disability Services; however, both agencies' staff collaborates frequently given that many SE consumers typically receive services under DSDS's Intellectual and Developmental Disability waiver. Due to the Employment First legislation, it is expected that a cooperative agreement will be developed within the coming year that will specifically outline opportunities for competitive integrated employment.

(3) the State agency responsible for providing mental health services.

DVR and the DBH have entered into an MOU in which both agencies agree that assisting individuals with behavioral health disorders to explore and attain employment is integral to the overall missions of both DVR and DBH and thus is inherent in the responsibilities of its entire staff and providers. High quality employment and support services for individuals with behavioral health disorders are high priorities for

both agencies. DVR and DBH will draft a new agreement within the next year more clearly outline agency responsibilities.

- (i) Comprehensive System of Personnel Development; Data System on Personnel and Personnel Development. Describe the designated State agency's procedures and activities to establish and maintain a comprehensive system of personnel development (CSPD) designed to ensure an adequate supply of qualified State rehabilitation professional and paraprofessional personnel for the designated State unit, including the following:

(1) Data System on Personnel and Personnel Development

In order to assess and identify the need for qualified personnel, DVR accesses three systems: 1) DVR has developed and maintains a database through AWARE case management system, which includes information on the number of VR professionals providing VR services statewide; 2) the Department of Administration provides an updated Workforce Profile in each fiscal year. The profile represents demographics such as age, ethnicity distribution, and retirement projections with job titles and categories. These data become an important step in the workforce planning process and are used to predict personnel needs for the next five years; 3) Effective November 7, 2011, the Division of Personnel began to transition Human Resources staff back to each Department, therefore, DVR, under DOLWD, has its own personnel system for collecting and analyzing data for maintaining personnel needs, evaluating and managing employee performance.

- (A) Qualified Personnel Needs. Describe the development and maintenance of a system for collecting and analyzing on an annual basis data on qualified personnel needs with respect to:
- (i) the number of personnel who are employed by the State agency in the provision of VR services in relation to the number of individuals served, broken down by personnel category;

Currently, the ratio of the number of vocational rehabilitation counselors (VRC) to the number of clients being served is approximately one VRC I for every 60 clients; one VRC II for every 75 clients, and one VRC III for every 90 clients.

In FFY 2015, DVR served 3802 individuals with disabilities, utilizing the staff of 96 full time vocational rehabilitation (VR) professionals. These consist of:

- 1 Director
- 1 Chief
- 1 Assistant Chief
- 5 Regional Managers
- 41 VR Counselors
- 26 VR Assistants
- 1 VR Evaluator
- 17 Administrative and Support Staff
- 1 CRP Specialist
- 1 Business Enterprise Program (BEP) Coordinator

- 1 ASL Interpreter

- (ii) the number of personnel currently needed by the State agency to provide VR services, broken down by personnel category; and

DVR finds present staffing levels sufficient to serve all eligible participants. DVR experienced an average rate of turnover during FFY2015.

- (iii) projections of the number of personnel, broken down by personnel category, who will be needed by the State agency to provide VR services in 5 years based on projections of the number of individuals to be served, including individuals with significant disabilities, the number of personnel expected to retire or leave the field, and other relevant factors.

DVR anticipates job vacancies will increase in the next four years as client services staff retire or through attrition. It is expected that DVR can expect roughly 12 percent of staff retire or resign by 2020. (Projected vacancies over the next four years: 12; Total number of full-time employees: 96). The projected number of people with disabilities is expected to continue the trend of 2-3% increases in the number of individuals with MSD. The continued movement of rural individuals, particularly over 60 years of age, to urban environments will continue to impact DVR services. At this time, DVR is not on an Order of Selection, but that could change with continued increases in the population of those individuals with disabilities.

Currently, the ratio of the number of vocational rehabilitation counselors (VRC) to the number of clients being served is approximately one VRC I for every 60 clients; one VRC II for every 75 clients, and one VRC III for every 90 clients.

| | <u>Projected Vacancies</u> |
|------------------------|----------------------------|
| VR Counselor | 7 |
| VR Assistant | 0 |
| VR Evaluator | 1 |
| VR Manager | 1 |
| Other Management staff | 2 |
| Admin Support staff | 1 |
| CRP Specialist | 0 |
| BEP Coordinator | 1 |
| ASL Interpreter | 0 |

- (B) Personnel Development. Describe the development and maintenance of a system for collecting and analyzing on an annual basis data on personnel development with respect to:
 - (i) a list of the institutions of higher education in the State that are preparing VR professionals, by type of program;

Educational institutions within the state of Alaska currently lack Bachelor's and Master's-level programs in Rehabilitation Counseling. University of Alaska offers academic programs in related disciplines, such as Associate and Bachelor's degrees in human services areas such as Psychology and Social Work, as well as Master's degrees in education, such as Counseling and Counselor Education. DVR diligently ensures that all employees are fully qualified to provide vocational rehabilitation services; those that do not meet CSPD conditions at the time of hire are mandated to enroll in rehabilitation counseling programs (full length or

post-graduate certificates), offered via distance delivery through Virginia Commonwealth University, University of Kentucky, and University of Massachusetts Boston.

In FFY 2015, six VR counselors participated in accreditation of Master's-level Rehabilitation Counselor Education; two VR counselors completed a graduate program; and one VR counselor successfully passed the Certified Rehabilitation Counseling (CRC) exam. DVR currently employs 46 VR Counselors; of those 90 percent have the CSPD requirements fully met.

- (ii) the number of students enrolled at each of those institutions, broken down by type of program; and

N/A

- (iii) the number of students who graduated during the prior year from each of those institutions with certification or licensure, or with the credentials for certification or licensure, broken down by the personnel category for which they have received, or have the credentials to receive, certification or licensure.

N/A

- (2) *Plan for Recruitment, Preparation and Retention of Qualified Personnel.* Describe the development and implementation of a plan to address the current and projected needs for qualified personnel including, the coordination and facilitation of efforts between the designated State unit and institutions of higher education and professional associations to recruit, prepare, and retain personnel who are qualified, including personnel from minority backgrounds and personnel who are individuals with disabilities.

DVR evaluates its personnel needs annually as part of the strategic planning process. The recruitment of qualified rehabilitation personnel has been historically challenging in Alaska due to lack of rehabilitation counseling programs within our university system, as well as Division of Personnel regulations, which mandate several unsuccessful in-state recruitments before out-of-state recruitment becomes an option. To overcome these difficulties, DVR has developed positive relationships with several Rehabilitation Counseling Education (RCE) programs to enable entry and journey level counselors to obtain the necessary qualifications through distance education and intensive on-the-job supervision. This strategy is effective with paraprofessional staff as well. DVR recruits from various entities, including tribal vocational rehabilitation and human service agencies, and offers paid and non-paid internships to rehabilitation counseling graduate students who are interested in relocating to Alaska.

In accordance with Title I of the ADA, DVR offers provisional hire to individuals with disabilities to enhance their access to meaningful and gainful employment, and to ensure that individuals with disabilities receive employment services in the most community integrated setting. Alaska relies upon educational institutions that deliver curriculums via distance education. Relationships with educational institutions fluctuate based on availability of long-term training grants and staff needs. However, DVR has developed a strong working relationship with Virginia Commonwealth University, University of Kentucky, and University of Massachusetts Boston. In order to reach a wider applicant market outside of the traditional in-state recruitment, DVR vacancies are advertised at the UAA Career Development Center, University of Washington Center for Continuing Education in Rehabilitation (CCER), and Western Washington University. Qualified individuals are identified through the on-going relationship with academic programs throughout the nation.

- (3) *Personnel Standards.* Describe the State agency's policies and procedures for the establishment and maintenance of personnel standards consistent with section 101(a)(7)(B) and to ensure that designated State unit professional and paraprofessional personnel are adequately trained and prepared, including:
- (A) standards that are consistent with any national or State-approved or -recognized certification, licensing, registration, or other comparable requirements that apply to the profession or discipline in which such personnel are providing VR services; and

The State of Alaska does not currently mandate licensure for rehabilitation counselors; as a result, DVR has adopted the Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification academic degree requirements as its standard. Strategies that DVR employs to ensure an adequate supply of qualified vocational rehabilitation professionals are:

- participating in local job/career fairs;
- formation of an in-house training and staff development team;
- offering paid and non-paid graduate internships;
- supporting rehabilitation counseling as an employment goal for DVR participants;
- supporting staff in fulfilling academic requirements to qualify for CRC;
- seeking out training to help staff achieve CRC recertification and professional growth;
- utilizing training resources and support of CCER;
- arranging presentations to graduate level counseling students at the local university; and
- developed a career advancement system that integrates educational and credentialing required for initial hire and future promotion DVR successfully modified rehabilitation counselor position descriptions to comply with CSPD provisions/mandates.

- (B) the establishment and maintenance of education and experience requirements, in accordance with section 101(a)(7)(B)(ii) of the Rehabilitation Act, to ensure that the personnel have a 21st century understanding of the evolving labor force and the needs of individuals with disabilities.

Those employees that do not meet the qualifying standard must now fulfill all academic requirements necessary to qualify for the CRC examination within six years of hire (for VRC I) or three years (for VRC II). Additionally, these employees will receive more intensive supervision and ongoing review of all non-delegable functions (i.e. eligibility determination, individualized plan for employment, plan amendment approval, and closure). As part of DVR strategic planning process, an annual evaluation of the effectiveness of recruitment and training practices are completed, and areas of improvement are then identified and incorporated into the plan.

- (4) *Staff Development.* Describe the State agency's policies, procedures, and activities to ensure that, consistent with section 101(a)(7)(C) of the Rehabilitation Act, all personnel employed by the designated State unit receive appropriate and adequate training in terms of:
- (A) a system of staff development for professionals and paraprofessionals within the designated State unit, particularly with respect to assessment, vocational counseling, job placement, and rehabilitation technology, including training implemented in coordination with entities carrying out State programs under section 4 of the Assistive Technology Act of 1998; and

DVR recognizes and supports the efforts of employees to upgrade their skills and knowledge capabilities through staff development. Training is provided on a continual basis in order to ensure professional enhancement. Training may be provided to groups or to individuals based on specific staff expectations and

duties. Throughout the year, staff is provided staff development opportunities in assessment, vocational counseling, job placement, rehabilitation technology, as well as AT. Additionally, DVR continues to coordinating with the AT of Alaska to increase training opportunities to DVR staff in AT.

- (B) procedures for the acquisition and dissemination of significant knowledge from research and other sources to designated State unit professionals and paraprofessionals.

Training and development is guided by issues identified during needs assessment, and takes into account budget availability, new federal initiatives, and outcome of program evaluation. Needs assessment involves individual/regional case reviews, client satisfaction surveys, consumer forums, performance appraisals, performance skill rating tools, employee development plans, Client Assistant Program annual reports, and supervisor/employee training needs surveys.

During FY2015, DVR staff participated in several conferences, including:

- training and development Building State Capacity Summit (Working with transitioning youth who are deaf/hard of hearing);
- Brain Institute: Putting Together the Pieces: Understanding Complex Issues After Brain Injury;
- Annual School on Addictions & Behavioral Health;
- Statewide Special Education Conference;
- Elders in Training; and
- reducing Recidivism Through Successful Reentry.

Other major training activities consisted of:

- Department-wide WIOA Training;
- Annual In-Service Training focused on AWARE Case Management New Release & Applications;
- Evaluation Trends, Ethics, Techniques, Tools, and Reporting for Division's Statewide Assessment Team;
- Deaf Workshop for Division's Deaf/Hard of Hearing Team;
- Blind Services Workshop for Division's Blind/Visually Impaired Team;
- When Violence Shows Up in Workplace;
- Hearing Voices that are Distressing;
- Substance Abuse & Sex Offender Treatment;
- Ethics for Rehabilitation Professionals;
- Tier 1 Benefit Planning/Financial Work Incentive Navigator;
- FASD & Gatekeepers; and
- National Certificate in Employment Services.

Throughout the year, DVR staff participated in different continuing education, and web-based workshops, including:

- Ethical & Legal Issues in the Workplace;

- Traumatic Brain Injury;
- Trauma & Crisis intervention;
- Mental Health First Aid;
- Innovative Employment;
- Serving Individual with Autism Spectrum Disorder through Vocational Evaluation;
- Sec 503 – Changing the Rules for Federal Contractors & Employers;
- Employment After Traumatic Brain Injury;
- Effective Supervision with Difficult Employees;
- Case Documentation;
- Autism Spectrum Disorders: Lifespan Issues;
- Accommodating Employees with Mental Health Impairments; and
- Tough Customers – Dealing with Difficult People in VR Services.

All new VR assistant staff participates in on-line training within their first year of employment, learning about:

- The History of VR;
- Basic Ethical Considerations for VR Professionals;
- Navigating Sticky Situations;
- Developing Collaborative Relationships; and
- Cultivating Cultural Competence.

Training activities occur on a continuous basis and many are delivered via teleconference and through webinars offered by CCER. Virginia Commonwealth University Rehabilitation Research & Training Center publishes an electronic newsletter, which provides updates regarding relevant research efforts and is disseminated to all DVR personnel. VR counselors utilize the services of medical/psychiatric consultants to regularly update their disability-related knowledge. Evidence-based best practices and advances in the field, presented by the Institute on Rehabilitation Issues, National Rehabilitation Association, and the National Rehabilitation Counseling Association, are regularly distributed to the field staff. DVR leadership team receives regular updates from the RSA, and maintains active communication with CCER in order to keep pace with the changes in the field of vocational rehabilitation.

- (5) *Personnel to Address Individual Communication Needs.* Describe how the designated State unit has personnel or obtains the services of other individuals who are able to communicate in appropriate modes of communication with or in the native language of applicants or eligible individuals who have limited English speaking ability.

DVR employs a full-time staff member, who is fluent in American Sign Language, to facilitate communication with the hard of hearing and deaf consumers/staff. The agency supports employees that are interested in becoming proficient in ASL to increase communication with hard of hearing and deaf participants. Tele-interpreting is widely used. VR counselors that serve this population are allowed to use the text message function as a form of accommodating their consumer's needs. For individuals with limited

English proficiency, DVR maintains a roster of employees fluent in various languages; staff may utilize the services of a professional interpreter when needed. DVR relies heavily on tribal vocational rehabilitation programs to educate state staff regarding culturally appropriate methods of communication with Alaska Native participants.

- (6) *Coordination of Personnel Development Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.* As appropriate, describe the procedures and activities to coordinate the designated State unit's CSPD with personnel development under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

DVR consistently collaborates with the State of Alaska Department of Education on numerous staff development and training initiatives.

DVR Transition Services. DVR reaches out to students with disabilities throughout Alaska in order to foster their smooth transition from secondary school into vocational/academic training and into the world of work. VR counselors within each regional office are assigned to specific schools to streamline the referral process, ensure counselor participation in IEP development, and ascertain that all schools are informed of DVR services. Contact with schools is carried out at a minimum on a monthly basis. Rural and village schools communicate with DVR through their special education staff, as well as DVR staff that is assigned and travels to that particular rural region. The transition coordinator holds monthly teleconferences with all VR counselors involved in transition initiatives. These monthly teleconferences allow staff to share information, brainstorm ideas, and develop effective strategies for service delivery. Tapestry, which is administered through the University of Alaska's, Center for Human Development, caters to young adults with intellectual disabilities with the goal of teaching them appropriate personal, social, and vocational skills in fostering a successful transition to employment. DVR actively collaborates with Center for Human Development and other community agencies to ensure that these young individuals with disabilities access the full array of vocational rehabilitation services.

Statewide Special Education Conference. DVR strongly encourages counselor presence and participation in this annual conference to establish/maintain an ongoing dialogue with school districts and stay abreast of new developments in the field of special education (i.e. disability issues, AT, classroom accommodations, new legislation, Individuals with Disabilities Education Act requirements, etc.). 16 DVR staff attended this conference in FFY2014.

Special Education Director Conference. The DVR transition coordinator participates in this conference annually. The transition coordinator is a regular presenter at the conference and maintains a vendor booth, which offers special education professionals from the 53 school districts within Alaska a chance to learn about DVR services.

DVR's transition coordinator is a member of the following youth boards: Alaska of University Anchorage Center for Human Development (Tapestry Project), Governor's Council on Disability & Special Education, and the Integrated Education Initiative.

(j) Statewide Assessment.

- (1) Provide an assessment of the rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities residing within the State, particularly the VR services needs of those:
 - (A) with the most significant disabilities, including their need for SE services;

Analysis of DVR data from FFY12-FFY14 showed that 37% of the participants receiving services were most severely disabled. For FFY15, this number is trending upward, with 40% of participants being MSD. SE has always been a need for many of the MSD participants.

(B) who are minorities;

For the past three years, the racial distribution of those receiving services has been relatively stable, reflecting the racial breakdown for the State. The largest minority population is the Alaskan Native, which is approximately 14% of the State's population. For SFY15, 22% of those who received services are Alaska Native.

(C) who have been unserved or underserved by the VR program;

Both the 2013 Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA) and statistics pulled from DVR case management system have shown that the rural population continues to be underserved. This has been an on-going challenge for the rural development team as there are so few jobs within some of the smaller communities. Available employment and employers are much more numerous in the urban areas.

(D) who have been served through other components of the statewide workforce development system; and

DVR is currently in the process of asking the core Labor partners to provide data regarding other programs participants may be involved with. This data will be provided when obtained.

(E) who are youth with disabilities and students with disabilities, including, as appropriate, their need for pre-employment transition services or other transition services.

The need for pre-employment transition services for students in school is well documented. Alaska's 2013-2014 school year special education statistics indicated that the state-wide percent of students who have enrolled in higher education was 13.7%, and only 43.4% were enrolled in higher education or competitively employed within one year of leaving high school. Additionally, under WIOA, agencies have been mandated to set-aside 15% of their budget to fund specific transition services for the 16-21 age youth currently in school. This population will be surveyed directly to obtain input into needs and goals for transition information.

(2) Identify the need to establish, develop, or improve community rehabilitation programs within the State; and

In order to address the needs of transition students, new contracts were developed for these services and put out for bid. The Rural Team is strategizing ways to get more CRPs in rural areas, which are traditionally underserved. CRPs provide services, like benefits analysis, which enable our participants to have informed choice. These services would not able to be offered by staff, as they lack the training and the time resource.

(3) Include an assessment of the needs of individuals with disabilities for transition career services and pre-employment transition services, and the extent to which such services are coordinated with transition services provided under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act .

One major group that will be included in this 2016 CSNA will be youth in school that may be potentially eligible for DVR services. These transition students will be queried for their perceptions of services available to them both now as students, and in the future post-secondary. This is a population that has not been extensively surveyed by DVR and formulating both appropriate and useful questions to give more

understanding about the needs of this group is proving challenging. In addition, DVR also continues to survey local Special Education teachers and directors and current agency staff to give input into how DVR, as an agency, can more effectively partner to provide transition and career services to these individuals.

(k) Annual Estimates. Describe:

(1) The number of individuals in the State who are eligible for services.

The 2014 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimate, estimates there are approximately 44,674 individuals or 9.8% of the Alaskan population between the ages of 18 to 64 with a disability.

(2) The number of eligible individuals who will receive services under:

(A) The VR Program;

In FFY2015, Alaska DVR provided serves to 2,204 individuals.

(B) The Supported Employment Program; and

For the FFY15, the SE Program provided services to 257 participants for a cost of \$293,852 or approximately \$1,143 per participant

(C) each priority category, if under an order of selection.

DVR was not operating under an Order of Selection during FFY2015 as there was adequate funding and qualified staff to provide services identified in IPEs to all eligible individuals. DVR anticipates this availability of qualified staff and funding will continue during FFY2016 through FFY2020. Throughout the year, DVR will continue to closely monitor expenditures and obligations in relationship to VR participant numbers as well as staffing patterns to ensure DVR's ability to provide VR services to all eligible individuals.

(3) The number of individuals who are eligible for VR services, but are not receiving such services due to an order of selection; and

DVR is not on an Order of Selection

(4) The cost of services for the number of individuals estimated to be eligible for services. If under an order of selection, identify the cost of services for each priority category.

Analysis of Funding:

- the SFY2016 budget beginning July 1, 2015 has DVR funded at the same level as prior years for client services;
- during FFY 2015, DVR collected \$939,216 in Social Security Reimbursements. These reimbursements have been averaging about \$950,000 for the past four years. To continue this level of reimbursement, DVR will be purchasing specific "Ticket tracking" software. This software will track all tickets currently outstanding and file the reimbursement paperwork;
- there continues to be adequate Title VI, Part B funding for SE services, including the 50% set aside for youth with the most significant disabilities;

- DVR was able to obtain \$600,000 in additional Federal funds through the re-allotment process for use during FFY2016 and expects to request additional Federal funds to be used for FFY2017 through FFY2020;
- eligible receiving Title I; 1,947 estimated funds \$5,000,000, average cost of services, \$2,568; and
- eligible receiving Title VI; 257 estimated funds \$350,000, average cost of services, \$1,362.

(l) State Goals and Priorities. The designated State unit must:

- (1) Identify if the goals and priorities were jointly developed and agreed to by the State VR agency and the State Rehabilitation Council, if the State has a Council, and jointly agreed to any revisions.

DVR and the SVRC including representatives of the AIVRS programs and the Statewide Independent Living Council, developed goals and priorities for the state vocational rehabilitation (VR) program during the strategic planning process. DVR's strategic plan is tied to the three year cycle of the CSNA with interim progress assessments regarding goals and priorities.

The strategic planning process is comprehensive and includes defining the agency's mission, principles, goals, priorities, strategies, and measurements. Input for the development of the goals, priorities and strategies came from the CSNA; public comment taken at the SVCR's quarterly meetings; ongoing consumer satisfaction surveys; and other program evaluation activities including the case file review, management information system reports and monitoring activities. DVR continuously monitors its progress towards meeting the standards and indicators and makes necessary adjustments to priorities and strategies as required. The goals, priorities, and progress are reviewed quarterly by the DVR management team and discussed with the SVRC at their quarterly meetings. Adjustments are made as required.

- (2) Identify the goals and priorities in carrying out the VR and Supported Employment programs.

The following strategic goals were set for FY2013-FY2015:

Goal 1: Service Delivery - DVR will deliver high quality vocational rehabilitation services to people with disabilities to assist them in obtaining employment consistent with their career goals.

- Improve VR services to transition age youth (age 24 and younger)
 - Explore the use of social media to connect youth to VR services
 - Newly designed Facebook-DOLWD web page <https://vimeo.com/88207351>
 - Counselors are using texting to communicate with youth
- Enhance web page with youth focus
 - New web page primarily for transition students in school: <http://www.labor.state.ak.us/dvr/transition.htm>
- Analyze why and when youth are dropping out of the VR program
 - On-going. Will be offering pre-and post-surveys during transition camps and will be conducting surveys to a larger group of transition students are a part of the 2016 CSNA
- Participate in Project Search, Tapestry and AIEI grants
 - DVR participated in Project Search and the Tapestry program. The Transition Coordinator is on the AIEI committee
- Through participation in the AIEI grant, increase the employment hours of youth with IDD

- On-going. Currently analyzing data
- Connect with the DOLWD Youth First sub-recipients
 - Transition Coordinator gave a presentation in August of 2015
- Outreach to alternative schools and youth correctional facilities such as the McLaughlin Youth Center
 - Coordination meetings with both OCS and the DJJ have been held
 - Presented at a state-wide conference
 - Currently working on Group Orientation project with Juneau OCS
- Expand the DVR transition work group to include Section 504 students
 - Current marketing efforts targeting this group are being developed. A new referral form and guidance includes 504 populations
- Expand the DVR transition work group to include youth from the DJJ system
 - On-going. Counselors have been assigned to DJJ system
- Annually identify 504 coordinators and Special Education staff for each school
 - Completed
- Include Guidance counselors and school nursing staff in DVR outreach activities
 - Completed
- Explore developing a transition planning guide for 504 students
 - In process
- Maintain DVR presence at Special Education conferences and continue outreach to special education teachers
 - Transition Coordinator presented at 2014 Special Education & Youth Summit conference
- Convene focus group made up of youth with an emphasis on communication and engagement strategies
 - After analyzing the results of the CSNA, specific areas will be determined and strategies developed for targeting this population
- Develop a strategic plan for transition services
 - Refine PETS Projects as a method to engage large numbers of students in PETS activities leading to an IPE; build a stronger CRP infrastructure to serve students; and build the capacity to coordinate services with LEAs
 - Expand the number of Transition Camps available to LEAs in rural areas to ensure that all students with disabilities have the opportunity to benefit from pre-employment transition activities
 - Coordinate with EED to ensure that planning, direction, and training of special education administrators and teachers promotes LEAs and DVR coordinating the provision of pre-employment transition services and the referral of transition age youth
 - Expand development and training of CRPs, including developing contracts with schools and/or teachers as CRPs to deliver pre-employment transition services

- Coordinate with Department of Juvenile Justice, child protection/foster care, tribal vocational programs, behavioral health and I/DD agencies to implement system change/system alignment efforts towards developing pathways to connect transition age youth with DVR and other necessary post-secondary supports
- Develop a vocational track within the ASSE Conference as the method to bring information and training to LEAs that promotes:
 - better transition planning towards employment, post-secondary education and/or training; and
 - methods for coordinating the provision of pre-employment transition services.
- Continue collaboration with EED in intensive technical assistance through National Technical Assistance Center on Transition to develop and implement a joint plan for coordinating with LEAs to address:
 - improving students with disabilities' graduation rate;
 - increasing the availability of pre-employment transition services;
 - developing a system for providing navigation services for post-secondary services; and
 - increasing parent involvement and engagement in transition planning in accessing post-secondary supports.
- Research RSA's emerging practices for youth services
 - Evolutionary process that will be monitored for new developments. May be a specific area of interest once new TA center is up and running
- Partner with the Division of Senior and Disability Services to improve the employment opportunities for youth with IDD or with a traumatic brain injury
 - Collaboration on-going.
- Use existing information from schools for eligibility
 - On-going.
- Work with school staff to obtain good referrals from schools
 - On-going. New referral process in place.
 - Improve VR services in Rural Alaska.
- Continue DVR rural work group to identify realistic goals for rural services; develop strategies for meeting these goals; and convey this information to VR field staff.
 - On-going meetings with Rural Services team to discuss best practices and strategies around challenges. Meetings have been increased from quarterly to every other month.
- Maintain strong relationships with Tribal Vocational Rehabilitation (TVR) and AJC partners. TVR programs to draft new MOU to present to DVR.
 - This was completed in June 2015.
- Develop partnerships with other state agencies providing rural services in Alaska
 - Currently collaborating with Tribal programs and school districts throughout the state.
- Coordinate DVR participation in SouthEast Regional Resource Center Rural Transition Camps

- First camp completed at a DJJ facility in which Pre-Employment Transition Services were delivered to potentially eligible students with disabilities. Plan to hold multiple transition camps throughout 2016.
- Identify locations and establish a travel schedule for rural areas other than the hub communities, currently monitoring through the need in different communities.
 - Have expanded services to Petersburg and Prince of Wales Island specifically due to the increased need.
 - Have also expanded services to Haines due to increased need and increased the number of counselors within the agency that are providing rural services.
- Developed and implemented a Trip Planning/Reporting tool (form).
 - The form was finalized and sent to staff on 3/13/2013.
- Develop tools and resources to assist VR staff in rural services delivery.
 - Work is on-going through continued meetings with Rural Services team, as well as collaboration with the agency AT team. This collaboration has enabled utilization of some of the functions of the State of Alaska WebEx video conferencing system. On-going research as to the benefits of the State Libraries Online With Libraries system.
- Develop CRPs in rural Alaska.
 - The number of CRPs serving rural Alaska has increased due to providing Pre-Employment Transition Services.
- Establish qualifications for CRPs serving rural locations. Work is progressing through counselor contacts in rural areas.
 - On-going. Continues to be challenging to find qualified CRPs in rural areas.
- Review MOA with TVR Consortium annually.
 - TVR Consortium plans to review MOU and present draft to DVR after spring 2016 meeting.
- Maximize the use of technology for the service delivery
 - Collaboration with AT team is increasing knowledge of available technology and possible ways to incorporate technology within the agency to increase productivity and case management.
- SVRC to travel to a rural location once a year.
 - One meeting a year is scheduled in a rural location.
- Ensure funds are available for VR counselors to travel to rural areas.
 - Funding has increased to accommodate additional trips as requested by counselors.
- Transition Coordinator and AT coordinator have joined rural team.
 - Ensure support for services to individuals who experience blindness or a visual impairment.
- Continue to support the Alaska Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired (the Center) and other efforts within DVR to ensure our obligation as a combined agency are met.
 - On-going although it continues to be a challenge for the center to maintain qualified staff.

- Expand use of Center for the Blind Agency funds. Completed 1/6/2014. Business practice now allows staff to access Center for the Blind Agency funds for Rehabilitation Centers that are out of state, supporting informed choice of consumers.
- Continue division support for the Blind Services Team with monthly teleconference & periodic trainings.
 - On-going.
- Maintain membership in Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired.
 - On-going.
- Remain active in the National Council of State Agencies for Blind.
 - On-going.
- Contract with the Technical Assistance and Continuing Education (TACE) to provide an overall analysis of statewide VR in-house services including the level of provision including statewide access, the overall effectiveness of the services and their place in the statewide WIOA system.
 - This contract was not developed. Program Evaluator will perform on-going evaluation of in-house services.
- Review current statewide standards and modify/develop as needed: standards for workshops, definitions of services and level of services including use compared to capacity
 - Definitions of services have been implemented. The Division Statewide Assessment Team continues to meet regularly to ensure consistency of standards and level of services.
- Analyze the relationship of in-house VR services to case movement.
 - Utilization of the Division's case management system to evaluate relationship of effectiveness of in-house services.
- Develop mechanisms for matching evaluation to outcomes.
 - Ongoing development.
- Ensure all staff have required knowledge for use of in-house services.
 - Staff continues to remain knowledgeable about in-house services available to consumers.
- Research practices of other public VR programs in timely IPE development.
 - On-going with additional staff training. Time IPE development (within 90 days) has been the standard since February 2014.
- Increase outreach to individuals with minority backgrounds
 - DVR continues to liaison with the AIVRS Tribal Consortium. On-going training about referral process and comparable benefits.
- Chief of Field Services is liaison to the Alaska Vocational Rehabilitation Tribal Consortium.
 - On-going.
- Develop a mechanism for matching CRP services to outcomes.
 - On-going. This has proven to be a challenge as PETS participants have used CRP services. Those outcome expectations will cover a longer period of time. In addition, many CRPs aid

in the goal of successful employment, but not with a one-to-one relationship. DVR is in the process of developing measures that will assist in determining effectiveness of CRP services.

- Share information with VR staff and CRPs for continued input and improvement.
 - On-going. Information and data are shared with the Field Service Council on a regular basis. VR Managers contact the CRP Specialist when issues arise with CRPs. DVR hosted three statewide CRP teleconferences this past year regarding WIOA, CRP training, DVR field service needs and the CRP application process. CCER facilitated statewide CRP quarterly teleconferences through the spring of 2015. DVR will start hosting scheduled statewide quarterly CRP teleconferences in the spring of 2016.
- Ensure an adequate number of CRPs and/or DVR staff who are trained to provide benefit analysis in order for Social Security beneficiaries to understand the impact of work on their benefits.
 - On-going. DVR has and continues to partner closely with UAA to guarantee there is an adequate pool of certified Community Work Incentives Coordinator (CWICs) in Alaska. Currently there are 8 CWICs that work as CRPs. Because quality assurance is so critical in benefit analysis, UAA (via an RSA) reviews a sample of CWIC reports throughout each year, provides and tracks ongoing training, develops and conducts recertification examinations annually and notifies DVR of any quality assurance, training or performance issues.
 - Based (in-part) on VR's request/need, UAA developed new training for CRPs on financial management and work incentive advisement. CRPs that complete the training will be qualified to provide a very basic review of an individual's financial situation and identify various work incentives the individual may be eligible to receive. They will also provide financial management training and advisement and recommend if additional services (e.g., benefits analysis) is needed. Financial and work incentive advisement is brand new CRP service.
- Market CRP as a career to current Direct Service Professionals through presentations at Full Lives Conferences and collaboration with the Alaska Alliance for Direct Service Careers.
 - On-going. Presentations have been conducted at the Full Lives Conference and the Special Education Conference.
- Provide staff training on CRP identified needs.
 - On-going and as required/requested.
- Work with rural VR counselors to identify potential rural CRPs
 - On-going. CRP Specialist participates in the Rural Services Committee meetings and has assisted in developing fliers for traveling counselors to post and distribute when traveling to rural areas. DVR still needs more CRPs in rural areas.
- DVR continues to evaluate CRPs for quality services and areas to improve services to DVR participants.
 - On-going as a part of program quality improvement and evaluation of effectiveness.
- CRP Facilities Specialist facilitates discussion between CRPs on promising practices, issues, etc.
 - On-going through teleconferences, webinars, and annual meetings with CRPs.
 - Deliver quality AT services consistently statewide.
- Develop a strategic AT plan to develop strategies to deliver AT services.

- On-going. The AT Counselor Team continues to meet, identify areas of need, and propose strategies to meet the needs.
- Work with Assistive Technologies of Alaska (ATLA) to improve relationships and service delivery.
 - On-going. Developed a “Guide to ATLA Services” with ATLA for DVR staff to better take advantage of all the services including those that are free or low cost. Has been emailed to staff and posted on intranet.
- Continue to consider AT services for clients throughout the rehab process.
 - Identified captioning phone that works with state system and accommodates state workers who are deaf or hard of hearing. Developing process to share this information statewide. On-going evaluation of how DVR staff currently provide AT services. Developing an Agency-wide needs assessment to specifically address providing quality AT to our participants.
- Improve service delivery for individuals who are Social Security beneficiaries and ensure compliance with federal regulation(s).
 - Evaluate use of Presumption of Eligibility, specifically around timeliness of services, per federal regulation.
- Develop procedures for referring individuals exiting DVR employed who are Social Security Ticket to Work holders to Employment Networks using the Partnership Plus model. (AJC ENs and others as they become available)
 - DVR has partnered with DEI to refer individuals to AJCs for extended services.

Goal 2 – Staff Development: DVR will recruit, employ, retain, and train the most qualified and highly skilled rehabilitation staff.

2.1 Recruit and retain qualified staff

- Develop consistent statewide tools for evaluating employee performance, annual review, training needs and for promotional purposes
 - Performance evaluation guide has created consistency between regions, self-evaluation tool was provided to Managers to use when writing evaluations. Training needs are determined using results from case review, discussions, and current events. The Division continues to support Leadership training for staff, including participation in the Emerging Leaders Series through UW.
- Maximize training funds to support VR Counselors in graduate level rehabilitation programs
 - The division continues to support graduate level training for those who do not meet the division’s standards. Five staff will be pursuing graduate level course work by July 1, 2014.
- Provide relevant training opportunities to staff such as Motivational Interviewing
 - The division continues to support counselors with meeting their continuing educational unit requirement by funding registrations to attend trainings, allowing staff work time to attend trainings and by awarding continuing educational units when the division develops/hosts a training activity.

2.2 Leadership development and succession planning

- Support staff participation in leadership training programs such as Emerging Leaders, the National Rehabilitation Leadership Institute (NRLI), etc.
 - On-going. One staff completed the NRLI, one completed EL, and an additional staff has been selected to attend the next EL series.
- Develop a succession plan
 - Many leadership staff changes have impacted this goal and emphasize the need for this plan. However, with new staff, it is assumed that the need for this plan will be pushed to next year.
- Make staff aware of educational and long range employment opportunities within DVR
 - On-going

Goal 3 – DVR will maintain/improve the efficiency and effectiveness of organizational systems

3.1 Revise the Case Review process to ensure adherence to standards and fidelity within the program statewide

- Review purpose of the process – determine what requires evaluation during case review
 - This is an on-going quality improvement process, with improvements made to both the process and the instrument, when needed. Training issues are identified and addressed; policies and procedures updated if any issue is identified.
- Examine components (fiscal, CRP and case files) and specific needs
 - Part of the on-going process improvement.
- Revise current process and tools, as appropriate (for all three components – case, financial & CRP)
 - Reviewing changing the process to be all electronic to eliminate the need for hand-written notes and storage for those notes.
- Establish standards
 - Standards have been established as has the Inter-reliability Review process, which ensures fidelity in the review process.

3.2 Implement federally required RSA-911 changes to the AWARE case management system.

- Staff actively participate in AWARE user groups
 - Staff participate in user group meetings to offer suggestions and to be a part of the development process for new software releases.
- Thorough analysis of impact to field and accounting staff
 - Help Desk staff thoroughly test new releases to be able to annotate any impact to staff.
- Thorough analysis of data changes as related to current data usage
 - Help Desk staff analyze and thoroughly test new release data to ensure operability and impact on policies and procedures.
- Training of field and other staff in timely manner
 - Documentation developed to inform staff of changes in the software that may impact their daily use. Further training is developed and given to staff when changes are significant.

3.3 Implement the new state accounting system - Integrated Resource Information System

- Coordinate with Alliance Enterprises and Alaska Department of Administration to adapt current accounting interface
 - Accounting interface was built and deployed just prior to go-live on July 1, 2015. The new accounting system continues to challenge DVR processes and the interface is updated as new requirements are discovered. This continues to be on-going and expensive.
- Explore opportunities for collaboration between state agencies
 - The advent of the Participant Individual Record Layout reporting requirements under WIOA are opening up collaboration between state agencies.

3.4 Use technology to deliver high quality services to all customers including VR program participants and vendors

- DVR staff will be trained on the technological tools available such as features of VOIP, video/captioning phone systems, AWARE, and AWARE report functionality, DVR intranet, DVR webpage, State of Alaska website employee resources, Microsoft Lync, iPad applications, and training platforms.
 - On-going and constant.
- Continually evaluate emerging technologies
 - Work closely with Alliance Enterprises in the development of new applications within the case management system AWARE to take advantage of new technology.
- 3.5 Evaluation Social Security Reimbursement & Ticket Tracker for efficiencies.
- Work with Alliance and Ticket Tracker to see which is the best software option for the agency.
 - Agency will be purchasing Ticket Tracker to better manage the Ticket to Work process. Planned implement will be early in 2016.

Goal 4 – DVR will provide leadership in the workforce system

4.1 Maintain a leadership role in expanding vocational opportunities for Alaskans with disabilities

- Establish criteria for support and participation in new initiatives.
 - On-going effort supported by upper management and leadership staff.
- Ensure AJC staff are regularly made aware of DVR and VR services.
 - On-going. More collaboration with Employment & Training Services (ETS) is required by WIOA and development of a shared referral system.
- DVR leadership team and managers continue to identify functional AJC issues that require on-going work at all levels of the division including the AJC Integration Committee and the local AJC management teams.
 - On-going
- Work with AJCs to obtain information on individuals who self-identify as having a disability.
 - On-going

- Support the National Governor’s Association Chair initiative; “A Better Bottom Line: Employing People with Disabilities”. Special Assistant to the Governor helped make Provisional Hire more visible to hiring managers during the recruitment process, thus increasing PH’s substantially over the past year.
 - On-going
- Partner with other service providers to maximize resources and coordinate services for individuals who are in need of long term SE services
 - On-going
- Support the Employment First Initiative – this bill is working its way through the legislative process.
 - This initiative was enacted in May Of 2014, making Alaska an Employment First state.
- Support efforts to establish vocational services from community behavioral health providers.
 - Managers to document successes/challenges related to mental health services in regions
- Continue Chief of Rehabilitation Services participation in the Vets Success meetings
 - On-going.
- Continue support for DVR business point of contact to the Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation National Employment Team
 - On-going
- Examine the role of DVR staff on boards, councils, and advisory groups
 - On-going. Complete review to be completed with new Assistant Chief when hired
- Seek membership or stronger representation on the AWIB
 - On-going. New WIOA regulations may ease the way for DVR to be represented on this board.
- Support the State as a Model Employer initiative and serve on the steering committee
 - On-going.
- Support the Alaska Integrated Employment Initiative and serve on the advisory board
 - On-going. Currently the Transition Coordinator sits on this board
- Support current Project Search sites and serve on the steering committee
 - On-going. Assistant Chief will be sitting on this committee.
- Support the Tapestry project and serve on the advisory board
 - On-going. Currently the Transition Coordinator sits on this board.
- Serve on the Governor’s Council on Disabilities and Special Education
 - On-going. This seat is assigned to the Assistant Chief
- Serve on the Alaska Mental Health Board
 - On-going. This seat is assigned to the Assistant Chief

- Serve on the Statewide Independent Living Council.
 - On-going. This seat will be staffed by the CRP Coordinator
- Serve on the Community and Public Transportation Advisory board
 - On-going. This seat will be assigned to the Director of DVR.
- Attend the Alaska Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired board meetings
 - On-going. Currently the Blind Services Coordinator for the State sits on this board.

Strategic goals set for FFY16 with input and approval from the SVRC. Additional planning sessions will be set with the SVRC to draft strategic goals for 2017-2020 once the regulations have been published, and data from the CSNA has been analyzed.

| Goal 1 – Service Delivery – DVR will deliver high quality vocational rehabilitation services for people with disabilities to assist them in obtaining employment consistent with their career goals. | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Objective | Activity | Who | Indicator of success |
| Expand Pre-Employment Transition Services to students 16-21 | Sponsor transition camps throughout Alaska | Transition Coordinator | 15% PETS set aside budget fully spent |
| | Contract with CRPs to provide PETS activities | Transition Coordinator, CRP Specialist | Increase in provision of PETS activities |
| | Work with Special Education teachers to ensure appropriate referrals | Transition Coordinator | Student referrals increase |
| | Outreach to alternative schools and youth correctional facilities | Transition Coordinator | Number of students in these facilities increases |
| | Provide quality assurance oversight to ensure PETS expenditures are being correctly captured and recorded | Program Evaluator | Accurate accountability of 15% PETS set-aside |
| Provide all services required under WIOA | Thorough review, implementation and adherence of new WIOA regulations (when available) | Planning, Policy and Performance Evaluation (PPP) Team, Leadership Team | Changes are implemented and disseminated to staff in a timely manner |
| | Review of policy manual | PPP Team, Leadership Team | Policies are updated as necessary and disseminated to staff |
| | Review of Technical Manual | PPP Team, Leadership Team | Manual is updated as necessary and disseminated to staff |
| | Training is provided to staff around new WIOA requirements | Program Evaluator, Chief | Staff understands their role in implantation of WIOA through training |
| | Develop training module to ensure staff captures and | Chief, Program Evaluator, Training | Training developed and provided to staff |

| | | | |
|---|---|--|--|
| | documents services to employers, once regulations are published | Specialist | |
| Continue to provide services in rural Alaska | Budget travel funds for counselor travel | Regional Managers, Leadership team | Counselors are able to travel to their assigned rural hubs or other areas as needed |
| | Counselors are assigned to rural hubs | Regional Managers | Counselors are assigned specific rural areas in which they provide VR services |
| | Counselors have access to case management software when out in the field | Assistive Technology Coordinator, PPP Team | Counselors access case management software while in rural areas. |
| | Rural Team tasked with developing strategies and goals for meeting the needs of rural clients. | Rural Team | Increased rural participants |
| | Maintain relationships with Tribal VR programs and one-stop AJCs | Rural team | Increased referrals and collaboration |
| | Identify strategies to increase CRPs in rural areas | Rural team, regional managers, CRP Specialist, Leadership Team | Increase in CRPs serving rural areas |
| | Maximize the use of technology to offer services remotely | AT Coordinator, Rural Team | Successful use of technology and increased services to rural areas |
| | State Vocational Rehabilitation Committee continues to meet at least once a year in a rural location. | SVRC, SVRC Liaison | Meeting held in a rural location |
| Ensure services to individuals who experience blindness or visual impairments | Support the Alaska Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired (the Center) and other efforts within DVR to ensure our obligation as a combined agency are met | Chief, Blind & VI Team | The Center continues to receive support and blind and VI participants receive appropriate services |
| | Maintain membership in Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the blind and Visually Impaired. | Blind & VI Team | Membership maintained. |
| Provide evaluation of services offered through DVR | QA activities performed with results used to determine training needs or to clarify policies and procedures | PPP team | Changes are made as necessary to policies and technical manual. Training delivered as necessary. |
| | Program evaluation results are reviewed by Leadership Team | PPP Team | Policies and practices are developed and implemented |

| | | | |
|--|--|--|---|
| | CSNA data are collected and used to establish strategic goals for FFY17. | PPP Team, Leadership Team | Assessment data are collected, analyzed and disseminated to Leadership Team |
| | CSNA results are disseminated to SVRC and combined strategic goal meeting scheduled | Leadership Team, SVRC | Strategic goals for FFY17 are developed. |
| | Consumer Satisfaction responses are analyzed and disseminated to Leadership Team and SVRC | PPP Team, SVRC | Analyzed data are reviewed and needed changes are made to ensure quality delivery of services |
| Meet or exceed state and federal performance standards | Establish baseline data for all WIOA required data elements | Program Evaluator | Baseline data will be available for all required elements of the Participant Individual Record Layout and the RSA-911 |
| | Update case management software AWARE to capture all new required data elements | Program Evaluator, software vendor | Software captures all new required data elements |
| | Negotiate new targets for required performance standards (when published) | Leadership Team | RSA and DVR have new targets for performance measures |
| | Develop relationships with other VR agencies to share best practices | Director, Chief, Asst. Chief, Program Evaluator | Network available for sharing information |
| | Monitor case activities to ensure program fidelity | Program Evaluator, Regional Managers, Chief | Information provided to regional managers for staff performance evaluations |
| Effective CRP performance and outcomes | Monitor and evaluate CRP performance to ensure fidelity, effectiveness and quality of service outcomes | Program Evaluator, CRP Specialist, Regional Managers | Yearly evaluation done for each CRP to determine continued usage |
| | Share information with VR staff and CRPs for continued input and improvement | CRP Specialist, staff | Continued involvement between staff and CRPs |
| | Work with rural VR counselors to identify potential rural CRPs | Rural Team, CPR Specialist | Additional rural CRPs recruited and providing services |
| Deliver quality AT services consistently statewide | Continue to work with ATLA to improve relationship and service delivery | AT Coordinator, AT Counselor Team | Service delivery improves |
| | Develop guide for using ATLA services | AT Coordinator, AT Counselor Team | Guide completed |
| Provide quality service delivery for individuals who are Social Security beneficiaries and | Ensure staff is aware of presumption of eligibility of beneficiaries | Chief, Training Specialist | Expedited eligibilities or development of Trial Work Experiences |

| | | | |
|--|--|------------------------------|-----------------|
| ensure compliance with federal regulation. | | | |
| | Ensure all beneficiaries are provided with a benefits analysis to fully understand how employment will impact their benefits | Regional Manager, Counselors | Informed choice |

Goal 2 – Staff Development. DVR will recruit, employ, retain, and train the most qualified and highly skilled rehabilitation staff.

| Objective | Activity | Who | Indicator of success |
|--|--|--------------------------------------|---|
| Recruit and retain qualified staff | Develop consistent statewide tools for training needs | Training Specialist | Tools are developed and disseminated |
| | Schedule an “all-staff” training session | Training Specialist, Leadership Team | Training occurs |
| | Ensure funding for the support of VR counselors in graduate level rehabilitation courses | Leadership Team | Funding is available |
| | Develop an internship program | Training Specialist | Internship program is developed |
| | CRC credit is provided for trainings | Training Specialist | Counselors are able to obtain continuing education CRC credits |
| | Ensure staff are aware of educational and long range employment opportunities with DVR | Leadership Team | Staff take advantage of education and employment opportunities within DVR |
| Leadership development and succession planning | Support staff participation in leadership training programs such as Emerging Leaders, the National Rehabilitation Leadership Institute, etc. | Leadership Team | Staff are participating at a level to meet VR Leadership needs |
| | Develop a succession plan | Leadership Team | Plan is developed and implemented |

Goal 3 – DVR will continuously evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of organizational systems and identify opportunities to develop innovative solutions for necessary changes

| Objective | Activity | Who | Indicator of success |
|--|---|-----------------|------------------------------|
| Review and revise as necessary the case review process | Develop the case review process electronically, using <i>Survey Monkey</i> to record all results | PPP Team | New process will be utilized |
| | Develop streamlined, electronic process for randomly selecting the appropriate number and type of cases to review | PPP Team, Chief | New process will be utilized |
| | Analyze results of new | PPP Team, Chief | Results will be used to make |

| | | | |
|--|--|---|--|
| | process and revise as necessary | | improvements or to solidify new process |
| Implement all federally mandated changes to RSA-911 report | Fully test and implement all changes to case management software | Help Desk Team | All updates are installed and working appropriately |
| | Analyze impact on field staff | Help Desk Team, Regional Managers | Staff adequately notified of changes |
| | Develop training materials on new components of data collection | Training Specialist, Help Desk Team, Chief | New materials developed and training delivered to field staff. |
| | Prepare and upload federal reports accurately and on-time | Program Evaluator, Help Desk Team | Reports are submitted on time and meet all requirements |
| Evaluate Social Security Reimbursement Process | Implement new ticket tracking software | Program Evaluator, Ticket Project Assistant | New software works as expected |
| | Train additional staff on process | Program Evaluator, Ticket Project Assistant and staff | PA has backup and knowledge of software is shared |
| | Continue to collect Social Security Reimbursements | Ticket Tracker staff | Social Security Reimbursements continue at least at current levels |

| Goal 4– DVR will provide leadership in the workforce system | | | |
|---|---|---------------------------|--|
| Objective | Activity | Who | Indicator of success |
| Maintain a leadership role in expanding vocational opportunities for Alaskans with disabilities | Become a member of the AWIB | Director | Hold a seat on the AWIB. |
| | Partner with other core Labor programs to develop Combined State Plan | Director, Leadership Team | Combined Plan includes VR input |
| | Collaborate with core programs authorized by WIOA to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of services. | | |
| | Work with one-stop AJCs to ensure referrals to and from DVR are occurring | Leadership Team | On-going dialogue with one-stop AJCs to ensure appropriate referrals |
| | Encourage DVR presence on appropriate boards, i.e. Alaska Mental Health Trust, Governor’s Council on Disabilities and Special Education, etc. | Director, Asst. Chief | Presence on boards increases |

- (3) Ensure that the goals and priorities are based on an analysis of the following areas:
- (A) the most recent comprehensive statewide assessment, including any updates;

DVR conducted a CSNA in 2013. The Strategic Goals listed in the table above were developed based on the findings of the CSNA. In order to determine the needs of Alaskans with disabilities, the CSNA looked at:

- What are the rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities, particularly the vocational rehabilitation services needs of individuals with most significant disabilities, including their need for SE services?
- What are the vocational rehabilitation services needs of individuals with disabilities who are minorities or who are in unserved or underserved populations?
- What are the vocational rehabilitation services needs of individuals with disabilities who are served through other components of the statewide workforce investment system?
- What is the need to establish, develop, or improve community rehabilitation programs (CRPs) within the state?

- (B) the State's performance under the performance accountability measures of section 116 of WIOA; and

DVR has collected baseline data on employment status at second and fourth quarter after exit as well as median wage at second quarter after exit. DVR does not have reliable data on educational attainment, measurable skill gain, and effectiveness in serving employers, therefore is unable to identify targets in these areas.

- (C) other available information on the operation and effectiveness of the VR program, including any reports received from the State Rehabilitation Council and findings and recommendations from monitoring activities conducted under section 107.

DVR has not had a monitoring review since 2010. The SVRC publishes an annual report, which helps shape policy through participating in strategic planning, needs assessment, consumer satisfaction surveys, and ongoing program evaluation. The SVRC has had no significant concerns regarding DVR's operation and effectiveness.

(m) Order of Selection. Describe:

- (1) The order to be followed in selecting eligible individuals to be provided VR services.
- (2) The justification for the order.
- (3) The service and outcome goals.
- (4) The time within which these goals may be achieved for individuals in each priority category within the order.
- (5) How individuals with the most significant disabilities are selected for services before all other individuals with disabilities; and
- (6) If the designated State unit has elected to serve eligible individuals, regardless of any established order of selection, who require specific services or equipment to maintain employment.

DVR is not on an Order of Selection.

(n) Goals and Plans for Distribution of title VI Funds.

(1) Specify the State's goals and priorities for funds received under section 603 of the Rehabilitation Act for the provision of supported employment services.

- Utilize 50% of SE funds for youth with the most significant disabilities
- Collaborate with the DEI regarding youth transition programs in the state
- Partner with the Center for Human Development to expand post-secondary education options
- Collaborate with the Governor's Council on Disabilities and Special Education and the Center for Human Development on transition handbooks for multiple stakeholder groups

(2) Describe the activities to be conducted, with funds reserved pursuant to section 603(d), for youth with the most significant disabilities, including :

(A) the provision of extended services for a period not to exceed 4 years; and

- Develop Cooperative agreement with Senior and Disability Services regarding individual plans of care to ensure long-term funding for those with the most significant disabilities
- Explore funding options for comparable benefits including Medicaid waiver funds and

(B) how the State will leverage other public and private funds to increase resources for extended services and expanded supported employment opportunities for youth with the most significant disabilities.

- Increase the number of CWICs through collaborative CWIC training opportunities
- Work with the Center for Human Development, the Trust , the Governor's Council and other partners to increase provider capacity for employment services and supports
- Partner to disseminate information on resources available for people with disabilities to obtain and maintain employment through job fairs, conferences, and other events

(o) State's Strategies. Describe the required strategies and how the agency will use these strategies to achieve its goals and priorities, support innovation and expansion activities, and overcome any barriers to accessing the VR and the Supported Employment programs (See sections 101(a)(15)(D) and (18)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act and section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA)):

(1) The methods to be used to expand and improve services to individuals with disabilities.

DVR works closely with local school districts, hospitals and CRPs to implement the national Project Search model in the Matanuska-Susitna and Fairbanks school districts. A collaborative internship model was developed four years ago to provide youth with developmental or intellectual disabilities opportunities to learn real job skills in one year school-to-work internship positions set up throughout the three hospitals involved. Sites were at Mat-Su Regional Medical Center, Central Peninsula Hospital, and Fairbanks Memorial Hospital. Total workplace immersion facilitates a seamless combination of classroom instruction, career exploration, and OJT and support through internships or worksite rotations. The goal for each participant is obtaining integrated employment using the skills learned through the internships. The state of Alaska has adopted this model for student interns with developmental disabilities. For FY15 15 youth participated in Project SEARCH, and 14 successfully completed their internships at the hospitals with 7 of those individuals now working in paid, competitive employment.

Project SEARCH is no longer being funded by the Governor's Council on Disabilities and Special Education. The Project SEARCH model will be used to provide Pre-Employment Transition Services to Students with Disabilities under the Client Services Component. The model will be used for all disability types rather than only developmental disabilities and will expand to other types of worksites.

DVR supports and participates in the Tapestry Postsecondary Transition Program through the University of Alaska Center for Human Development. The purpose of the program is to provide students (ages 18 to 21) with intellectual and cognitive disabilities a postsecondary college experience to develop self-advocacy skills, engage in career exploration, develop work readiness skills, and engage in work experience that lead to employment in a career field or enrollment in a postsecondary educational program. Now in its 6th year, the retention rate is approximately 80%. 19 people have graduated from the program and 14 of those were employed at graduation. Twelve of the 14 were employment in competitive employment with an average hourly wage of \$9.34/hour; higher than Alaska's minimum wage.

- (2) How a broad range of assistive technology services and devices will be provided to individuals with disabilities at each stage of the rehabilitation process and on a statewide basis.

The Division has a policy on AT service delivery throughout the VR process.

DVR has established an AT team that examines the use of AT throughout the Division for all individuals. Additionally, this team also looks at how AT can be used to deliver VR services to remote and rural Alaska

- (3) The outreach procedures that will be used to identify and serve individuals with disabilities who are minorities, including those with the most significant disabilities, as well as those who have been unserved or underserved by the VR program.

Our underserved population is rural Alaskans. This has been an on-going challenge for the rural development team as there are so few jobs within some of the smaller communities. Available employment and employers are much more numerous in the urban areas. The Rural Team is strategizing ways to get more CRPs in rural areas, which are traditionally underserved. The Business Employment Services Team has been created specifically to outreach and provide training and services to employers with the goal of encouraging more employers to provide employment opportunities for people with disabilities. Have expanded services to Petersburg, Haines, and Prince of Wales Island due to increased need and have increased the number of counselors within the agency that are providing rural services. Collaboration with the AT team has enabled utilization of available electronic tools and video conferencing. DVR has increased the number of CRPs serving rural Alaska due to providing Pre-Employment Transition Services. Work is on-going on developing qualifications for rural CRPs, as it is difficult to find qualified CRPs in rural areas.

- (4) The methods to be used to improve and expand VR services for students with disabilities, including the coordination of services designed to facilitate the transition of such students from school to postsecondary life (including the receipt of VR services, postsecondary education, employment, and pre-employment transition services).

DVR issued an invitation to submit a proposal to CRPs across the state in 2015 to provide pre-employment transition services to students with disabilities in coordination with Local Education Agencies (LEAs). DVR funded nine PETS Projects for funding, in both urban and rural locations, with a goal of providing 125 youth with intensive PETS activities that lead toward an Individualized plan for employment. This project

resulted in expanding CRPs to include IL Centers and Behavioral Health organizations and increasing DVRs ability to provide substantial services in rural locals.

Transition coordinator is providing Transition Camps in conjunction with several partners. A camp run in November was run by a CRP, enrollees were inmates in the Juvenile system and the University of Alaska Southeast provide one college credit for attending the all-day session. Transition age students were given presentations by an array of employers, DVR staff, and others to broaden horizons for these students and to offer assistance in achieving current employment-related or post-secondary goals. The response from the participants was very positive. There are several more Transition Camps scheduled for FFY16.

- (5) If applicable, plans for establishing, developing, or improving community rehabilitation programs within the State.

Collaboration and partnership with UAA to ensure ongoing training is available to CRPs throughout the state. UAA is in the process of gaining national accreditation from the ACRE to provide employment services training. DVR requires CRPs complete a minimum of 40 hours of ACRE accredited training to meet the minimum requirements to provide basic vocational rehabilitation services.

- (6) Strategies to improve the performance of the State with respect to the performance accountability measures under section 116 of WIOA.

Once regulations have been published, baseline data acquired from other core programs and targets negotiated with RSA, DVR will be able to comment on performance, based on the accountability indicators. Some of the data has been available.

For the accountability measures that involve quarterly wages and percentages, DVR has worked with another Labor department to procure the data and will be able to report percentages and State wage data, for adults and youth. The data provided included the current FFY15 and three previous years. However, DVR is finding it difficult to obtain Federal Wage data, resulting in lower percentages of participants employed and lower overall wage data targets.

For the accountability measures involving education and credentialing, that information is proving to be much more difficult to obtain. Currently working to establish the relationship with education that will allow for sharing the schooling/credentialing data, but little progress has been made so far. We are investigating how we might obtain that data from additional sources. For education and training that is being paid for by DVR, that information is readily available and will be collected and reported. However, the level of detail that is being required does impose a burden of additional staff time to provide that data. The requirement to provide this data for the current FFY15 will be attempted; however, it is doubtful that such data will be able to be matched to previous three years of participants. Even if able to obtain this data, the matching involved to collect it and enter it into the reporting system would be extremely burdensome.

The service to employers metric has yet to be determined; however, DVR has been collecting data on contacts, outreach, and training provided to employers for the past year. It is assumed that some of that data will be a part of the required indicator of performance.

For FFY15, DVR is attempting to obtain data showing which participants were participating in other Labor core programs. This data sharing agreement has not yet been put into place.

Once complete regulations have been published, the case management software has been updated, and staff has been trained on the new data collection elements, DVR will be in a position to negotiate appropriate target measures and ensure that infrastructure is in place for achieving those measures.

(7) Strategies for assisting other components of the statewide workforce development system in assisting individuals with disabilities.

- Currently co-located, 6 one-stops
- Increase collaboration and integrated service delivery with AJCs
- Under Section 188, AJC Universal Access, ensure physical and communication accessibility, program accessibility, AT, and AJC staff training is adequate to serve the needs of individuals with disabilities

(8) How the agency's strategies will be used to:

(A) achieve goals and priorities by the State, consistent with the comprehensive needs assessment;

- Build clear routes for students, youth and adults to Careers
 - Sponsor transition camps throughout Alaska
 - Contract with CRPs to provide Pre-employment transition services to students 16-21
 - Work with Special Education teachers to ensure appropriate referrals
 - Outreach to alternative schools and youth correctional facilities
- Develop multiple paths for employers and workers
 - Increase outreach to employers
 - Work with BEST to survey needs and gaps for improved partnering with employers
 - Develop training module to ensure staff captures and documents services to employers, once regulations are published with definitions “services”
- Support and grow learning opportunities for workers at all stages of life
 - Work closely and collaborate with one-stop AJCs to ensure a smooth referral process between each entity
 - Work closely and collaborate with the other core programs to ensure a smooth referral process between all programs
 - Continue to improve outreach to rural areas
 - Maximize training opportunities by collaborating with other core programs
 - Have representation on State-wide boards like to AWIB, the Alaska Mental Health Trust, the Governor’s Council on Disabilities and
 - Special Education to ensure people with disabilities continue to have a voice in developing learning opportunities
- Improve the efficiency and performance of Alaska’s workforce system
 - Collaborate with State-wide data group to develop streamlined enrollment processes across all core programs

- Refine referral process to enhance co-investment opportunities between core programs
- Meet or exceed negotiated performance measure targets

(B) [support innovation and expansion activities; and](#)

- Develop portable, electronic training modules to provide information to employers, based on survey results of needs and gaps
- Collaborate with State-wide data group to develop streamlined enrollment processes across all core programs
- Continue to provide funding to the State Vocational Rehabilitation Committee and the Statewide Independent Living Council

(C) [overcome identified barriers relating to equitable access to and participation of individuals with disabilities in the State VR Services Program and the State Supported Employment Services Program.](#)

The largest barrier to equitable access is due to the remoteness of Alaskan communities and limited resources. DVR partners with schools districts, American Indian Vocational Rehabilitation Service programs, WIOA core programs, and other local partners in designated hub communities throughout Alaska. Through coordination of services with these partners, DVR is able to provide VR services to individuals living in rural Alaska. Additionally, DVR has a Rural Services Team that is consistently examining methods for improving service delivery to Alaskans with disabilities residing in rural and remote communities. DVR is also committed to continued efforts to develop CRP capacity in rural Alaska, as well as implementing innovative strategies using assistive technology to enhance and encourage continued consumer participation throughout the VR process.

(p) [Evaluation and Reports of Progress: VR and Supported Employment Goals. Describe:](#)

(1) An evaluation of the extent to which the VR program goals described in the approved VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan for the most recently completed program year were achieved. The evaluation must:

- (A) Identify the strategies that contributed to the achievement of the goals.
- (B) Describe the factors that impeded the achievement of the goals and priorities.

Goal 1 – Service Delivery: DVR will provide high quality services to all eligible individuals to assist them in obtaining employment consistent with their career goals.

Priority 1 - Transition services for youth with disabilities

- Rehabilitation rate for youth was 61.2% which exceeds the Federal S&I 1.2 of 55.8%
- 22% of all applicants were youth
- 22.8% (137) of all those individuals closed rehabilitated were youth at application
- 25.1% of all individuals participating in the VR program were youth at application
- For youth closed rehabilitated, the average hourly wage was \$11.12, well above the minimum wage of \$7.75 and the average number of hours worked at closure was 28.4 hours per week.

- DVR continued its emphasis on youth transition services in FY2013 with the hiring of a new transition coordinator
- Strategies contributing to success:
 - Counselors in Fairbanks, Anchorage, Kenai and Wasilla assigned as Project Search Counselors in high schools
 - DVR transition team includes all VR counselors assigned to high schools and the transition coordinator continues to meet every other month
 - DVR staff participates in bi-monthly Job Corp meetings
 - On-going efforts to maintain relationships with school district staff directly involved with students who experience a disability
 - Continued to explore and expand the use of social media to connect youth to VR services
 - Continued to educate school staff on DVR's mission as it relates to referrals
 - Updated web site with tools including a video for special education teachers
 - Coordinating meetings with both OCS and DJJ.
 - Spoke at state-wide video conference with DJJ.
 - Provided Discovery training to DJJ staff
- Factors impeding progress:
 - Post-secondary students are often very transient
 - Youth have different communication styles than more traditional methods, i.e. anecdotal information suggests texting has become the preferred method of communication. DVR needs to determine best way to communicate to reduce number of youth who are lost after applying for VR services.
 - School district staff turnover.

Priority 2. Remain off an Order of selection

- Strategies contributing to success:
 - DVR was able to maintain current staffing levels
 - DVR was able to take advantage of Federal re-allotment funds
 - Aggressive filing of Social Security reimbursements
 - Close monitoring of expenditures and obligations
- Factors impeding progress:
 - None

Priority 3. Improving DVR services in rural Alaska. DVR remains committed to improving services to rural Alaska. The number of counselors assigned to travel on an itinerant basis has increased. Even so, providing services to rural Alaska continues to be a challenge for DVR. The 2013 Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment identified rural Alaska as an underserved area.

- Strategies contributing to success:

- Continued partnerships with the AVIRS programs, the local one-stop AJCs and other State agencies providing rural services.
- VR counselors are assigned to hub communities in Western Alaska and to other rural communities
- Continued expansion of tools and resources that are not available in rural areas such as vocational evaluation tests/assessments for VR counselors to use when traveling.
- DVR counselors participated in Rural Transition Camps
- Factors impeding progress:
 - Size of the state
 - Lack of service in rural Alaska
 - Lack of employment opportunities in rural Alaska
 - Census data suggest an out-migration from rural Alaska to larger communities

Priority 4. Work with one-stop AJC partners to improve services in AJCs for people with disabilities.

- Strategies contributing to success:
 - AT services are available in one-stop AJCs
 - DVR collaborated with the Employment and Training Services (ETS) on the implementation of the DEI
 - DVR worked with and supported ETS’s effort for the one-stop AJCs to become employment networks as part of the ticket to Work initiative.
 - Strong partnership between ETS and DVR to support services to individuals with disabilities in one-stop AJCs at all levels of both organizations.
 - DVR staff continues to make presentations on VR services at local one-stop AJCs.
- Factors Impeding progress:
 - Staff turnover at one-stop AJCs
 - AJC closures and reduced staff
 - AJCs in rural communities are served by DVR counselors on an itinerant basis.

Priority 5. Enhance the DVR service delivery system through the use of technology

- Strategies contributing to success:
 - Expanded the use of “Survey Monkey” software for participant satisfaction surveys.
 - CRPs can now apply on-line
 - Improved and expanded the functionality of DVR’s intranet
 - DVR’s case-management software is updated to keep up changing federal requirements
 - Using participant preferences to communicate; text, email, etc.
- Factors impeding progress:

- Statewide internet services and infrastructure limited in many smaller communities
- Reduced and limited resources
- Limited bandwidth

Priority 6. Develop new CRPs and enhance delivery of CRP services

- Strategies contributing to success:
 - CRP standards have been developed and implemented
 - CRP application process revised with the minimum training, education and experience requirements established for each service
 - Local staff and regional managers work in the communities to establish new CRPs, particularly in rural, underserved areas.
- Factors impeding progress:
 - difficult to retain CRPs;
 - new State accounting system has delayed payments for CPRs, many of whom are small operations; and
 - primary CRP in the State specializing in AT services cannot meet the demand

Priority 7. Meet or exceed federal performance standards

- DVR did not meet Standard 1.1, probably due to the new requirement to have cases in plan in 90 days. This requirement can force more unsuccessful closures. However, DVR met or exceeded every other standard.
- Strategies contributing to success:
 - Good communication with staff and Regional Managers. Clear goals and guidelines. On-going training, particularly around WIOA.
 - Proactive planning for future WIOA requirements
 - Feedback reports to managers and staff
 - New program evaluation emphasis
- Factors impeding progress:
 - Stress of lower oil prices on entire State of Alaska structure and job market
 - DVR cases becoming more complex and increased IDD and cognitive impairments among participants.
 - Lack of employers in rural areas

Priority 8. Enhance and streamline Ticket to Work processes

- Strategies contributing to success:
 - The decision to purchase tracking software that will streamline and offer electronic processing of claims and tickets.

- Dedicated staff
- Factors impeding progress:
 - None

Priority 9. Assess service delivery system for individual who are blind or visually impaired to ensure on-going support.

- Strategies contributing to success:
 - DVR counselor assigned to Blind Services participates in community outreach on issue facing the blind and visually impaired.
 - All VR offices are able to provide services to the blind and visually impaired.
- Factors impeding progress:
 - The blind and visually impaired are a low incidence population , making it difficult for the Center to have an adequate customer base
 - Keeping qualified staff employed at the Center
 - Blind services in many cases are less expensive out-of-state

Goal 2 – Staff Development: CVR will recruit, employ, retain, and train the most qualified and highly skilled rehabilitation staff.

Priority 1. Recruit and retain qualified staff

- Strategies contributing to success:
 - Utilizing training resources and the support of TACE and CCER
 - Seeking training opportunities to help staff achieve CRC recertification and professional growth
- Factors impeding progress:
 - Educational institutions within the state of Alaska currently lack Bachelor and Master level programs in Rehabilitation Counseling. University of Alaska offers academic programs in related disciplines, such as Associate and Bachelor degrees in Human Services and Psychology, as well as Master of Education degree in Counseling
 - State’s employment and pay policies make it difficult to recruit new staff

Priority 2. Provide on-going training opportunities.

- Strategies contributing to success:
 - Training activities occur on a continuous basis and many are delivery via teleconference and/or webinars.
 - DVR counselors utilize the services of medical/psychiatric consultants to regularly update their disability-related knowledge. Evidence-based best practices and advances in the field, presented by the Institute on Rehabilitation Issues.
- Factors impeding progress:

- Lack of local training

Priority 3. Support leadership development and succession planning

- Strategies contributing to success:
 - Able to send staff to Emerging Leaders and the NRLI
 - DVR worked with the TACE on succession planning
 - Availability of training dollars
- Factors impeding progress:
 - Staff turnover

Goal 3 – DVR will distinguish its role in the workforce system and will leverage partnerships to maximize resources and support for employment of individuals with disabilities

Priority 1. Partner with employers to promote the hiring of people with disabilities

- Strategies contributing to success:
 - Created a Business Team with the goals of strengthening ties and networking with employers
 - Coordination and board participation with the Governor’s Council on Disabilities and Special Education, the Alaska Mental Health Board and the Community and Public Transportation Advisory board.
- Factors impeding progress:
 - DVR is a small agency with limited staff resources and does not always have the capacity to participate on all boards or initiatives

Priority 2. Partner with other service providers to maximize resources and coordinate services especially for individuals who are in need of long term supported employment services and employment services from community behavioral health providers.

- Strategies contributing to success:
 - Many opportunities to partner with State-wide initiatives and hold board/committee positions on many of these initiatives
- Factors impeding progress:
 - Staff capacity
 - Shifting and non-aligned priorities

(2) An evaluation of the extent to which the Supported Employment program goals described in the Supported Employment Supplement for the most recent program year were achieved. The evaluation must:

(A) Identify the strategies that contributed to the achievement of the goals.

- Continued efforts coordinated with the Governor’s Council on Disabilities and Special Education

- Continue to work with the Center for Human Development and the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority to increase provider capacity for employment services and supports
- Continue to increase use of the Provisional Hire process

(B) Describe the factors that impeded the achievement of the goals and priorities.

- The I/DD Home and Community Based Services waiver waitlist is expected to increase substantially due to lack of funding for the program.

(3) The VR program's performance on the performance accountability indicators under section 116 of WIOA.

- The I/DD Home and Community Based Services waiver waitlist is expected to increase substantially due to lack of funding for the program.

(4) How the funds reserved for innovation and expansion activities were utilized.

- To support the State Vocational Rehabilitation Council and Statewide Independent Living Council activities.

(g) Quality, Scope, and Extent of Supported Employment Services. Include the following:

- (1) The quality, scope, and extent of supported employment services to be provided to individuals with the most significant disabilities, including youth with the most significant disabilities.
- (2) The timing of transition to extended services.

Goals and Priorities for the FFY2017-FFY2020 supported employment (SE) program:

1. DVR will provide SE services to 200 eligible individuals.
2. DVR will set aside 50% of the SE award to provide services to youth with the most significant disabilities.
3. DVR will assist 50 SE eligible individuals to obtain competitive employment.
4. DVR will be able to provide all the identified required VR services to all SE eligible individuals.
5. Explore opportunities for CRPs and other entities to become employment networks to provide long-term supports.
6. Work with the community mental health system to increase and establish work related programs within that system.
7. Emphasize community based, integrated employment settings with the Governor's Council on Disability and Special Education, the Alaska Mental Health Board, community behavioral health programs and the Trust to increase vocational programs within the mental health service delivery system.

FFY2015 SE Program Outcomes:

1. DVR provided VR services under an IPE to 257 SE eligible individuals, of which 79 were youth

2. DVR successfully assisted 100 SE eligible individuals in obtaining competitive employment, of which 52 were youth
3. DVR was not on an order of selection and had adequate funding and staff to provide SE services to all eligible individuals

Strategies contributing to the achievement of the goals:

1. Adequate SE funding was available to DVR counselors
2. DVR has continued to support and work with the DETS in the endeavor of one-stop AJCs to become Employment Networks
3. DVR has continued to support Project Search
4. The Alaska Division of Senior and Disability Services has continued to work to reduce the wait list for support services
5. DVR has continued to work with the community mental health system to increase and/or to reinstate work related programs within that system of providers
6. Alaska passed Employment First legislation

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION CERTIFICATIONS AND ASSURANCES

CERTIFICATIONS

| States must provide written and signed certifications that: | |
|--|--|
| 1. | The Alaska Division of Vocational Rehabilitation is authorized to submit the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan under title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Rehabilitation Act), as amended by WIOA, ³ and its supplement under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act ⁴ ; |
| 2. | As a condition for the receipt of Federal funds under title I of the Rehabilitation Act for the provision of VR services, the Alaska Division of Vocational Rehabilitation 5 agrees to operate and administer the State VR Services Program in accordance with the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan ⁶ , the Rehabilitation Act, and all applicable regulations ⁷ , policies, and procedures established by the Secretary of Education. Funds made available under section 111 of the Rehabilitation Act are used solely for the provision of VR services and the administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan; |
| 3. | As a condition for the receipt of Federal funds under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act for supported employment services, the designated State agency agrees to operate and |

³ Public Law 113-128.

⁴ Unless otherwise stated, "Rehabilitation Act" means the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by WIOA, signed into law on July 22, 2014.⁵ All references in this plan to "designated State agency" or to "the State agency" relate to the agency identified in this paragraph.

⁵ All references in this plan to "designated State agency" or to "the State agency" relate to the agency identified in this paragraph.

⁶ No funds under title I of the Rehabilitation Act may be awarded without an approved VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan in accordance with section 101(a) of the Rehabilitation Act.

⁷ Applicable regulations, in part, include the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) in 34 CFR parts 76, 77, 79, 81, and 82; 2 CFR part 200 as adopted by 2 CFR part 3474; and the State VR Services program regulations.

| | |
|----|--|
| | administer the State Supported Employment Services Program in accordance with the supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan ⁸ , the Rehabilitation Act, and all applicable regulations ⁹ , policies, and procedures established by the Secretary of Education. Funds made available under title VI are used solely for the provision of supported employment services and the administration of the supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan; |
| 4. | The designated State agency and/or the designated State unit has the authority under State law to perform the functions of the State regarding the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement; |
| 5. | The State legally may carry out each provision of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement. |
| 6. | All provisions of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement are consistent with State law. |
| 7. | The Director of the Alaska Division of Vocational Rehabilitation has the authority under State law to receive, hold, and disburse Federal funds made available under the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement; |
| 8. | The Director of the Alaska Division of Vocational Rehabilitation has the authority to submit the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and the supplement for Supported Employment services; |
| 9. | The agency that submits the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement has adopted or otherwise formally approved the plan and its supplement. |

Certifications Signed By:

Signature: (Signature on file)
Name of Signatory: John Cannon
Title of Signatory: Director, Alaska Division of Vocational Rehabilitation
Date Signed: Pending submission of final state plan

ASSURANCES

The designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate and identified in the State certifications included with this VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement, through signature of the authorized individual, assures the Commissioner of the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA), that it will comply with all of the requirements of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement, as set forth in sections 101(a) and 606 of the Rehabilitation Act. The individual authorized to submit the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement makes the following assurances:

⁸ No funds under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act may be awarded without an approved supported employment supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan in accordance with section 606(a) of the Rehabilitation Act.

⁹ Applicable regulations, in part, include the citations in footnote 6.

¹⁰ States that elect to include employment and training activities carried out under the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) Act (42 U.S.C. 9901 et seq.) under a Combined State Plan would submit all other required elements of a complete CSBG State Plan directly to the Federal agency that administers the program. Similarly, States that elect to include employment and training activities carried by the Department of Housing and Urban Development and programs authorized under section 6(d)(4) and 6(o) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 that are included would submit all other required elements of a complete State Plan for those programs directly to the Federal agency that administers the program.

| The State Plan must provide assurances that: | |
|---|---|
| 1. | Public Comment on Policies and Procedures: The designated State agency assures it will comply with all statutory and regulatory requirements for public participation in the VR Services Portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, as required by section 101(a)(16)(A) of the Rehabilitation Act. |
| 2. | Submission of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and Its Supplement: The designated State unit assures it will comply with all requirements pertaining to the submission and revisions of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement for the State Supported Employment Services program, as required by sections 101(a)(1), (22), (23), and 606(a) of the Rehabilitation Act; section 102 of WIOA in the case of the submission of a unified plan; section 103 of WIOA in the case of a submission of a Combined State Plan; 34 CFR 76.140. |
| 3. | <p>Administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan: The designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate, assures it will comply with the requirements related to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) the establishment of the designated State agency and designated State unit, as required by section 101(a)(2) of the Rehabilitation Act... (b) the establishment of either a State independent commission or State Rehabilitation Council, as required by section 101(a)(21) of the Rehabilitation Act. The designated State agency or designated State unit, as applicable (Option A or B must be selected): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (A) is an independent State commission. (B) has established a State Rehabilitation Council (c) consultations regarding the administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, in accordance with section 101(a)(16)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act. (d) the financial participation by the State, or if the State so elects, by the State and local agencies, to provide the amount of the non-Federal share of the cost of carrying out the VR program in accordance section 101(a)(3). (e) the local administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, in accordance with section 101(a)(2)(A) of the Rehabilitation Act. Select yes or no, as appropriate, to identify if the designated State agency allows for the local administration of VR funds, (Yes/No) (f) the shared funding and administration of joint programs, in accordance with section 101(a)(2)(A)(ii) of the Rehabilitation Act. Select yes or no, as appropriate, to identify if the designated State agency allows for the shared funding and administration of joint programs, (Yes/No) (g) statewideness and waivers of statewideness requirements, as set forth in section 101(a)(4) of the Rehabilitation Act. Is the designated State agency is requesting or maintaining a waiver of statewideness for one or more services provided under the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan? (Yes/No) See Section 2 of this VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan. (h) the descriptions for cooperation, collaboration, and coordination, as required by sections 101(a)(11), (24)(B), and 606(b) of the Rehabilitation Act. (i) all required methods of administration, as required by section 101(a)(6) of the Rehabilitation Act. (j) the requirements for the comprehensive system of personnel development, as set forth in section 101(a)(7) of the Rehabilitation Act. (k) the compilation and submission to the Commissioner of statewide assessments, estimates, State goals and priorities, strategies, and progress reports, as appropriate, and as required by sections 101(a)(15), 105(c)(2), and 606(b)(8) of the Rehabilitation Act. (l) the reservation and use of a portion of the funds allotted to the State under section 110 |

| | |
|----|--|
| | <p>of the Rehabilitation Act for the development and implementation of innovative approaches to expand and improve the provision of VR services to individuals with disabilities, particularly individuals with the most significant disabilities.</p> <p>(m) the submission of reports as required by section 101(a)(10) of the Rehabilitation Act.</p> |
| 4. | <p>Administration of the Provision of VR Services: The designated State agency, or designated State unit, as appropriate, assures that it will:</p> <p>(a) comply with all requirements regarding information and referral services in accordance with sections 101(a)(5)(D) and (20) of the Rehabilitation Act.</p> <p>(b) impose no duration of residence requirement as part of determining an individual's eligibility for VR services or that excludes from services under the plan any individual who is present in the State in accordance with section 101(a)(12) of the Rehabilitation Act.</p> <p>(c) provide the full range of services listed in section 103(a) of the Rehabilitation Act as appropriate, to all eligible individuals with disabilities in the State who apply for services in accordance with section 101(a)(5) of the Rehabilitation Act? (Yes/No)</p> <p>(d) determine whether comparable services and benefits are available to the individual in accordance with section 101(a)(8) of the Rehabilitation Act.</p> <p>(e) comply with the requirements for the development of an individualized plan for employment in accordance with section 102(b) of the Rehabilitation Act.</p> <p>(f) comply with requirements regarding the provisions of informed choice for all applicants and eligible individuals in accordance with section 102(d) of the Rehabilitation Act.</p> <p>(g) provide vocational rehabilitation services to American Indians who are individuals with disabilities residing in the State, in accordance with section 101(a)(13) of the Rehabilitation Act.</p> <p>(h) comply with the requirements for the conduct of semiannual or annual review, as appropriate, for individuals employed either in an extended employment setting in a community rehabilitation program or any other employment under section 14(c) of the Fair Labor Standards Act, as required by section 101(a)(14) of the Rehabilitation Act.</p> <p>(i) meet the requirements in sections 101(a)(17) and 103(b)(2) of the Rehabilitation Act if the State elects to construct, under special circumstances, facilities for community rehabilitation programs</p> <p>(j) with respect to students with disabilities, the State,</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">(A) has developed and will implement,</p> <p style="padding-left: 80px;">(i) strategies to address the needs identified in the assessments; and</p> <p style="padding-left: 80px;">(ii) strategies to achieve the goals and priorities identified by the State, to improve and expand vocational rehabilitation services for students with disabilities on a statewide basis; and</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">(B) has developed and will implement strategies to provide pre-employment transition services (sections 101(a)(15) and 101(a)(25)).</p> |
| 5. | <p>Administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan: The designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate, assures it will comply with the requirements related to:</p> <p>(a) the establishment of the designated State agency and designated State unit, as required by section 101(a)(2) of the Rehabilitation Act...</p> <p>(b) the establishment of either a State independent commission or State Rehabilitation Council, as required by section 101(a)(21) of the Rehabilitation Act. The designated State agency or designated State unit, as applicable (Option A or B must be selected):</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">(A) is an independent State commission.</p> |

| | |
|----|---|
| | <p>(B) has established a State Rehabilitation Council</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (c) consultations regarding the administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, in accordance with section 101(a)(16)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act. (d) the financial participation by the State, or if the State so elects, by the State and local agencies, to provide the amount of the non-Federal share of the cost of carrying out the VR program in accordance section 101(a)(3). (e) the local administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, in accordance with section 101(a)(2)(A) of the Rehabilitation Act. Select yes or no, as appropriate, to identify if the designated State agency allows for the local administration of VR funds, (Yes/No) (f) the shared funding and administration of joint programs, in accordance with section 101(a)(2)(A)(ii) of the Rehabilitation Act. Select yes or no, as appropriate, to identify if the designated State agency allows for the shared funding and administration of joint programs, (Yes/No) (g) statewideness and waivers of statewideness requirements, as set forth in section 101(a)(4) of the Rehabilitation Act. Is the designated State agency is requesting or maintaining a waiver of statewideness for one or more services provided under the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan? (Yes/No) See Section 2 of this VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan. (h) the descriptions for cooperation, collaboration, and coordination, as required by sections 101(a)(11), (24)(B), and 606(b) of the Rehabilitation Act. (i) all required methods of administration, as required by section 101(a)(6) of the Rehabilitation Act. (j) the requirements for the comprehensive system of personnel development, as set forth in section 101(a)(7) of the Rehabilitation Act. (k) the compilation and submission to the Commissioner of statewide assessments, estimates, State goals and priorities, strategies, and progress reports, as appropriate, and as required by sections 101(a)(15), 105(c)(2), and 606(b)(8) of the Rehabilitation Act. (l) the reservation and use of a portion of the funds allotted to the State under section 110 of the Rehabilitation Act for the development and implementation of innovative approaches to expand and improve the provision of VR services to individuals with disabilities, particularly individuals with the most significant disabilities. (m) the submission of reports as required by section 101(a)(10) of the Rehabilitation Act. |
| 6. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Financial Administration of the Supported Employment Program: The designated State agency assures that it will expend no more than 2.5 percent of the State's allotment under title VI for administrative costs of carrying out this program; and, the designated State agency or agencies will provide, directly or indirectly through public or private entities, non-Federal contributions in an amount that is not less than 10 percent of the costs of carrying out supported employment services provided to youth with the most significant disabilities with the funds reserved for such purpose under section 603(d) of the Rehabilitation Act, in accordance with section 606(b)(7)(G) and (H) of the Rehabilitation Act. (b) The designated State agency assures that it will use funds made available under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act only to provide supported employment services to individuals with the most significant disabilities, including extended services to youth with the most significant disabilities, who are eligible to receive such services; and, that such funds are used only to supplement and not supplant the funds provided under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act, when providing supported employment services specified in the individualized plan for employment, in accordance with section 606(b)(7)(A) and (D), of the Rehabilitation Act. |
| 7. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Provision of Supported Employment Services: The designated State agency assures |

that it will provide supported employment services as defined in section 7(39) of the Rehabilitation Act.

(b) The designated State agency assures that:

- i. the comprehensive assessment of individuals with significant disabilities conducted under section 102(b)(1) of the Rehabilitation Act and funded under title I of the Rehabilitation Act includes consideration of supported employment as an appropriate employment outcome, in accordance with the requirements of section 606(b)(7)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act
- ii. an individualized plan for employment that meets the requirements of section 102(b) of the Rehabilitation Act , which is developed and updated with title I funds, in accordance with sections 102(b)(3)(F) and 606(b)(6)(C) and (E) of the Rehabilitation Act.

Assurances Signed By:

Signature: (Signature on file)

Name of Signatory: John Cannon

Title of Signatory: Director, Alaska Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

Date Signed: *Pending submission of final state plan*

VII. PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR COMBINED STATE PLAN PARTNER PROGRAMS

States choosing to submit a Combined State Plan must provide information concerning the six core programs—the Adult Program, Dislocated Worker Program, Youth Program, Wagner-Peyser Act Program, Adult Education and Family Literacy Act Program, and the Vocational Rehabilitation Program—and also submit relevant information for any of the eleven partner programs it includes in its Combined State Plan. When a State includes a Combined State Plan partner program in its Combined State Plan, it need not submit a separate plan or application for that particular program.¹⁰ If included, Combined State Plan partner programs are subject to the “common planning elements” in Sections II and III of that document, where specified, as well as the program-specific requirements for that program (available on www.regulations.gov for public comment). The requirements that a State must address for any of the partner programs it includes in its Combined State Plan are provided in this separate supplemental document. The Departments are not seeking comments on these program-specific requirements, which exist under separate OMB control numbers and do not represent requirements under WIOA. For further details on this overall collection, access the Federal eRulemaking Portal at <http://www.regulations.gov> by selecting Docket ID number ETA-2015-0006.

Senior Community Service Employment Program

(a) Economic Projections and Impact

- (1) Discuss long-term projections for jobs in industries and occupations in the State that may provide employment opportunities for older workers. (20 CFR 641.302(d))

See the economic analysis section of the full strategic plan for the full discussion on long-term projections for jobs in industries and occupations in the State that may provide employment opportunities. Regarding SCSEP, Alaska’s senior population continues to grow along with the needs of employers for older workers in health care and social assistance. Both the AWIB and the ACoA develop strategies to keep pace with workforce needs through planning, advocacy, public awareness efforts, and collaboration with other organizations focused on the well-being of older Alaskans. The state recognizes the need for reliable older workers in the workforce and continues to collaborate with other key organizations including the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services, Senior and Disabilities Services, Governor’s Council on Disabilities and Special Education, Alaska Mental Health Trust and the University of Alaska to help the SCSEP in Alaska. These key organizations utilize the AJCs for meeting areas, training needs, employment searches, individual employment plan development, and general communication at partner meetings. Positive collaboration continues with other state agencies to deliver training and employment services to seniors.

- (2) Discuss how the long-term job projections discussed in the economic analysis section of strategic plan relate to the types of unsubsidized jobs for which SCSEP participants will be trained and the types of skill training to be provided. (20 CFR 641.302(d))

The State of Alaska is focus on developing the state’s resource based economy and maximizing its human capital. This is accomplished with ongoing collaborative engagement of industries, state universities,

¹⁰ States that elect to include employment and training activities carried out under the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) Act (42 U.S.C. 9901 et seq.) under a Combined State Plan would submit all other required elements of a complete CSBG State Plan directly to the Federal agency that administers the program. Similarly, States that elect to include employment and training activities carried by the Department of Housing and Urban Development and programs authorized under section 6(d)(4) and 6(o) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 that are included would submit all other required elements of a complete State Plan for those programs directly to the Federal agency that administers the program.

vocational educational centers, organized labor, economic development representatives, educators, tribal entities, community and faith based organizations, as well as regional and local officials. Currently, about 76% of the SCSEP participants are accepting employment in office and administrative services, 11% in community and social services, 11% in food preparation and service, and the remaining 2% are in miscellaneous sectors. Alaska employers continue to hire older workers with a firm foundation of both basic employability skills and specific technical knowledge for occupations at all levels of education and training. The program emphasis is on training that result in the attainment of postsecondary credentials or industry-recognized certifications that strengthen individual employment-based training.

Alaska is aware of the need to improve the training and preparation that individuals receive for jobs that are in demand. Strategies include identifying competencies that workers must have to do their jobs effectively, helping participants build specific skills, and assessing their work to ensure that they have the capacity to perform duties or tasks competently. A critical key to working with other agencies is collaboration with stakeholders to leverage their collective public and private sector assets and resources in order to devise strategies that focus on infrastructure, investment, and talent development.

- (3) [Discuss current and projected employment opportunities in the State \(such as by providing information available under §15 of the Wagner-Peyser Act \(29 U.S.C. 491-2\) by occupation\), and the types of skills possessed by eligible individuals. \(20 CFR 641.325\(c\)\)](#)

In the last year, ALEXsys (Alaska's Job Bank) posted nearly 70,000 job openings. As of September 30, 2015, fifty-seven percent of all openings are in healthcare, community and social services, personal care and service, sales, production occupations/industries, food preparation and serving, education, training, and transportation and material moving occupations. Other older workers' employment opportunities include management, professional, and information occupations in the state.

Each week, a distribution list of available jobs is sent to all Older Worker Specialists. From this job available list, case managers are able to encourage job ready participants to apply for specific jobs. In addition, once a participant has posted a skills based resume online the ALEXsys, they can receive a system-generated notification of new job postings that require skills similar to those reflected in their resume. The types of skills that need to be developed and possessed by work ready SCSEP individuals are verbal communication skills, strong work ethic, teamwork skills, analytical skills, computer skills, and initiative.

(b) [Service Delivery and Coordination](#)

- (1) [A description of actions to coordinate SCSEP with other programs. This may alternatively be discussed in the State strategies section of the strategic plan, but regardless of placement in document, must include:](#)
 - (A) [Planned actions to coordinate activities of SCSEP sub-recipients with WIOA Title I programs, including plans for using the WIOA one-stop delivery system and its partners to serve individuals aged 55 and older. \(20 CFR 641.302\(g\), 641.325\(e\)\)](#)

SCSEP is co-located within the DOLWD Division of Employment and Training Services and works closely with its integrated partners to ensure that participants understand that there are many services available from the AJC. SCSEP has developed an integrated system of case management plans that are braided to address the requirement of grant funds and needs of participants and employers. The case managers work with participants and employment service partners to develop individual training plans. SCSEP also works with WIOA and other job training programs to co-enroll participants in career services that provide labor market information, job listings, information on partner programs, and individualized services such as comprehensive and specialized assessments, development of individual employment plans, career counseling, career planning or workforce preparation activities. Other training services may include occupational skills training, community service work-based training, or customized training.

(B) Planned actions to coordinate activities of SCSEP sub-recipients with the activities being carried out in the State under the other titles of the Older Americans Act (OAA). (20 CFR 641.302(h))

The DOLWD manages Title V for senior employment and planned action to coordinate activities include following labor directives and guidance in developing the workforce needs. SCSEP is aligned with the state's commitment to economic development. Workforce development programs rely on the broad strategic policy decisions of the AWIB and ACoA to clarify the relationship between programs and particular economic development efforts.

SCSEP's service delivery plan and coordination includes a strong working relationship between other OAA partner agencies in providing services to those most in need. While multiple state agencies provide services to Alaska seniors, the Department of Health & Social Services (DHSS) is the State of Alaska's designated state unit on aging. The state is a single planning and service unit and there are no Area Agencies on Aging within the state of Alaska.

SCSEP has strong working relationship with the other programs authorized by the OAA operating in Alaska. The state SCSEP coordinator sits on the UAA Community & Technical College's Plus 50 Bridge to College & Careers Instruction Program group and works directly with the ACoA to plan and coordinate services with all other OAA programs to better support not only employment, but also health, wellness, and independence for seniors.

For example, each quarter the state's SCSEP coordinator meets with other state directors and coordinators to ensure that SCSEP activities statewide are leveraging partnerships with Aging and Disability Resource Centers, Senior Home and Community Based programs, Nutrition, Transportation, Support Services, Adult Day Service, National Family Caregiver Support programs, the Alzheimer's Disease and Related Disorder Education and Support programs, Senior Residential Services, Real Choice Systems Change services, Medicare Information services, Legal Assistance, Alaska Legal Services, Consumer Choice, Medicaid Waiver programs, Nursing Facility Transition programs, Health and Disease Prevention programs, Adult Protective Services, etc. Referrals are made to all appropriate services to assist the participants as needed. These quarterly meetings are held in different locations of the state to ensure ongoing collaboration with key organizations.

(C) Planned actions to coordinate SCSEP with other private and public entities and programs that provide services to older Americans, such as community and faith-based organizations, transportation programs, and programs for those with special needs or disabilities. (20 CFR 641.302(i))

The state is currently working with many host sites and leveraging resources to ensure successful outcomes for the SCSEP participants that will foster individual economic self-sufficiency and promote useful opportunities in community service activities. The state also provides a wide range of programs and services to seniors, spanning multiple divisions and other private and public entities. Funds from the OAA are leveraged with Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act, other federal programs, and resources from the Alaska STEP. The program provides local training in priority industries by placing seniors in community work-based training sites at non-profit, faith-based organizations, transportation and public facilities, governmental offices, senior centers, schools, hospitals, to name a few.

(D) Planned actions to coordinate SCSEP with other labor market and job training initiatives. (20 CFR 641.302(j))

SCSEP continues to coordinate with other programs, initiatives, and entities in an ongoing effort to train Alaska's workforce and to maximize its human capital. These ongoing partnerships have yielded important

new participant services and resources for older adults with gaps in work history and limited educational experience who wish to enter or re-enter the workforce.

(E) Actions to ensure that SCSEP is an active partner in the one-stop delivery system and the steps the State will take to encourage and improve coordination with the one-stop delivery system. (20 CFR 641.335)

SCSEP is managed by DOLWD's, DETS, which administers Wagner-Peyser funded employment services and delivers WIOA programs in the state's 19 AJCs. SCSEP has been fully integrated in the one-stop system for more than 10 years and the close relationship between WIOA, Wagner-Peyser, and SCSEP ensures access to employment services to both individuals and communities throughout the State.

(F) Efforts to work with local economic development offices in rural locations.

Alaska's SCSEP continues to reach out to and engage employers to develop and promote opportunities to SCSEP participants by leveraging the one-stop business connection staff's services, working directly with employers, and by continuing to reach out to Alaska Native entities. Alaska Native organizations are very important and provide many employment opportunities in rural Alaska. The state SCSEP program targets Alaska Native employers such as regional hospitals and tribal offices to create host agency agreements for participant training. Many tribal organizations have health care, tourism, and natural resource development opportunities for seniors located in rural areas.

(2) The State's long-term strategy for engaging employers to develop and promote opportunities for the placement of SCSEP participants in unsubsidized employment. (20 CFR 641.302(e))

Alaska remains focused on SCSEP service delivery in that it has integrated into both the state's workforce investment system as well as the senior service system. Skilled one-stop and project operator staff provide quality services to older workers, and employers have reported high satisfaction levels with SCSEP participants who have entered unsubsidized employment with them. Employers have reported that they have great work habits, problem solving skills, the ability to work with others, and adaptability to change with business needs. Alaska's long-term strategy, therefore, is to stay the course and continue to reach out to both workforce development partners, the business community and senior service partners to ensure successful outcomes for older workers and Alaskan businesses alike.

(3) The State's long-term strategy for serving minority older individuals under SCSEP. (20 CFR 641.302 (c))

The long-term strategy remains the same, continue to help all those who qualify for SCSEP services. During State fiscal year 2015, SCSEP served 178 older Alaskans who worked in service to the general community and 133 participants who worked in service to the elderly community. The program served an unduplicated 296 clients. Fifty-nine percent of participants were female, and forty-one percent were male. Eighty-two percent of clients were under age 65, and eighteen were age 65 and older. Forty-four percent of participants identified their race as American Indian, Alaska Native, Asian, Black, Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, or mixed race. Nine percent of participants had less education than a high school diploma or equivalent, while forty-six percent had a high school diploma or equivalent, and forty-six percent had some post-secondary education, including fourteen percent with a bachelor's degree or advanced college degree. Eighty-four percent of the participants had a family income at or below the poverty level. Thirty-eight percent were individuals with documented disabilities. Fifty-eight percent were individuals with poor employment history or prospects. Thirty-five percent were homeless, two percent were displaced homemakers, and twenty percent were veterans or spouses of veterans.

(4) A list of community services that are needed and the places where these services are most needed. Specifically, the plan must address the needs and location of those individuals most in need of community services and the groups working to meet their needs. (20 CFR 641.330)

Alaska's population in 2013 was 735,132. Nearly 38.5 percent of the state's residents lived in Anchorage, which is one of three urban areas of Alaska. Alaska Natives/American Indians represent approximately 11.4 percent of Alaska's residents and are a significant segment of the population in rural villages and communities. In 2013, the senior population overall was 158,909 or 21.6 percent of the state's population. In addition to Alaska Natives, other types of seniors who are most in need of the SCSEP program are widowed and divorced persons, minorities, high-school dropouts, veterans, persons not eligible for Social Security benefits, persons with a limited work history, and seniors on fixed low incomes. The SCSEP program operates where there is the greatest need relative to participants, host agencies, and employers. SCSEP-funded services remain available statewide via the AJCs and sub recipients. The areas with the greatest need for SCSEP-funded services are Anchorage, Fairbanks, Matanuska-Susitna, Kenai Peninsula, and Juneau because many seniors relocate to these regions to be near medical care. Regional economic challenges facing older Alaskans include income insecurity, the need for more reliable access to health care and long-term care supports, an anticipated physician shortage, absence of geriatric education among providers, a shortage of sufficient senior services and health care services workforce to meet future needs, the need for emergency preparedness for a wide range of potential disasters, and soaring energy and utility costs.

- (5) [The State's long-term strategy to improve SCSEP services, including planned long-term changes to the design of the program within the State, and planned changes in the use of SCSEP sub-recipients and program operators to better achieve the goals of the program. This may include recommendations to the Department as appropriate. \(20 CFR 641.302\(k\)\)](#)

The long-term strategies meeting to improve program goals and services offered SCSEP an opportunity to work directly with its partners in education, industry, workforce development, economic development, and the public. SCSEP attests that it and its sub recipient partners have been involved in the WIOA joint planning and its policies. The planning process has been ongoing for months and the writing of this WIOA strategic workforce development plan for Alaska emphasizes sector partnerships, career pathways, cross-program data and measurement, and job-driven investments to required and interested partners. Three public meetings were held in November of 2015 in Juneau, Fairbanks, and Anchorage to provide information to and seek feedback from the public to help develop Alaska's combined plan. Alaska's state plan stresses the importance of education, training, credentials, and skill attainment. The combined plan works towards economic self-sufficiency of workers by aligning workforce development with education and economic development.

In preparation for development of this state plan, the ACoA began its needs assessment process in 2013 with the first of six elder/senior listening sessions held in communities across Alaska. In 2014, ACoA's survey of Alaskans age 60 years and older drew nearly 2,300 responses, providing insight on topics ranging from health care to housing, from finances to senior services. Many responders also included open-ended comments on issues of concern to them, sharing their insights and ideas for solutions. The ACoA also surveyed service providers about their perceptions of senior needs now and within the next five years, hearing from 85 providers in Alaska. Throughout the needs assessment process a number of concerns about financial security were raised. During the elder-listening sessions, input was heard about issues ranging from the value of living a subsistence lifestyle to worries about the cost of living. The senior survey showed financial security as the #2 ranking concern of seniors in Alaska. The long-term strategy to improve SCSEP services is to include discussion with participants on financial and work incentives, and to provide information on social security 1619b Medicaid While Working, or to explore specialized work incentives of Ticket to Work, Impairment-Related Work Expenses, Blind Work Expenses, Plan to Achieve Self-Support, or by giving referrals to those in need of these services. Alaska continues to need older workers to help maintain a reliable, dedicated workforce and provides a significant cost savings for both the short and long term, as workers are in demand throughout Alaska's economy, across all industries and in all occupations. Alaska is a great place to work and live, with unlimited potential.

- (6) The State’s strategy for continuous improvement in the level of performance for SCSEP participants’ entry into unsubsidized employment, and to achieve, at a minimum, the levels specified in OAA Section 513(a)(2)(E)(ii). (20 CFR 641.302(f))

The State’s strategy continues to be collaboration and integration into the state’s larger workforce development system and by using SPARQ and other program data to drive decisions on services offered and industries targeted for continuous improvement. Incorporating these elements into program planning and operations prepares SCSEP participants for self-sustaining employment and economic stability after program exit.

1. SCSEP’s common measures goals for State fiscal year 2016 are:
2. Entered Employment: 57%;
3. Employment Retention: 72.0%;
4. Service Level: 175%;
5. Service to Most in Need: Program will serve those most in need as evidenced by average number of barriers (at least 2.54); and
6. Average Earnings: Increase average wages from zero to \$8,506.

(c) Location and Population Served, including Equitable Distribution

Equitable distribution is based on census information and federally approved slots to the regions. It is also dependent upon capacity within a region or community to deliver senior services. Enrollment priority is given to veterans and qualified spouses, then to individuals who are over 65, have a disability, have low literacy skills or limited English proficiency, reside in a rural area, are homeless or at risk of homelessness, have low employment prospects, or have failed to find employment after using services through the American AJC system, also known as, AJC.

- (1) A description of the localities and populations for which projects of the type authorized by title V are most needed. (20 CFR 641.325 (d))

Alaska has the fastest growing senior population rate in the U.S. Although people in the state are living longer and many are active, this comes with a rise in the number of seniors with dementia, chronic health conditions, and behavioral health needs. Alaska’s total senior population is expected to grow very rapidly in the next 15 years because of the size of the baby boomer population, as well as historical trends in migration and longevity. The reason behind the rapid expansion of Alaska’s senior population lies in the events of the 1970s – the construction of the Trans-Alaska Pipeline and the economic boom that oil development brought about, drawing thousands of young people to the state for newly created jobs in every sector. Those young people established homes and families, and grew extremely fond of Alaska’s lifestyle. Many of them stayed on for their entire working lives, and are now choosing to retire in the state as well, representing a shift in a long-term pattern where most seniors left the state upon retirement.

- (2) List the cities and counties where the project will be conducted. Include the number of SCSEP authorized positions and indicate where the positions changed from the prior year.

| Equitable Distribution | | PY 2015/2014 | Modified Slots | PY 2014 Enrollment | Over/Under Enrolled |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------|-------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|
| Number of people to serve in each region | | | | | |
| FIPS | Census Area | | | | |
| 2013 | Aleutians | 3 | 2 | | (2) |
| 2016 | Aleutians | 2 | 1 | | (1) |
| 2020 | Anchorage | 56 | 44 | 104 | 60 |
| 2050 | Bethel | 8 | 6 | 1 | (5) |
| 2060 | Bristol | 1 | 1 | | (1) |
| 2068 | Denali | 1 | 1 | | (1) |
| 2070 | Dillingham | 2 | 2 | | (2) |
| 2090 | Fairbanks North Star | 16 | 12 | 63 | 51 |
| 2100 | Haines | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 |
| 2105 | Hoonah-Angoon | 2 | 2 | 3 | 1 |
| 2110 | Juneau | 7 | 5 | 24 | 19 |
| 2122 | Kenai | 21 | 16 | 44 | 28 |
| 2130 | Ketchikan | 5 | 4 | | (4) |
| 2150 | Kodiak | 2 | 2 | | (2) |
| 2164 | Lake and Peninsula | 1 | 1 | | (1) |
| 2170 | Matanuska-Susitna | 26 | 20 | 37 | 17 |
| 2180 | Nome | 6 | 5 | 1 | (4) |
| 2185 | North | 3 | 2 | | (2) |
| 2188 | Northwest | 3 | 2 | | (2) |
| 2195 | Petersburg | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| 2198 | Prince of Wales-Hyder | 2 | 2 | 2 | 0 |
| 2220 | Sitka | 3 | 2 | 1 | (1) |
| 2230 | Skagway | 1 | 1 | | (1) |
| 2240 | Southeast | 3 | 2 | | (2) |
| 2261 | Valdez-Cordova | 2 | 1 | | (1) |
| 2270 | Wade | 4 | 3 | | (3) |
| 2275 | Wrangell | 2 | 2 | | (2) |
| 2282 | Yakutat | 1 | 1 | | (1) |
| 2290 | Yukon-Koyukuk | 5 | 4 | 5 | 1 |
| | | 190 | 148 | 288 | 140 |

The State continues to reach out to all regions. All regions are open for enrollment. The state coordinator oversees these regions working directly with AJC and its partners. Alaska has not turned down or wait listed any eligible participant for services.

The State's long-term strategy for achieving an equitable distribution of SCSEP positions within the State that:

- (A) Moves positions from over-served to underserved locations within the State in compliance with 20 CFR 641.365.

SCSEP services are available in all regions and the program is fully integrated into all AJCs. The program continues to advertise at its AJC teams meetings, informing partners and public that the SCSEP program

exists statewide and what this program can do for older Alaskans and its employers. This proactive approach empowers the target population to connect with AJCs or its sub recipients to help this program achieve the equitable distribution requirements statewide.

(B) *Equitably serves rural and urban areas.*

Alaska's SCSEP is and will continue to be available to all eligible participants statewide. The state's long term strategies are: 1) to award sub-recipients who are capable project operators in the most populated areas of the state when such a project operator is available; 2) to operate the program in the most populated areas with DOLWD staff in AJCs where a capable project operator is not available; and 3) to continue to make program services available to both urban and rural areas of the state through the 17 AJCs. Alaska's SCSEP intends to continue to ensure a wait list does not exist and those who are eligible for services receive the assistance they need to enter the program.

(C) *Serves individuals afforded priority for service under 20 CFR 641.520. (20 CFR 641.302(a), 641.365, 641.520)*

Currently, the State of Alaska does not have a waitlist and is able to help all those requesting services. Alaska's selection of participants is based on the POS and income eligibility requirements. The state understands that pursuant to regulations prescribed by the Labor Secretary, an eligible individual shall have priority for the community service employment and other authorized activities provided under the OAA Amendments of 2006, Title V – SCSEP if the individual:

1. is 65 years of age or older; or
 - (A) has a disability;
 - (B) has limited English proficiency or low literacy skills;
 - (C) resides in a rural area;
 - (D) is a veteran;
 - (E) has low employment prospects;
 - (F) has failed to find employment after using services provided under title I of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act; or
 - (G) is homeless or at risk for homelessness.

(3) *The ratio of eligible individuals in each service area to the total eligible population in the State. (20 CFR 641.325(a))*

The largest population areas are Anchorage, Fairbanks, Mat-Su, Kenai Peninsula, and Juneau. Areas with the highest percentages of population age 55 and over include Anchorage (38.27%), Matanuska-Susitna (13.27%), Fairbanks (11.84%), Kenai Peninsula (10.78%), and in Juneau (5.03%), and the rest of the census areas have a small percentages of the population 55 and over. The relative distribution of eligible individuals is based on:

- Reside in urban and rural areas within the State;
- Have the greatest economic need;
- Are minorities;

- Are limited English proficient; and
- Have the greatest social need. (20 CFR 641.325(b))

| 2013 General Characteristics | Alaska Number | Alaska Percent | U.S. Percent |
|------------------------------|---------------|----------------|--------------|
| Male | 385,209 | 52.40% | 49.20% |
| Female | 349,923 | 47.60% | 50.80% |
| Two or more Races | 52,194 | 7.10% | 2.40% |
| White | 494,744 | 67.30% | 77.70% |
| African American | 28,670 | 3.90% | 13.20% |
| AK Native/American Indian | 108,064 | 14.70% | 1.21% |
| Asian/Pacific Islander | 51,459 | 7.00% | 5.49% |
| Hispanic or Latino | 48,519 | 6.60% | 17.10% |

Referring to the above table, it is noted that the breakdown for the male/female categories show that there are more males than females in Alaska while the opposite is true for the country as a whole. The population of Caucasians in Alaska is much lower than in the country as a whole, 67.3% in Alaska, while 77.7% in the US. African Americans have a much lower percent of the population in Alaska (3.9%) than in the US (13.2%). American Indians/Alaska Natives has a much larger portion of the population in Alaska (14.7%) compared to the US (1.21%). Hispanic or Latino (of any race) makes up only 6.6% of the population of Alaska while making up 17.1% of the national population. Alaska SCSEP is focused on helping those most in need based on greatest economic need, minority status, and greatest social need.

- (4) A description of the steps taken to avoid disruptions to the greatest extent possible, when positions are redistributed, as provided in 20 CFR 641.365; when new Census or other reliable data become available; or when there is over-enrollment for any other reason. (20 CFR 641.325(i), 641.302(b))

Disruptions in service have not historically been a problem in Alaska’s SCSEP. However, if disruptions in service occur, the program will use current SCSEP program performance reporting system data, including updated Census information, and trends to determine where positions need to be to meet the demand for services. In order to prevent disruption in service, both the AJCs and SCSEP sub recipients would assist those participants affected. If disruption of services were to occur, meetings with affected sub recipients would be scheduled to outline possible scenarios for minimizing potential impacts. Budget revisions could be made to sub recipient funding allocations to alleviate under or over funding and this process also occurs at mid-year to adjust regions with the greatest needs to those regions that do not need the funding awarded. This effort, if necessary would occur immediately, depending on the specific situation. The determination of where positions need to be relocated and to what extent the urgency of such relocations exists will be the basis for the state’s decisions. In order to address the issues of disruption of service, teleconferences with all affected parties would be scheduled to discuss the issues and to keep all partners informed.

(d) SCSEP Operations

- (1) *Administrative*: describe the organizational structure of the project and how subprojects will be managed, including:
- (A) identification of the key staff, including the primary responsibilities and the amount of time assigned to the SCSEP grant;

The State SCSEP Program Coordinator (1 full time equivalent), Rita Bowen has nine years of SCSEP experience. The credentials she holds are Certified Workforce Development Professional, Paralegal,

National Certificate in Employment Services, Americans with Disabilities Act Trainer, Professional Procurement Officer III, HIV Counselor, Curriculum, Advising and Program Planning Advisor, Americans with Disabilities Trainer, and Association of Community Rehabilitation Educators certification. She develops and administers sub recipients agreements, oversees and monitors performance, provides training and technical assistance to sub-recipients, and prepares the annual Equitable Distribution report. She also is the state’s administrator for SPARQ, SCSEP’s online data reporting tool, and creates and maintains user profiles for sub recipients key staff involved in the administration of this grant. Ken Mill, Assistant Director - Grants, Contracts, Technology, supervises the program coordinator; he provides oversight and guidance (.10 full time equivalent).

- (B) Include an organization chart depicting any sub- recipients or local affiliates implementing the grant. Include a table with authorized positions for each sub-grantee or affiliate, if applicable;

The table below indicates sub recipients name, location, the number of authorized positions for PY 2015 and the number of years of experience each sub recipient has with delivering SCSEP services.

| Local Projects, Years of Experience As SCSEP Service Providers | Number Authorized Positions |
|---|-----------------------------|
| AJC - Statewide, 10 years Robert Barton, Community Development Specialist II, Association of Community Rehabilitation Educators certification | 62 |
| Adult Learning Programs of AK - Northern Region, 10 years Tom Howard, Master of Public Administration, Bachelor of Science in Occupational Education | 46 |
| Southeast Regional Resource Center -Southeast Region, 13 years Susan Bus, Master of Education Guidance - counseling emphasis, Employment Counselor II | 20 |
| Nikiski Senior Citizen Center - Kenai Region, 1 year Jill Smith B.A., Communications & Mediation, Multi-Party Mediation and Conflict Resolution Trainer, Incident Command Center Trainer | 31 |
| Palmer Senior Citizen Center - Mat-Su Region, 5 Years Rick VanTassel, Older Worker Specialist, Americans with Disabilities Trainer | 31 |
| Total Slots | 190 |

- (C) describe training that will be provided to local staff;

Training is ongoing and as needed. The program coordinator is in contact with all regions for prior employment and wages or approval of supportive services. The topics covered with staff are:

Senior Services: SCSEP 101; knowledge of community services and referrals; communication with seniors; assessment and individualized employment planning; relationship to person and community; workforce preparation; career exploration; connection to resources; program design and delivery; administrative skills; relationship with employers and between employers and senior.

Job Seeker Services: general “helping” skills; job preparation skills; job search skills; job retention skills; job advancement skills; and case management.

Business and Employer Services: business communications; development of host site and training staff , business relationships; knowledge of economic development; job/career development skills; human resources services; information services; and customized services.

Management Services: planning and design of SCSEP; identification and development of resources; performance management; system capacity building; strategic direction; quality improvement; and presentation skills.

(D) describe how projects will be monitored for program and financial compliance, including audit plans;

The Division is responsible for monitoring compliance with appropriate federal uniform administrative requirements for grants as promulgated in the Office of Management and Budget Circulars and/or federal regulations. The monitoring ensures that sub-recipient financial management systems:

1. provide fiscal control and accounting procedures to permit timely preparation of required reports;
2. permit the tracing of funds to establish that funds have not been used in violation of restrictions on the use of such funds;
3. demonstrate compliance with matching requirements, cost limitations and proper classification of costs;
4. provide the proper allocation of costs by adopting consistently applied methods that reflect a reasonable relationship for cost benefit; and,
5. demonstrate compliance with insurance, procurement, and property management requirements.

Responsibilities

Desk Monitoring

All sub-recipients shall submit Progress Reports on a quarterly basis as a requirement for receipt of grant funds.

The State of Alaska program coordinator is responsible for a grant shall complete desk monitoring throughout the life of the grant project.

This desk monitoring will comply with the procedures set forth in this policy.

Based upon this desk monitoring, the program coordinator will ensure that, where grant progress is deficient, the sub-recipient is required to take appropriate actions to correct the deficiencies. The program coordinator will provide technical assistance to the sub-recipient, as appropriate.

Should there be a need for a grant amendment, the program coordinator will notify the sub-recipient and assist in the preparation of the amendment.

All sub-recipients shall submit monthly invoices that detail their financial activity for the month, that are to be submitted within fifteen days following the end of the month or as specified in the grant agreement.

The invoices must include the following:

1. amount budgeted by program element, cost category, and budget line items of Personal Services, Travel, Contractual, Supplies, Equipment, Administration;
2. amount expended for the month by program element, cost category, and budget line item;
3. total expenditures to date by program element, cost category and budget line item; and,
4. balance of funds by program element, cost category and budget line item.

The grants administrator will conduct desk monitoring of each grant project under their purview in accordance with the procedures set forth in this policy.

Based upon this desk monitoring, the grants administrator will ensure that the sub-recipient takes appropriate actions to correct all financial activity deficiencies. The grants administrator will provide technical assistance to the sub-recipient, as appropriate.

Should a grant amendment be required, the grants administrator will notify the sub-recipient, and the program coordinator will assist in the preparation of the amendment.

On Site Monitoring

The program coordinator will determine when grant recipients will require an on-site monitoring visit for data validation and program review.

The program coordinator and grants administrator will annually prepare an on-site monitoring schedule for their programs. At a minimum, the schedule will identify the name of the sub-recipient, the dollar amount of the grant, the grant program, the tentative or scheduled date of the on-site review, and the names or initials of the staff participating in the review.

Program coordinators are responsible for conducting the on-site monitoring of their grants in accordance with the determinations made in the previous section and are responsible for determining the procedures to be used for conducting the reviews.

Grants administrators are responsible for conducting the on-site monitoring of their grants in accordance with the determinations and are responsible for completing the Administrative and Financial Management Monitoring Guide when conducting the reviews.

To the extent possible and practical, program coordinator will coordinate the program and financial on-site reviews to minimize the disruption and time requirements placed upon the sub-recipient organization and staff. When a sub-recipient receives grants under more than one of the Division's grant programs, DOLWD staff will, to the extent possible, coordinate with each other to complete a single site visit of the sub-recipient rather than multiple site visits during the year.

Procedures

Program Desk Monitoring

The program coordinator for a grant will monthly complete the following minimum activities:

1. compare activities stated in the Progress Report with the scope of services of the grant to verify that the activities occurring are those intended;
2. assess whether or not the grant activities, including progress with the grant participants, are on schedule or within the timeframes either specified in the grant agreement or planned when the grant was negotiated; and,
3. review statistical data from the SPARQ to ensure the number of participants enrolled is in accordance with the grant agreement and whether the sub-recipient is meeting the required performance levels. This review will also verify the appropriateness of the participant and services for that program. This review should also assess, to the extent possible, the timeliness and completeness of the data entered in the SPARQ.

To ensure timely review, every effort should be made to complete the review within two weeks of submission.

Should the desk monitoring reveal any problems or deficiencies in the sub-recipient's performance, the program coordinator will:

1. identify the causes or reasons for the problems or deficiencies;
2. provide technical assistance and advice to the sub-recipient to identify possible actions to remedy or correct the problems or deficiencies;
3. monitor the sub-recipient's implementation of the corrective actions through close contact with the sub-recipient by either telephonic or written communications; and,
4. document the problems, causes, corrective actions, and outcomes in the grant file.

Financial Desk Monitoring

The grants administrator will monthly monitor the financial activity of the grant by at a minimum:

1. determining the timeliness of the report submission;
7. reviewing and approving any copies of source documentation if submitted to support the monthly expenditures, including verifying the amounts included on the invoice;
8. comparing the budgeted amounts on the monthly invoice with the grant budget;
9. assessing whether any of the grant budget line items have been over-expended or indicates an over-expenditure is likely to occur prior to the completion of the grant;
10. assessing whether the grant expenditures are timely and in accordance with the scheduled timeframes of grant activities; and,
11. reviewing any cash advances to ensure advances are not in excess of the grant agreement for both amount and timing.

Should the desk monitoring reveal any problems or deficiencies in the sub-recipient's performance, the grants administrator will:

1. notify the program coordinator of the problem and identify the causes or reasons for the problems or deficiencies;
2. provide technical assistance and advice to the sub-recipient to identify possible actions to remedy or correct the problems or deficiencies;
3. monitor the sub-recipient's implementation of the corrective actions through close contact with the sub-recipient through telephonic or written communications; and,
4. document the problems, causes, corrective actions, and outcomes in the grant file.

On Site Monitoring

The program coordinator and the grants administrator will complete, at a minimum, the following prior to the site visit:

1. coordinate with each other and the sub-recipient to determine the best time for the monitoring visit. Plan and conduct a single monitor visit, whenever possible.
2. at least two weeks prior to the site visit, the program coordinator or the grants administrator will send a letter or e-mail to the sub-recipient to formally document notification of the site visit. At a minimum, this will provide:
 - o the name or names of the person or persons conducting the review,

- the dates of the review,
- what the review will cover,
- who from the sub-recipient's organization should be available,
- the materials or documents or information expected to be reviewed; and,
- what documents should be compiled or available for review prior to arrival.

Division staff will prepare for the site visit by:

1. reviewing grant file and other appropriate documentation to identify any problems with the grant;
2. reviewing previous reports of on-site monitoring and the resolution of concerns, findings, or questioned costs;
3. provide a reminder to the sub-recipient via telephone or e-mail three working days prior to the visit.

During the on-site monitoring, the program coordinator will complete the following:

1. conduct an Entrance Conference with appropriate representatives of the sub-recipient organization to include:
 - introductions,
 - an explanation of the purpose of the review,
 - a description of the scope of the review, and,
 - any other appropriate information.
12. complete the appropriate monitoring procedures and guides;
13. gather appropriate documentation or other information to support any problems or deficiencies identified;
14. classify any problems or deficiencies as Program or Administrative Concerns, Findings of Non-compliance or Questioned Costs;
15. coordinate and agree upon the matters to be discussed during the Exit Conference;
16. conduct an Exit Conference at the completion of the on-site monitoring to include appropriate staff from the sub-recipient's organization to cover,
 - areas in which the sub-recipient's performance and activities are acceptable,
 - problem or deficient areas,
 - any concerns, findings or questioned costs identified as preliminary results, and
 - the approximate time line for the draft monitoring report to be completed.

Following the on-site monitoring, the program coordinator and the grants administrator will organize, and as appropriate summarize, any documentation, notes and other materials obtained or prepared during the visit. The monitoring documentation will be maintained in the Division's grant file.

Monitoring Report

Following the on-site monitoring, the program coordinator and the grants administrator will coordinate the preparation of a draft monitoring report. To the extent possible, a completed draft report should be available within three weeks of the date of the site visit.

The required standard report format includes the following sections:

1. purpose of the review,
2. scope of the review,
3. procedures completed,
4. results of the review, including:
 - o barriers encountered by the sub-recipient; and
 - o promising practices by the sub-recipient.

Concerns/Findings/Questioned Costs and Required Actions (as appropriate).

If the on-site monitoring identified Findings of Non-compliance or Questioned Costs, the report shall specify each statutory, regulatory, or other requirement for which there is an incidence of non-compliance.

If the monitoring report identifies findings or questioned costs, the report should identify specific Required Actions, which the sub-recipient should undertake to resolve the findings or questioned costs and the timeframe for those actions. The draft report shall be provided to the Assistant Director, Workforce Development for review and approval. After four days, the monitoring report will be finalized with the current date and issued to the sub-recipient if no comments are received. The Division maintains all documentation or other materials obtained or prepared during the on-site monitoring. The sub-recipient monitoring file contains the completed monitoring procedures or guides, the monitoring report, and all appropriate correspondence pertaining to the monitoring.

Resolution of Administrative or Program Concerns

If the on-site monitoring identifies only Administrative or Program Concerns, a cover letter for transmitting the report to the sub-recipient will include:

1. reference to the administrative or program concerns,
2. a request for the sub-recipient to provide, within 30 days of the date of the letter, written comments concerning the report and any actions the sub-recipient plans to take in response to the concerns.

If a formal response from the sub-recipient is received regarding the monitoring report, the program coordinator and the grants administrator will review and assess the sub-recipient's response, and maintain the response and their assessment in the monitoring file for that sub-recipient.

If a formal response is not received from the sub-recipient within the requested 30-day time, the program coordinator and the grants administrator will make an appropriate notation for the file and will formally close the monitoring report. Note: program or administrative concerns are not a violation of the requirements of the funding program or grant agreement. As such, the program or administrative concerns are advisory and a formal response by the sub-recipient is not required for closure of the monitoring report.

Resolution of Findings of Non-compliance and Questioned Costs

If the on-site monitoring identifies Findings of Non-compliance and/or Questioned Costs, the program coordinator and the grants administrator will follow procedures comparable to the Department's policy for resolving audit findings. These procedures will include:

1. Providing written notice to the sub-recipient of the Findings of Non-compliance and/or Questioned Costs;

2. Request the sub-recipient provide a Corrective Action Plan or other documentation to resolve the Findings or Questioned Costs;
3. Issue an Initial Determination on the Findings and Questioned Costs;
4. Offer the sub-recipient the opportunity to informally resolve the matters;
5. Issue a Final Determination on the Findings and Questioned Costs;
6. Notify the sub-recipient of possible sanctions and, if applicable, acceptable methods of debt repayment; and,
7. Notify the sub-recipient of its right to appeal the Final Determination.

- (E) describe how the State will manage its providers and how it will transfer participants if new providers are selected to serve in the State.

The State will work with both the old and new providers to transfer participant to the new provider site by using the SPARQ data, including updated Census information, and trends to determine where positions need to be placed in order to meet the demand for services. If positions need to be re-located to new regions, then this can be accomplished through attrition or enhanced training. In order to prevent disruption of service, both the AJCs and the new SCSEP sub recipient would assist those participants affected. If disruption of services were to occur, meetings with affected sub recipients would be scheduled to outline possible scenarios for minimizing potential impacts. Budget revisions could be made to sub recipient funding allocations to alleviate under or over funding. This effort, if necessary would occur immediately, depending on the situation. The determination of where positions need to be re-located and to what extent the urgency of such re-locations is necessary will be the basis for the state's decisions. In order to address the issues of disruption of service or new service provider teleconferences with all affected parties would be scheduled to discuss these issues and to keep all partners informed.

- (2) Recruitment: describe how sub-recipient will recruit and select of participants will be achieved. The eligibility of participants is described under 20 CFR 641.500 and 641.525.

The Alaska's workforce – like its population -- is diverse culturally and racially. Alaska SCSEP strives to provide services to the greatest possible number of participants, regardless of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, political affiliation, belief, marital status, change in marital status, pregnancy, or parenthood. SCSEP recruitment services are offered daily at the AJCs as part of their menu of services available. The program is working directly with homeless shelters, veteran organizations, public assistance, vocational rehabilitation, tribal organizations, hospitals, senior centers, aging resource disability centers, and faith based agencies. The program is asking these agencies for referrals to those who are most in need. The real problem is most Alaskans are job ready but under-employed due to seasonal work. SCSEP helps those most in need connect to programs and agencies that provide direct services and support to improve employment skills and gain work experience.

- (3) Income Eligibility: describe how participant income will be recertified each year, including where eligibility records will be maintained.

Participants must continue to meet the SCSEP eligibility requirements annually. The SCSEP case manager will schedule an appointment with the participant to re-certify eligibility no less than once every 12 months. The eligibility records will be maintained in the participant file with hard copies for proof of income. Participants are also obligated to immediately report any changes in household income or family size to their SCSEP case manager. Failure to notify can be deemed as falsification and result in immediate termination.

- (4) Orientation: describe the orientation procedures for:

(A) Participants

The older worker specialist or coordinator is responsible for providing an orientation for each participant once a host agency assignment is made and, if possible, before the first day of community service at a host agency. Participant orientation must provide the following information: SCSEP goals and objectives; availability of supportive services; a free or low-cost physical examination; training opportunities; participant's rights and responsibilities; participant meetings; obligation to seek unsubsidized employment, applying for jobs at the host agency; registering with the AJC ALEXsys; post-enrollment and unsubsidized employment information that will be collected; community service assignment description; customer satisfaction surveys mandated by the U.S. Department of Labor; and allowable and unallowable political activities.

Each participant must be given a copy of the personnel policies and procedures: hours of community service; training wage; required and fringe benefits for participants; role of supervisors; evaluation of participant progress; provision of safe working environment; annual monitoring and safety assessment; documentation requirements; assessment, re-assessments and IEP; termination policies, including IEP termination; procedures for complaint resolution; procedures for reporting assignment-related accidents; travel reimbursement, if applicable; durational limit of 48 months on SCSEP participation; community service assignment limitation; obligation to report any change in income or family size that may affect eligibility; drug-free workplace policy; prohibition from volunteering at host agencies; felony back ground checks, if applicable; information and photo release form; and privacy act statement.

Participants are assessed for the need for supportive services to enable them to successfully participate in the SCSEP. Supportive services, such as, eyeglasses; transportation assistance; incidentals such as tools, work boots, uniforms, etc. maybe offered when there is an imminent and documented need. Services may be provided directly or through referral to a social service organization. Assistance is subject to funds availability.

Participants receive job search assistance from SCSEP staff and from their local AJC workforce services. All participants must be registered in the ALEXsys, attend workshops, and regularly check for job openings. SCSEP staff provides support, coordinates training plans, helps develop job opportunities, and assists participants in achieving goals outlined on the IEP. If a participant cannot obtain a job, the SCSEP staff and participant discuss other services that may be needed. Next steps may involve developing a new training plan or determining that SCSEP services are no longer suitable, in which case the participant will exit the program.

Participants train at a host agency for an average of 20 hours per week unless more or less hours are authorized by the State of Alaska. Authorized hours may be reduced to accommodate changes in the availability of funds. The host agency assures that the participant works the number of hours authorized and specified in the participant's training assignment. The host agency shall not permit participants to perform community service for more hours than those authorized or to volunteer hours. If the host agency permits participant(s) to exceed authorized hours, or to return to the assignment after being on leave without pay for more than 30-days without prior authorization or past the participant's termination date, the host agency shall compensate the participant for those hours. Host Agency supervisors will receive prior notice if the participant's schedule changes or if SCSEP staff know an absence is planned. In the unlikely event that a participant is absent from the assignment without prior notification, please contact your SCSEP representative.

If a participant is away from the assignment due to necessary illness, he or she must be allowed to make up the time. If absent due to death in the family, jury duty, or if the host agency is closed on a scheduled day of training, the participant may be provided the option to make up time if approved by the host agency supervisor and the SCSEP representative. Time can be made up in the same pay period, or in the pay period

immediately preceding or following the one in which the participant's normal schedule is disrupted. No overtime is allowed nor can more than 40 hours of training be claimed per week when making up time.

SCSEP is a temporary paid training program, not a permanent job. Each participant is required to work with SCSEP staff to identify and obtain unsubsidized employment. The participant's expectations are to obtain skills at a host agency and/or in classroom training, look for job opportunities and follow-up on job leads.

SCSEP may conduct background checks on participants based on their assignments or customized training that may require felony background checks.

(B) **Host Agencies**

The case manager or host agency supervisor will provide an orientation to a participant that is assigned to the agency. Host agencies orientation includes:

SCSEP has dual goals to promote useful opportunities in community service activities and to move participants into unsubsidized employment so they can achieve economic self-sufficiency.

The purpose of community service assignments is to provide meaningful training through work experience and job skills that can lead to unsubsidized employment. That SCSEP is not a job; it is a training program - a stepping-stone to real employment with higher wages, benefits, and opportunities for advancement.

The individual employment plan reflects individual interests, training needs, realistic local job opportunities, supportive service needs, and the types of services that can be provided through the host site and its community partners. An individualized training plan is developed that outlines the skills the participant will need to learn at their host agency or in a classroom setting.

The role of the host agency supervisor is to provide support, skills training and ongoing supervision and a safe healthy work environment. The host agency supervisor reinforces that the SCSEP is a training program and encourage participants to find employment off the program. Host agencies can provide additional support by promoting the program with their peers and employers in the community, co-sponsoring special events, and providing in-kind or direct support to the program.

The host agency supervisor is responsible for the accuracy of each final time sheet's reported hours and signatures and for faxing or mailing the time sheet timely to the SCSEP representative. Each pay cycle, the host agency supervisor shall report on participant time sheets a true and accurate statement of hours by the participant.

A participant may be approved a leave of absence up to 30 days in a program year absent extenuating circumstances. At the expiration of the approved leave, he/she must return to the SCSEP or be exited from the program. Upon return, the participant is not guaranteed to be assigned to the original host agency or to be placed in the same type of assignment. A leave request will not be approved for more than 30 consecutive days or during the 30 day period between the date of a notification of exit letter and the actual exit date.

SCSEP staff or its host agencies are not allowed to schedule participant to work on a holiday. Holiday pay for SCSEP participants is four hours on the following official federal or State of Alaska holidays: New Year's Day, Martin Luther King Day, Presidents' Day, Seward's Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Alaska Day, Veteran's Day, Thanksgiving Day, and Christmas Day.

The host agency supervisor must report all injuries sustained by a participant while at the host agency or training site immediately or within 24 hours of the accident to the local SCSEP case manager or the state SCSEP office.

The ultimate goal of the SCSEP participant is to attain unsubsidized employment. Host agency supervisors should evaluate participant training progress every 90 days in partnership with the SCSEP representative. Whenever host agency supervisors would like to discuss the progress of the participant(s) assigned to their agency outside of the formal evaluation timeframe, they should contact their SCSEP representative.

Program participation in the program varies for each participant and is based on individual training needs; however, the maximum duration of program participation is 48 months. The number of host sites to which a participant is assigned varies for each participant and is based on individual training needs and the development of skills.

SCSEP staff will visit each participant and host agency to review program, administrative, and service satisfaction at least twice a year. At least annually, a safety assessment will be completed of all training sites.

- (5) **Duration Limits:** describe any policy for maximum duration of enrollment or maximum time in community service and provide a copy of the current Duration Limit policy.

Alaska does not offer an extension to any participant beyond four years. Alaska will continue this policy. The State understands that it applies to everyone, with no exceptions. The program ensures that an Individual Employment Plan for each individual is developed and provides notice for transition into unsubsidized employment or other assistance before the maximum duration has expired and that all affected participants are informed in writing no less three times. Once at 12 months prior to scheduled durational limit, then at six months and at 30 days with referrals to other services with each letter.

- (6) **Assessments:** describe the procedures for assessing job aptitudes, job readiness, and job preferences of participants and their potential to transition into unsubsidized employment. Also describe how the assessment will be used to develop the participant's Individual Employment Plan (IEP).

Case managers are required to conduct a complete assessment for each participant at the time of enrollment and prior to placement in a community service assignment. The procedures for the initial assessment and IEP serve as tools and the bases to accomplish the following: help the case manager make an effective community service assignment to a host agency; identify appropriate training for the participant; identify unsubsidized employment opportunities and/or prospects; pinpoint any personal, social or other barriers to employment and identify supportive services that will enhance the participant's experience in SCSEP; and establish a plan of action, including goals and deadlines, to enhance unsubsidized employment.

The IEP must reflect the participant's needs, interests and helps to outline his or her employment goals and host site placement. The assessment includes: date of assessment; work history; educational history; other talents, hobbies, volunteering, life interests and experience; most in need characteristics/barriers to service and/or employment; knowledge and skills; potential for transition to unsubsidized employment; participant's employment goals and objectives (goals of initial assessment); participant's community service objectives and potential; needs for supportive services; training needs; and signatures of participant and staff member conducting the assessment.

If an appropriate assessment and IEP have already been developed under Title I of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, that assessment and IEP may be used rather than developing a new assessment and/or IEP. Re-assessments are required and should be conducted at least twice in a 12-month period, and the case manager must keep all copies of the updated forms in the participant's file.

- (7) **Community Service Assignments:** describe how the participant will be assigned to community service including:

- (A) the types of community service activity that will be emphasized and how they were chosen; methods used to match participants with community service training;

In each region, the SCSEP case manager works with host agencies to develop community service assignments that provide participants with training and skills they need to pursue employment opportunities. The process for ensuring that the community service activities support the regional economy is by helping prepare the participant for the types of jobs in their community and by connecting the participant to those agencies that teach computer usage, using the internet effectively, multi-line telephone systems, accounting systems, or any other technical skills that the participant may be interested in learning to gain employment. This approach ensures that the community service assignment helps prepare participants for employment opportunities in the local community. The types of community service employment activities that are emphasized in assigning participants and why and how they were chosen, including their value to the community and the participant need to learn and/or strengthen a specific skill or set of skills that are consistent with his/her employment goals. Every effort to find a community service assignment a participant wants and that leads to developing needed skills is the goal.

- (B) the extent to which participants will be placed in the administration of the project itself;

Currently, participant staff is employed in each sub recipient office for administrative support and to assist participants understand the resources available at each center or to help train the participants. They are paid at a higher training wage as SCSEP trainers once trained and may refer the participants to other community resources and case notes those encounters.

- (C) the types of host agencies used and the procedures and criteria for selecting the assignments;

SCSEP provides both community services and work-based training. Participants' are placed in a wide variety of community service activities at non-profit and public facilities, including day-care centers, senior centers, schools and hospitals. The procedures and criteria for selecting the training assignments is to ensure safety and security, improve quality of life, employment preparation, and employment outcome. The training assignment criteria is to link course work and host agencies training to ensure that participants understand what is expected in the workplace and the types of work demands that will be required by the employer. Alaska employers continue to need workers with a firm foundation of both basic employability skills and specific technical knowledge for occupations at all levels of education and training. Older workers continue to be in demand throughout Alaska's economy, across industries and in most occupations. The specific strategies that SCSEP uses to develop and maintain close relationships with host agencies is to use its local older worker specialists who will stay in direct contact with them to monitor progress of the participants to ensure a successful partnership from training to employment.

- (D) the average number of hours in a participant's training week;

Participants are paid at the State of Alaska prevailing wage or the minimum wage, which is currently \$9.75 per hour. Hours per week are usually 20. Overtime is not permitted in the SCSEP program. The state's program coordinator may approve or deny a request for extra hours for participants.

- (E) the fringe benefits offered (if any);

SCSEP host agencies are not allowed to schedule participant to work on a holiday. Participants are paid four hours on the following official holidays: New Year's Day, Martin Luther King Day, Presidents' Day, Seward's Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Alaska Day, Veteran's Day, Thanksgiving Day, and Christmas Day.

The State of Alaska shall ensure that enrollees receive all fringe benefits required by law and shall be provided uniformly to all enrollees. Each enrollee will be offered the opportunity to take a physical

examination annually. A physical is a fringe benefit and is not an eligibility criterion. The examining physician shall provide, to the enrollee only, a written report of the results of the examination. The enrollee may, at his or her option, provide their case manager a copy of the report. The results of the physical examination shall not be taken into consideration in determining placement into a community service assignment. An enrollee may refuse the physical examination offered. In such a case, the sub recipient must document this refusal, through a signed waiver or other means, within thirty work days after commencement of the community service assignment. Any expenditure of the grant funds for contributions into a retirement system or plan for participants are prohibited.

Participants are authorized a leave of absence for administrative, medical, personal, and death or serious illness of an immediate family member. These leaves cannot exceed 30 days. Participants must inform SCSEP staff of the situation and sign the authorized leave of absence form before leaving if possible. All leave is without pay.

(F) [procedures for ensuring adequate supervision.](#)

Procedures for ensuring that participants are given adequate supervision during their community service assignment and that the organization is helping the participant obtain the skills required to be hired either by them or another organization is checked by their case manager as a drop in visit and during scheduled on-site visits to host sites. Most host sites are visited monthly to ensure required supervision. The case manager ensures that the participant is learning and is safe from any hazards and that the host agency is training the person as agreed based the individual employment plan.

(8) [Training: describe the training that will be provided during community service assignments and any other types of training provided, including linkages with local one-stop centers, and Registered Apprenticeship.](#)

The State supports integration of services through a single delivery system for both businesses and individuals at its 17 AJC. This efficient use of resources includes SCSEP integrating with the WIOA program, Wagner-Peyser, UI, Veterans' programs, Registered Apprenticeship, the TAA program, and working directly with its mandated partners. This program's labor market-responsive training strategies provide employment and training services to program participants at three broad levels: 1) core, 2) intensive, and 3) community service training. The program design is to provide participants with services that meet their needs and helps them to get and keep a good job.

The AJC and SCSEP sub recipients provide core services such as job search and placement within host sites to help participants gain marketable skills for local jobs. They provide intensive services such as comprehensive skill assessments, career counseling, and career planning assistance. They help identify participant skills that need updating to reach career goals and teach job search strategies. They place participants in community service training that helps participants upgrade their skills to be competitive in the local job market. The program recognizes a dual-customer approach that serves both participants and employers, promoting training that leads to credentials in emerging occupational sectors and industries, and uses Alaska's well-developed labor market information as a cornerstone of program planning and design.

Another key methodology that the program uses to prepare participants for unsubsidized employment and to engage employers to hire older workers is to train participants to use the ALEXsys. This system connects participants' to job openings online; participants can view their resumes with skills that match employers' needs, and tells them what skills they need to apply for those jobs; it also helps participants find out more about labor market information in their area; and helps them find answers to workplace questions and resources for workplace issues. ALEXsys will even send a participant emails whenever a new job posts and the participant's resume matches the qualifications of that job.

The program has increased its use of this innovative service delivery strategies by allowing participants to sign up for AJC workshops independently, and use the virtual recruiter of the one-stop center, which allows participants to sign up for automated notifications when a job becomes available in their field of interest. The goal is to ensure our participants have easy access to the information and services provided through the AJCs or through its sub recipients to provide participants with the most appropriate services to fit their individual employment needs.

Eligible training providers for the state have met certain criteria as defined under the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. Participants seeking training may be sent to these training programs on the list. These training activities include specific skills training, classroom instruction, lectures, seminar, individual instruction, training through other employment and training program. These types of training require additional fees and tuitions. The training is ongoing or as needed or set up for a specific person. The course work can take weeks or months depending on where the individual skills are and what skills they need to enter the job market. To be employed at most office worksites, an individual must type 40 words per minute and know how to use computers and current software.

Plus 50 Program: Developed together with UAA and SCSEP to provide comprehensive six week training with instruction in computers, communication, math, managing personal finances, and work search preparation. This partnership helps participants to enter into long-term employment at sustainable wages and provides access to income supports through its extended support network.

Southeast Regional Resource Center and Adult Learning Programs of Alaska: GED and Adult Education Services, instruction in reading, writing, and math, GED preparation and testing, English as a Second Language (ESL) and citizenship preparation, resume writing, job readiness training, computer training, Intro to computer, Word, Excel, Access, Power Point, Quick Books, Customer Service classes, and job training workshops and clubs.

Training examples for SCSEP older workers includes computer lab coursework to learn to use computers and its software; nonprofit training centers; job search; job referral; placement assistance; basics resumes; cover letters; interviewing skills; job search; mock interviewing or customized training for older workers with nonprofits within the community that leads to employment.

Training activities include specific skills training, Career Ready 101/KeyTrain, WorkKeys, classroom instruction, lectures, seminars, individual computer instructions, and specific training as needed to secure employment. These person-centered trainings require additional fees and tuitions. Training is ongoing or customized for a specific person. Course work can take weeks or months depending on an individual's abilities or types of skills they need to enter the job market. The program goals upon completion of the training are for participants to be computer literate to be able to apply for work and transition into today's workforce. This training has increased their prospects for obtaining employment and retaining employment. Most of these participants have been unemployed for a very long time: 63% are receiving public assistance; 86% are living below the poverty level; 65% have low employment prospects; 29% are homeless; 19% are veteran; 100% are unemployed with barriers to employment.

- (9) **Supportive Services:** describe the supportive services that will be offered to help participants obtain and retain an unsubsidized job, including transportation assistance (if applicable).

The State of Alaska SCSEP has approval to use up to 10 percent of grant funds that would otherwise be devoted to wages and benefits under 20 CR 641.873 to provide participant training (as described in 20 CFR 641.540(e)) and participant supportive services to enable participants to successfully participate in Alaska's SCSEP project. These supportive services and training activities directly benefit participants find a job and keep a job. These funds will also improve Alaska's SCSEP effectiveness and enrollees' employment outcomes by ensuring that they have opportunities to acquire the skills and training to maximize their

potential and enter competitive, integrated employment. Based on last year's performance, entered employment should continue to improve. The average time in community service is ten months instead of four years, and the amount paid to participant entering employment is higher than minimum wage due to SCSEP training and supportive services.

- (10) **Termination:** describe procedures for terminating a participant, including IEP terminations. Please provide a copy of the current termination procedures.

IEP Related Terminations

Federal regulations allow for Individual Employment Plan (IEP) related terminations, but all practical steps should be taken to avoid this option. Any termination of a SCSEP participant is subject to the SCSEP grievance procedure. Host sites always retain the right to ask any SCSEP participant to be removed from its premises.

Reasons and Process for Termination

Participants will not be terminated from the SCSEP program solely based on their age. Neither DOLWD nor its SCSEP sub recipients will impose an upper age limit for participation in the program. The DOLWD and its SCSEP sub recipients will seek to avoid termination whenever possible and will use progressive discipline and corrective action as described below, except in the case of serious violations, such as fraud, violence, or threats to health or safety, and others. In cases where the DOLWD or its SCSEP sub recipients terminate a participant, it will refer the individual to other potential sources of assistance. Any termination described below will be consistent with administrative guidelines issued by the United States Department of Labor. All termination notices will provide participants' 30-day notice before the termination becomes effective and will inform participants of their right to grieve the termination under the SCSEP Complaint and Grievance Procedure. This 30-day notice allows a participant time to contest the determination and to offer factors in mitigation. A copy of the grievance procedure will be attached to the termination notice.

(a) Termination Due to Provision of False Information - If, at any time, the DOLWD or its SCSEP sub recipients determines that a participant was incorrectly declared eligible as a result of false information knowingly given by the participant, staff will immediately give the participant written notice explaining the reason(s) for termination and will terminate the participant 30 days after it has provided the participant with written notice. The participant will be removed immediately from the host agency and placed on leave without pay during the 30 day notice period.

(b) Termination Due to Income Ineligibility Determined at Recertification – If, at any time, the DOLWD or its SCSEP sub recipients finds a participant to be no longer eligible for enrollment, staff will give the participant written notice explaining the reason(s) for termination and will terminate the participant 30 days after it has provided the participant with written notice. The participant will be allowed to continue the host agency assignment during the 30 day notice period.

(c) Termination Due to Incorrect Initial Eligibility Determination – If, at any time, the DOLWD or its SCSEP sub recipients determines that it incorrectly determined a participant to be eligible for the program through no fault of the participant, staff will give the participant immediate written notice explaining the reason(s) for termination and will terminate the participant 30 days after it has provided the participant with written notice. The participant will be allowed to continue training at the host agency assignment during this 30-day notice period.

(d) Termination Due to 48 Month Participation Limitation

A participant may be terminated when he or she meets the 48 month Individual Durational Limit Policy. The DOLWD staff or its SCSEP sub recipients will give the participant written notice at one year, six month and then 30 days before the 48 month maximum participation date explaining the reason(s) for termination and will terminate the participant 30 days after it has provided the participant with written notice. The participant will be allowed to continue the host agency assignment during the last 30-day notice period.

(e) Termination Due to Becoming Employed During Enrollment

If, at any time, the DOLWD or its SCSEP sub recipients finds a participant to be employed while enrolled in SCSEP without having notified the DOLWD or its SCSEP sub recipients of the employment, staff will immediately give the participant written notice explaining the reason(s) for termination and will terminate the participant 30 days after it has provided the participant with written notice. The participant will be removed immediately from the host agency and placed on leave without pay during the 30-day notice period.

(f) Termination for Cause

Participants may be terminated for willful misconduct, including intentional violations of reasonable program rules and directives, or for failure to comply with the terms of the Individual Employment Plan without good cause. For-cause termination requires that participants commit willful misconduct before termination is appropriate, rather than because of mere negligence, inadvertence, incapacity, or incompetence. This type of termination can occur quickly because it is important to remove the problem participant from the vicinity of the host site and its other employees. Examples of the kinds of behavior that may warrant termination include:

- falsification of time sheets or other official records;
- intentional disclosure of confidential or private information obtained from the host agency, sub recipient, or AJC;
- physical violence or intentional destruction of property;
- lying, obscene/abusive, harassing or threatening language or behavior;
- sexual harassment;
- causing an imminent threat to health or safety;
- non-compliance with substance abuse policy;
- training under the influence;
- violation of the approved break agreement including failure to return from an approved break by the required date without due notice or good cause;
- failure to report for training;
- three or more unauthorized absences from the host agency/training site without good cause or proper notice;
- absence from training work area;
- frequent tardiness;
- training abandonment;

- repeated refusal by the participant to perform specific actions;
- refusal to cooperate with the recertification, assessment, or IEP process;
- insubordination, that is, intentionally refusing to carry out the direction or instructions of a host agency supervisor or its SCSEP staff member(s) provided there were no extenuating circumstances;
- failure to comply with written policies and procedures;
- misbehavior or rudeness toward other employees or customers;
- theft of property;
- incompetence or failure to respond to training;
- fighting or other physical aggression;
- using community service site or DOLWD property for personal business;
- damaging /misusing property;
- threatening violence or committing a violent act;
- possession of/concealing a weapon;
- viewing pornographic sites or movies at host site computers on work time;
- sleeping during training hours;
- gambling at the host site;
- refusal to comply with IEP without good cause including:
 - refusal to accept training opportunities outlined in the IEP;
 - refusal to accept a new community service assignment to enhance skill development in support of IEP goals;
 - refusal to accept supportive services that will enhance his or her ability to participate in a community service assignment consistent with the IEP;
 - refusal to participate in all offered services such as job search or resume writing; or
 - refusal to accept two job offers and/or referrals to job openings.

IEP terminations are not appropriate when:

- occurrences are not within the control of the participant;
- the situation is impacted by the death of a closely related person or partner;
- the training or job places undue hardships on the participant that exceed the demands of the community service assignment;
- the proposed employment is more costly to the participant than the SCSEP position; or
- other reasons should be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Disciplinary/Termination Process

Outlined below is the disciplinary process for terminating a participant. Case notes should document the details explaining the cause of the events and improvements or actions required to remain in the program and a statement that failure to make improvements or complete the IEP-related tasks will result in

termination from the program. The DOLWD or its SCSEP sub recipients reserves the right to move directly to termination for serious violations such as violence, threatening behavior, or fraud, but normally the termination process will include the following steps.

Step one: Documented Verbal Warning – The SCSEP staff member verbally warns the participant, then completes case notes of the warning in the participant’s file. This gives the participant an opportunity to correct their behavior or conduct, or their failure to comply with the IEP requirements, except in cases involving serious harm or imminent threat to health, safety, property, etc. SCSEP staff will document the details explaining what happened and what is expected as next steps.

Step two: Written Warning – The SCSEP staff member will complete a warning letter and discuss it with the participant. This letter should be given in person if possible or via the telephone or email. The warning letter and required next steps will be sent to the participant indicating that the participant has to correct their behavior or conduct. A copy of this letter will be placed in the participant’s file detailing the requirement(s) to correct their behavior or conduct. This warning letter should make it clear that if the participant refuses to comply with the requirement(s) to correct their behavior or conduct or to make improvement(s) or fails to complete the IEP-related tasks that terminations from the program will result. This step may repeat as required or it may also be the final step prior to terminating the participant.

Step three: Termination – A SCSEP staff member will write a letter to the participant informing them of the reason(s) for termination from the program and the effective date, which must be a minimum of 30 days after the issuance of the letter. This letter will specifically reference the infraction and include the person’s right to grieve the termination in accordance with the Complaint Procedure in this Orientation Handbook. SCSEP staff will meet with the participant in person or via the telephone to:

1. inform the participant that he or she is being terminated from the program;
2. review the 30 day termination letter;
3. inform the participant of his or her last day at the training site or inform the participant that he or she is being placed on a 30 day unpaid leave of absence until the exit date. During this time SCSEP staff is available to assist the participant in job search activities;
4. inform the participant of the right to appeal the decision by implementing the Grievance Procedure outlined in this manual.
5. have the participant sign the exit paperwork; and
6. have the participant sign the last time sheet.

SCSEP staff will update the case notes and place the notification of termination in the participant’s permanent file. At the point of termination, the participant will be given a written procedure on how to appeal the termination. Steps for filing an appeal are listed below:

- (11) [Complaints & Grievances: describe the procedures for addressing and resolving participant complaints and grievances related to program termination. Please provide a copy of the current complaint/grievance policies.](#)

GRIEVANCE POLICY

This policy provides for an administrative review or appeal process for informal and formal resolution of program or discrimination complaints for applicants and participants. Complainants may seek redress for either program or discrimination complaints. Program complaints pertain to whether program staff applied the law, regulations, and professional protocol appropriately while making program decisions.

Discrimination complaints concern whether program staff made decisions on a prohibitive basis. Program

complaints may be appealed through program staff whereas discrimination complaints may also be filed with State and Federal agencies. The State of Alaska expects most concerns to be resolved through informal discussion and direct dialogue. However, it recognizes that some concerns and differences of opinion may not be resolved in this manner. This policy establishes the mechanism and process for the fair and timely review and resolution of training-related grievances. Nothing in this policy shall be construed to contradict prevailing laws and requirements for complaints or equal opportunity matters.

Informal Resolution Procedure - Complainants may pursue informal resolution of program problems or grievance at any time. The grievance process is intended to allow the grievance to be resolved at the earliest date and at the lowest supervisory level possible. Participants are expected to discuss work-related problems and grievances with SCSEP staff within a reasonable amount of time. These meetings can take place either in person or via a telephone conference. Both parties may offer any additional information or facts that have led up to this grievance. The SCSEP staff should:

7. attempt to resolve complaints informally;
8. arrange to meet with the complainant and other interested parties;
9. ascertain facts with all service providers prior to meeting;
10. retain on file a brief report regarding facts, issues discussed, and outcome; and
11. close the case if the complainant, program staff, and other interested parties reach a mutually satisfactory resolution.

The complainant may seek formal resolution regardless of outcome or attendance at the informal meeting if the reason is service denial or termination. Complainants may file formal complaints at the Local or State level, and may request a hearing as a final resolution.

Formal Procedures for Grievances

A copy of the grievance procedures is to be given to new participants as part of the orientation and again to all participants targeted for Exit Due to Cause. The participant may grieve service denial and termination. A written grievance shall first be submitted in writing to their local SCSEP program manager. The program manager shall schedule a meeting(s) with the participant within 14 calendar days of the grievance being formally submitted. These meetings can take place either in person or via a telephone conference.

17. If the grievance can be resolved during this meeting, the SCSEP program manager shall provide written documentation of the resolution and submit the documentation to the participant and place this information into the participant file.
18. If the grievance cannot be resolved during this meeting, the SCSEP program manager shall schedule a meeting with the sub recipient's Director within 14 calendar days following the meeting with the SCSEP program manager and the participant.

The meeting shall consist of the following process to resolve the issue(s) during the meeting with the sub recipient's Director or designee, SCSEP program manager, and participant.

The SCSEP sub recipient's Director or designee shall facilitate the meeting either in person or via a telephone conference and render a determination in writing. The determination, including the justification for the determination shall be submitted in writing to the participant. A copy of the determination shall be maintained in the participant file.

The participant has the right to request an administrative review from DOLWD, DETS of this determination. There are two levels of appeal in the Department. The first or lower appeal is filed to the

Appeal Tribunal. This is a separate and independent unit of the Department, which has a staff of Hearing Officers who hear and decide appeals.

The second or higher appeal is to the Department itself. These second level appeals are decided by the Commissioner of Labor. In most cases, the participant must receive a decision from the Appeal Tribunal before he or she can appeal to the Department. If the participant disagrees with the Department's decision, they can file an appeal to Superior Court.

The process for filing an appeal regarding the administrative determination is for the participant to present the appeal in writing within twenty (20) days of the final sub recipient's action to DETS, Assistant Director, P.O. Box 115509 Juneau, AK 99811-5509. The participant must include the following information in order to be processed:

1. the complainant's full name, address, phone number, and/or other means of contacting complainant;
2. the name, address, and telephone number of the sub recipient's or organization that the charge is filed against;
3. the complainant's SCSEP location of registration;
4. a clear and concise statement of the facts, including pertinent dates constituting the alleged violation;
5. copies of pertinent correspondence, if any;
6. the remedy the complainant seeks;
7. the names, addresses, and telephone numbers of any witnesses;
8. whether the individual has filed the same or similar charge regarding this matter;
9. the name, address, and telephone number of a person who always knows where to contact the person wishing to file a charge; and
10. the complaint must be signed and dated. Anonymous complaints will not be processed.

Submission must be via certified mail, return receipt requested to: State of Alaska, DOLWD DETS Assistant Director, P.O. Box 25509, Juneau, AK 99811-5509.

The DETS will request that the participant's sub recipient provide a written statement regarding their views of the situation to be submitted within fourteen (14) days.

NOTICE: Recipients of financial assistance under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act or Senior Community Services Employment Program are prohibited from discrimination against members of the public, applicants for services, registrants, participants, claimants, applicants for employment (with the workforce agency or AJCs) and WIOA or SCSEP financed employees on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, political affiliation or belief, marital status, change in marital status, pregnancy or parenthood. In addition, it is prohibited to discriminate against any individual or beneficiary of WIOA or SCSEP programs based on the beneficiary's citizenship/status as a lawfully admitted immigrant authorized to work in the United States. Finally, it is prohibited to discriminate against any individual or beneficiary of WIOA or SCSEP programs based on his or her participation in WIOA Title I or OAA Title V financially assisted program activity.

Confidentiality: Program providers and staff must protect the confidentiality of grievant to the maximum extent possible. This includes:

- • the fact that the grievance has been filed;
- • the identity of the grievant(s);
- • the identity of individual respondents to the allegations;
- • the identity of any person(s) who furnished information relative to, or assisting in, a grievance investigation; and
- • when consent has been provided for the release of the grievant identity, program providers must ensure that such disclosure is made under conditions that promote the continued receipt of confidential information.

SCSEP PROGRAM GRIEVANCES

A grievance may be filed on an SCSEP program decision if the grievant:

- applied for services;
- registered for and is receiving services;
- is a one-stop partner or provides services on a contractual basis;
- was denied potential SCSEP funding or services;
- complains against an employer, if referred to the employer by an SCSEP representative and alleges violation of employment-related laws;
- is subject to testing for the use of controlled substances; or
- was sanctioned after testing positive for the use of controlled substances.

Informal Resolution: Grievant may pursue informal resolution of program grievances at any time. SCSEP program staff should:

- attempt to resolve grievant informally
- arrange to meet with the grievant and other interested parties
- ascertain facts with all service providers prior to meeting
- retain a file and brief report regarding facts, issues discussed, and outcome; and
- close the case if the grievant, program staff, and other interested parties reach a mutually satisfactory resolution. The grievant may seek formal resolution regardless of outcome or attendance at the informal meeting.

Formal Resolution: Grievant may file formal program grievances at the state level, in writing and including:

- the grievant full name, address, telephone number and/or other means of contact;
- the full name and address of the individual or entity that the grievant alleges is responsible for his/her grievance;
- the grievant job title and the SCSEP program (if applicable);
- if an applicant, the SCSEP location;
- a clear and concise statement of the facts, including pertinent dates constituting the alleged violation;

- copies of pertinent correspondence, if any and;
- the remedy the grievant seeks, and the date and signature of the grievant.

Process: The grievant may submit a formal grievance to the DETS, SCSEP Coordinator, who must conduct an investigation and render a written decision within 10 days of the receipt of the grievance. If you disagree with the decision, you may appeal to the:

DETS Division Director — The Division must receive the appeal within 10 days of the receipt of the decision from the DETS, SCSEP Program Coordinator, or within 10 days of the date on which the grievant should have received a decision. The DETS Director will issue a decision within 10 days of the receipt of request for review and advise the grievant of further appeal rights.

Commissioner — The grievant has the right to appeal to the Commissioner if the DETS Director fails to render a decision within the allotted time or if the grievance is not resolved to the grievant satisfaction. The state must receive the appeals within 10 days of the date on which the grievant should have received a decision. Grievant must submit requests to:

**Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development
Commissioner
P.O. Box 115509
Juneau, AK 99811-5509**

The Commissioner will issue a decision within 10 days of the receipt of request for review and advise the grievant of further appeal rights.

Hearing: The grievant has the right to request an administrative hearing at any time within 30 days of the initial filing of the grievance. The hearing will not be held if the grievance has been mutually resolved among interested parties. The grievant will be contact by the DETS Director staff to schedule a hearing. The DETS Director will provide notice of the hearing date.

The grievant has the following rights with respect to the hearing process:

- representation at the hearing by counsel or other authorized agent(s);
- presentation and questioning of witnesses and other parties;
- waiver or postponement of a scheduled hearing in order to pursue informal resolution;
- a request, with good cause, to reschedule the hearing;
- use of telephone or teleconference to conduct the hearing if it is impractical for all parties to appear at the same place;
- the hearing will be held within 45 days of the receipt of the grievance; and
- a Hearing Officer will be appointed to conduct the hearing.

The grievant is responsible for the cost of their representation. A written decision will be rendered within 15 days of the date of the hearing. The decision will be final.

Accessibility: Outreach and reasonable accommodation shall be made for individuals with limited English-speaking, writing or reading ability, hearing impairment or other disability that restricts the normal access to or processing of an alleged program or discrimination grievance.

Withdrawal of Grievance: The grievant has the right to withdraw the grievance, in writing, at any time.

Equal Employment Opportunity Laws

All aspects of the SCSEP program must abide by the following laws regarding discrimination in the workplace:

- Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VII), which prohibits employment discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, or national origin;
- the Equal Pay Act of 1963, which protects men and women who perform substantially equal work in the same establishment from sex-based wage discrimination;
- the Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967, which protects individuals who are 40 years of age or older;
- Title I and Title V of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, which prohibit employment discrimination against qualified individuals with disabilities in the private sector, and in state and local governments;
- Sections 501 and 505 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, which prohibit discrimination against qualified individuals with disabilities who work in the federal government; and
- the Civil Rights Act of 1991, which, among other things, provides monetary damages in cases of intentional employment discrimination.

If the participant believes they have been subjected to discrimination under Title V funded program or activity, they may file a complaint within 180 days from the date of the alleged violation with the Alaska State Commission for Human Rights by contacting them at:

Alaska State Commission for Human Rights
800 A Street, Suite 204
Anchorage, AK 99501-3669
Anchorage Area Phone: 907-274-4692
Anchorage Area TTY/TDD: 907-276-3177
Toll-Free Complaint Hot Line (in-state only): 1-800-478-4692
TTY/TDD Toll-Free Complaint Hot Line (in-state only): 1-800-478-3177

Alternatively, they may file a complaint with the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission at:

U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission
Federal Office Building
909 First Avenue, Suite 400
Seattle, WA 98104-1061

Phone: 206-220-6883 or 1-800-669-4000
TTY: 206-220-6882 or 1-800-669-6820

- (12) **Maximizing enrollment:** describe procedures for fully enrolling all available slots, including over enrolling participants, and how over-enrollments will be balanced with equitable distribution requirements.

The State helps those in need, if possible. If one census area is under-enrolled, a slot is borrowed to assist the senior most in need.

- (13) **Performance:** include a proposed level for each performance measure for each of the program years covered by the plan. While the plan is under review, the State will negotiate with the Employment and Training Administration to set the appropriate levels for the next year. The State may also negotiate performance

levels in a subsequent modification. At a minimum, States must identify the performance indicators required under the SCSEP Final Rule published on September 1, 2010, and, for each indicator, the State must develop an objective and quantifiable performance goal for the next year.

The performance measures are:

1. entered employment, 56%
2. employment retention, 66.7%
3. average earnings, \$8,506
4. service level, 175%
5. service to most-in-need, 2.54
6. community service, 75.0%

(14) Administrative Costs: describe any request for an increase in administrative costs consistent with section 502(c)(3) of the OAA.

Administrative costs are budgeted at 13.5% or lower.

SCSEP ASSURANCES

| | |
|---|---|
| The State Plan must include assurances that where SCSEP is included in the Combined Workforce Plan, the State has established a written policy and procedure to obtain advice and recommendations on the State Plan from: | |
| 1. | <p>Representatives of the State and area agencies on aging; State and local boards under WIOA; Public and private nonprofit agencies and organizations providing employment services, including each sub-recipient operating a SCSEP project within the State, except as provided under section 506(a)(3) of OAA and 20 CFR 641.320(b); Social service organizations providing services to older individuals; Sub-recipients under Title III of OAA; Affected Communities; Unemployed older individuals; Community-based organizations serving older individuals; Business organizations; and Labor organizations.</p> |

The Governor has designated the AWIB as an alternative entity for WIOA workforce board as Alaska is a single workforce area state and a single workforce board state. AWIB acts as both the state and local board. AWIB continually focuses on aligning, simplifying, and streamlining the workforce system and as a single regional planning board aligns several policy issues:

- Alaska is a single one-stop operator that administers the state’s AJCs, which provides consistent application of policy and the flexibility to meet unique local and regional workforce needs. The single operator system prevents duplication of effort and helps partner organizations deliver services more effectively;
- several standardized Web-based applications provide statewide services. These include ALEXsys, EGrAMS, and the online ICM. Each system provides a consistent approach to data collection and publishing of reports;
- universal access at all one-stop AJCs is consistent; and

- an industry-demand-driven approach and economic data for targeted populations ensure resources are allocated to support high-demand occupations.

The Governor has also designated the Department of Health and Social Services as Alaska's sole state agency on aging. The ACoA within DHSS is authorized by Alaska Statute 47.45.240(a)(l) to develop the state plan for senior services in accordance with the provisions of the OAA and its amendments. The comprehensive plan was approved on August 11, 2015 documents the needs of older Alaskans and establishes direction for the coordination of all State activities related to seniors services related to the OAA, including the development of a comprehensive and coordinated system for the delivery of supportive services and is located at:

See: http://dhss.alaska.gov/acoa/Documents/ACoA_StatePlan_FY16-FY19.pdf

Below is a list of key stakeholders who participated in developing the senior services state's plan.

| Name | Advisory Committee List And Agency |
|-------------------|---|
| Kathy Allely | Governor's Council on Disabilities & Special Education |
| Steve Ashman | PHIP Division Manager, Municipality of Anchorage |
| David Blacketer | Co-Chair of Steering Committee, Commission member |
| Rita Bowen | Program Coordinator, DOLWD SCSEP – Mature Alaskans Seeking Skills Training |
| Jeanette Burket | Aging Services Program Specialist, U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services |
| Lisa Cauble | Director, Trust Training Cooperative |
| Ella Craig | Anchorage Senior Advisory Commission and senior |
| Denise Daniello | Executive Director, ACoA |
| Marie Darlin | Co-Chair of Steering Committee, ACoA Commission member |
| Joan Fisher | Chair, Anchorage Senior Advisory Commission |
| Karl Garber | Executive Director, Alzheimer's Resource of Alaska |
| Rachel Greenberg | Deputy Director, Palmer Senior Center, ACoA Commission Member |
| Mellisa Heflin | Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium |
| Ken Helander | Advocacy Director, AARP Alaska |
| Teresa Holt | Long Term Care Ombudsman |
| Heidi James Frost | Executive Director, Statewide Independent Living Council of Alaska |
| Amanda Lofgren | Program Officer, Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority |
| Jim McCall | Alaska Housing Finance Corporation Senior Housing Office |
| Banarsi Lal | Chair, Fairbanks North Star Borough Senior Advisory Commission |
| Lisa Morley | Grant Unit Manager, DSDS |
| Cyndi Nation | Project Director, Tanana Chiefs Conference |
| Mary Shields | Chair, ACoA |
| Lesley Thompson | Planner, ACoA |
| Albert Wall | Director, Division of Behavioral Health |
| Marianne Mills | Director of the Southeast Senior Services Program Division of Catholic Community Service & AgeNET Chair |
| Lisa Donat | Home Care Program Coordinator, Tanana Chiefs Conference |
| Sheila Soule | Assistance Vice Provost, UAA Office of Health Programs |
| Joan Houlihan | Behavioral Health Specialist, Division of Behavioral Health |
| David Levy | Senior Services Coordinator, Municipality of Anchorage, Department of Health & Human Services |
| Beth Goldstein | Supervising Attorney, Alaska Office of Public Advocacy, Office of Elder Fraud and Assistance |
| Brenda Mahlatini | Adult Protective Services Program Manager, Senior and Disabilities Services |
| Jane Urbanovsky | Administrator, Residential Licensing and Background Check Programs, Health Care Services, DHSS |
| Shaun Wilhelm | Chief of Risk and Research Management, Division of Behavioral Health |
| Barbara Crane | Tanana Chiefs Conference |

U.S. Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration
200 Constitution Avenue, N.W. Washington, D.C. 20210

March 20, 2015

The Honorable Bill Walker Governor of Alaska
State Capitol
P.O. Box 110001 Juneau, AK 99811-0001

Dear Governor Bill Walker,

The Senior Community Service Employment Program regulations at 20 CFR 641.340(a) require that the Governor or highest government official review the current State Plan and submit an update to the Secretary of Labor for consideration and approval “not less often than every two years.” The current four-year state plan covers Program Years 2012 through 2016.

This letter is to notify you that the Employment and Training Administration has reviewed and approved Alaska’s Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) State Plan Two- year Modification for Title V of the Older Americans Act (OAA). This approved SCSEP modification is valid through June 30, 2016.

The purpose of the SCSEP State Plan modification is to foster coordination among the various SCSEP recipients and sub- recipients within the state and facilitate the efforts of the stakeholders, including state and local boards to accomplish the goals of SCSEP. The DOL encourages you to review your SCSEP State Plan more frequently and to make modifications as circumstances warrant.

Thank you for your submission and the efforts to coordinate services in your state. If you have any questions, please contact your Federal Project Officer Ingrid Schonfield, schonfield.ingrid@dol.gov.

Sincerely,



Sara Williams Grant Office



August 11, 2015

The Honorable Bill Walker
Governor of Alaska
P.O. Box 110001
Juneau, AK 99811-0001

Dear Governor Walker:

I am pleased to inform you that the Alaska State Plan on Aging under the Older Americans Act for July 1, 2015 through June 30, 2019, has been approved.

The approved State Plan outlines a continued commitment to ensure the preferred value of Alaskan seniors to remain as independent as possible and in their own homes and communities for as long as possible. It is commendable to see that despite the rapidly growing demographic demands of a senior population in Alaska and coupled with the challenges of reduced Alaska state budget revenue, the plan demonstrates a continued evolution towards systems change and innovation opportunities. We support your vision to maintain a balanced long-term services and supports system and an incorporation of person-centered planning principles and values throughout your aging and disability service delivery systems. Your continued state support and enhanced, comprehensive approach to services offered to seniors and people of all disabilities through your network of ADRCs is also quite noteworthy, as is the extensive public and stakeholder participation evident in the development process of your new State Plan on Aging.

The Seattle Regional Office staff of the U.S. Administration for Community Living looks forward to working with you and the Alaska Commission on Aging and Alaska Department of Health and Social Services, in the implementation of the State Plan. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact David A. Ishida, Regional Administrator at 415-437-8780. I appreciate your dedication and commitment toward improving the lives of older persons in Alaska.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kathy Greenlee".

Kathy Greenlee,
Administrator and Assistant Secretary for Aging

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Performance Goals for the Core Programs

Include the State's expected levels of performance relating to the performance accountability measures based on primary indicators of performance described in section 116(b)(2)(A) of WIOA.

| | Baseline | PY 2016 / FY 2017 | | | PY 2017 / FY 2018 | | |
|---|----------|-------------------------|---------------------------|--|-------------------------|---------------------------|--|
| | | Proposed/Expected Level | Negotiated/Adjusted Level | | Proposed/Expected Level | Negotiated/Adjusted Level | |
| Employment (Second Quarter after Exit) | | | | | | | |
| Adults | 80.0% | 80.0% | | | 80.5% | | |
| Dislocated Workers | 81.5% | 81.5% | | | 82.0% | | |
| Youth (Education, Training or Employment) | 57.5% | 57.5% | | | 58.0% | | |
| Adult Education | 60.0% | 60.0% | | | 60.0% | | |
| Wagner-Peyser | 56.0% | 56.0% | | | 56.5% | | |
| Vocational Rehabilitation | 65% | 65% | | | | | |
| Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit) | | | | | | | |
| Adults | 82.0% | 82.0% | | | 82.5% | | |
| Dislocated Workers | 90.5% | 90.5% | | | 91.0% | | |
| Youth (Education, Training or Employment) | | | | | | | |
| Adult Education | 80.0% | 80.0% | | | 80.0% | | |
| Wagner-Peyser | 79.0% | 79.0% | | | 79.5% | | |
| Vocational Rehabilitation | 45% | 45% | | | | | |
| Median | | | | | | | |

| | | | | | | |
|--|-------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|--|
| Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit | | | | | | |
| Adults | \$20,100 | \$20,100 | | \$20,400 | | |
| Dislocated Workers | \$23,500 | \$23,500 | | \$23,800 | | |
| Youth | | | | | | |
| Adult Education | | | | \$18,750 | | |
| Wagner- Peyser | \$18,500 | \$18,500 | | | | |
| Vocational Rehabilitation | \$7,000 | \$7,000 | | | | |
| Credential Attainment Rate | | | | | | |
| Adults | | | | | | |
| Dislocated Workers | | | | | | |
| Youth | 62.0% | 62.0% | | 62.5% | | |
| Adult Education | 83.0% | 83.0% | | 83.0% | | |
| Wagner- Peyser | Not Applicable | Not Applicable | Not Applicable | Not Applicable | Not Applicable | |
| Vocational Rehabilitation | No data | No data | | | | |
| Measureable Skill Gains | | | | | | |
| Adults | | | | | | |
| Dislocated Workers | | | | | | |
| Youth | | | | | | |
| Adult Education | 37.0% | 37.0% | | 37.0% | | |
| Wagner- Peyser | Not Applicable | Not Applicable | Not Applicable | Not Applicable | Not Applicable | |
| Vocational Rehabilitation | No data | No data | | | | |
| Effectiveness in Serving Employers | | | | | | |
| Adults | | | | | | |

| | | | | | | | |
|--|----------------------------------|---------|--|--|---------|--|--|
| Dislocated Workers | | | | | | | |
| Youth | | | | | | | |
| Adult Education | | N/A | | | | | |
| Wagner-Peyser | | | | | | | |
| Rehabilitative Services | No definition of “effectiveness” | | | | | | |
| Combined Federal Partner Measures SCSEP | | | | | | | |
| Community Service | 74.0% | 75.0% | | | 75.0% | | |
| Common Measures Entered Employment | 58.8% | 57.0% | | | 57.0% | | |
| Common Measures Employment Retention | 64.8% | 72.0% | | | 72.0% | | |
| Common Measures Average Earnings | \$8,437 | \$8,506 | | | \$8,506 | | |
| Service Level | 173.10% | 175% | | | 175% | | |
| Service to Most in Need | 2.07% | 2.54 | | | 2.54% | | |

| Additional Indicators of Performance NOT APPLICABLE FOR ALASKA | |
|---|--|
| 1. | |
| 2. | |
| 3. | |

Appendix 2: Acronyms

| | |
|---------|--|
| ABE | Adult Basic Education |
| AC | Apprenticeship Coordinator |
| ACoA | Alaska Commission on Aging |
| ACRE | Association of Community Rehabilitation Educators |
| ADA | Americans with Disabilities Act |
| ADVR | Alaska Division of Vocational Rehabilitation |
| AIEI | Alaska Integrated Employment Initiative |
| AVTEC | Alaska Vocational Technical Education Center |
| AIVRS | American Indian Vocational Rehabilitation |
| AJC | Alaska Job Center |
| ALEXsys | Alaska's Labor Exchange system |
| AOP | Agricultural Outreach Plan |
| ARDOR | Alaska Regional Development Organization |
| AT | Assistive Technology |
| ATOP | Alaska Transition Outreach Project |
| AWARE | ADVR's case management software |
| AWIB | Alaska Workforce Investment Board |
| BEP | Business Enterprise Program |
| BEST | Business Employment Services Team |
| CCER | Continuing Education in Rehabilitation |
| CCR | College and Career Readiness |
| CRC | Certified Rehabilitation Counselor |
| CRP | Community Rehabilitation Program |
| CSNA | Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment |
| CSPD | Comprehensive System of Personnel Development |
| CSTS | Career Support Training Services |
| CTE | Career and Technical Education |
| CWIC | Community Work Incentives Coordinator |
| DBH | Division of Behavioral Health |
| DEI | Disability Employment Initiative |
| DETS | Division of Employment and Training Services |
| DHSS | Department of Health & Social Services |
| DJJ | Division of Juvenile Justice |
| DOC | Department of Corrections |
| DOL | Department of Labor |
| DOLWD | Department of Labor and Workforce Development |
| DPA | Division of Public Assistance |
| DRC | Disability Resource Coordinator |
| DSDS | Division of Senior and Disability Services |
| DVOP | Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program |
| DVR | Division of Vocational Rehabilitation |
| EED | Department of Education and Early Development |
| EGrAMS | Electronic Grants Administration and Management System |
| EN | Employment Networks |
| ES | Employment Service |
| ESL | English as a Second Language |
| ETA | Employment and Training Administration |
| ETPL | Eligible Training Providers List |

| | |
|-------|--|
| ETS | Employment & Training Services |
| FASD | Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder |
| ICM | Individual Case Management |
| IDD | Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities |
| IEP | Individual Employment Plan |
| IPE | Individualized Plan for Employment |
| JVSG | Jobs for Veterans State Grant |
| LEA | Local Education Agency |
| LVER | Local Veterans' Employment Representative |
| MASST | Mature Alaskans Seeking Skills Training |
| MOU | Memorandum of Understanding |
| MSD | Most Significant Disabilities |
| MSFW | Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker |
| NFJP | National Farmworker Jobs Program |
| NRLI | National Rehabilitation Leadership Institute |
| OAA | Older Americans Act |
| OCS | Office of Children's Services |
| OFCCP | Office of Federal Contract Compliance |
| OJT | On-the-Job training |
| PETS | Pre-Employment Transition Services |
| POS | Priority of Service |
| PPP | Planning, Policy and Performance Evaluation |
| RA | Registered Apprenticeship |
| RESEA | Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment |
| RR | Rapid Response |
| RSA | Rehabilitation Services Administration |
| SCSEP | Senior Community Service and Employment Program |
| SE | Supported Employment |
| SMA | State Monitor Advocate |
| SPARQ | SCSEP Performance and Results QPR System |
| STEP | State Training and Employment Program |
| SVRC | State Vocational Rehabilitation Committee |
| TAA | Trade Adjustment Assistance |
| TAARA | Trade Adjustment Assistance Reauthorization Act |
| TANF | Temporary Assistance for Needy Families |
| TAS | Trade Act System |
| TSM | Transitioning Service Member |
| TVEP | Technical and Vocational Education Program |
| UAA | University of Alaska Anchorage |
| UI | Unemployment Insurance |
| USDOL | United States Department of Labor |
| VR | Vocational Rehabilitation |
| VR&E | Vocational Rehabilitation & Education |
| VRC | Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor |
| WIA | Workforce Investment Act |
| WIOA | Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act |