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**Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development  
Division of Business Partnerships**

**Notice of Request for Grant Applications (RGA)**

**Alaska Youth First Program**

**State Fiscal Year 2015**

**This Request for Grant Applications is dependent upon  
appropriation of funds by the Alaska State Legislature**

**Date of Issue: January 15, 2014**

**Project Timeline**

**July 1, 2014 to June 30, 2015**

**Eligible Applicants:**

**Non-profit or for-profit organizations providing  
employment readiness services to youth.**

**Grant applications must be submitted through EGrAMS  
by 5:00 p.m., February 28, 2014**

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Questions about the content of this Request for Grant Applications should be directed to:

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Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development  
Division of Business Partnerships  
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(907) 269-4658

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EGrAMS is an **E**lectronic **G**rants **A**dministration and **M**anagement **S**ystem. It can be accessed from the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development website:

[labor.alaska.gov/bp/egramshome.htm](http://labor.alaska.gov/bp/egramshome.htm)

or through the **myAlaska** web site:

[myalaska.state.ak.us/home/app](http://myalaska.state.ak.us/home/app)

Questions about EGrAMs should be directed to:

EGrAMS Help Desk  
907-465-4893  
[dol.dbp.egramshelpdesk@alaska.gov](mailto:dol.dbp.egramshelpdesk@alaska.gov)

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**Americans with Disabilities Act** - Auxiliary aides and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities. To make arrangements for auxiliary aides or services, please contact the Division of Business Partnerships at (907) 269-3576 no later than ten (10) working days prior to the application deadline. The Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development is an Equal Opportunity Employer/Program. All grant recipients or sub-contractors must comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

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## SECTION I: PROGRAM INFORMATION

**Overview and Purpose:** The focus of the Alaska Youth First (AYF) Program is to create work readiness skills and improve available career planning options. Projects should increase youths' awareness of current labor market information, create clear understanding of workforce expectations, provide an opportunity to learn about work readiness skills and increase awareness of in-state training opportunities which prepare youth for career paths that lead to employment in Alaska's high demand, high growth occupations, or apprenticeship and postsecondary education.

**Scope of Services Requested:** The Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Division of Business Partnership's priorities for the AYF program will be allocated for the following services:

- Career Guide Services
- Youth Employability Skills
- Work Experience
- Applied Academic Learning
- Educator Externships

### **Career Guides:**

Although they are not teachers, Career Guides work with youth and young adults to create industry awareness in, and deliver labor market information on, Alaska's high growth, high demand occupations, providing them with the knowledge and tools to make informed career decisions. They create interest and provide support in learning about job markets, researching occupations, and where applicable, applying for jobs and training programs.

Career Guides will be visiting and working with schools, surrounding or outlying communities, Alaska Native organizations, community service agencies, and employers in the communities they serve. These partnerships are vital to successful program delivery, and applicants will be required to describe in detail how partnerships with these entities will be developed.

Statewide, 20,000 youth are expected to be provided services which include, but are not limited to:

- referring youth to a job opening or apprenticeship;
- assisting youth with career decisions and providing career guidance;
- assisting youth in registering in the Alaska Labor Exchange System (ALEXsys);
- assisting youth in registering in the Alaska Career Information System (AKCIS) to create a career portfolio and complete an interest inventory;
- assisting youth with developing a Personal Learning Career Plan (PLCP);
- providing youth with information about Career Ready 101, Work Keys;
- attending career/job fairs and deliver presentations to groups in/out of school;
- providing outreach to out of school youth; and
- recognizing and referring youth for intervention (e.g., alcohol or drug abuse).

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Innovative strategies that meet the goals identified above are also a high priority.

**Youth Employability Skills:**

In addition to basic skills in the areas of applied math and language arts, youth also need an opportunity to develop employability skills including the work maturity skills necessary for successful employment. The characteristics of qualified, capable youth workers include appropriate personal appearance, clear speaking ability, problem solving aptitude, effective use of judgment, decision-making skills, and a positive attitude and social manners. Programs, such as youth employability skills certification, address these and other characteristics.

The U.S. Department of Labor hosts the Employability Skills Framework website, [cte.ed.gov/employabilityskills/index.php/framework](http://cte.ed.gov/employabilityskills/index.php/framework), which explains youth employability skills in-depth.

Statewide, 10,000 youth are expected to be served in this category, which must include participants completing a certification program such as OSHA10, CNA, NCCER, or First Aid/CPR. Services in this category include, but are not limited to:

- providing information regarding employer and employee rights;
- providing training for youth to gain work maturity skills;
- providing training in job seeking skills, résumé and job application preparation, and interview skills;
- providing job specific training and experience;
- assisting youth in completing a Youth Employability Skills assessment and inventory; and
- identifying deficiencies in math and reading, and assisting youth in determining an educational path to overcome these deficiencies.

The services described under Career Guides are also services recommended for those applying for AYF funds under this category. In addition, innovative strategies that integrate the development of the skills identified above with skills required by industry are also a high priority.

**Work Experience:**

Practicing and demonstrating work skills are effective ways to ensure skills development in a short period of time. Through structured training plans and immediate feedback from supervisors and employment counselors in an intensive short-term work experience, unpaid work experience, or job shadowing, youth and young adults learn how attention to detail, timeliness, responsibility, communication skills, and teamwork lead to success.

A work experience component under the AYF program may provide participant wages for a paid work experience, or may be structured so that an employer pays the participants' wages. Job shadowing is considered work experience if the participant receives an evaluation as a learning tool from the provider.

Statewide, 800 youth are expected to be provided services which include, but are not limited to:

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- working in a pre-apprenticeship or an apprenticeship program;
  - working in an internship program;
  - working in a subsidized or unsubsidized position; and
  - other work experience that may include job shadowing.

Innovative strategies that meet the goals identified above are also a high priority.

### **Applied Academic Training:**

Virtually every high growth, high demand occupation requires that youth be competent in the areas of reading, math, and communication. The goal of applied academic training is to increase competency through applied learning, such as: understanding fractions by learning how to read a tape measure; learning to write by drafting business correspondence; or improving their reading skills by explaining to others what they have read. Academic goals are identified based on the career path of choice, after which academic training can be enhanced and aligned to meet the skill set needed to prepare for that career.

Statewide, 450 youth are expected to be provided services which include, but are not limited to:

- providing job-skill related education;
- assisting with secondary school completion (high school diploma or GED);
- providing postsecondary and certificate training; and
- assisting with alignment of education and career goals.

Innovative strategies that meet the goals identified above are also a high priority.

### **Educator Externships:**

Teachers and other educators have a significant impact on young people as they select and de-select career paths. Externship experiences allow educators to learn new skills and gain an understanding of job requirements, career opportunities, and workplace environments in Alaska industries. This will, in turn, help educators develop curricula that are more relevant for students and that demonstrate a better connection between what they're learning and future work experiences. Educator externships are a cost effective approach to impacting a large number of students who pursue careers in Alaska's high growth, high demand industries.

In an Educator Externship, educators typically spend two weeks working in an industry to learn more about a specific workplace, including academic and other requirements. Educators receive a small stipend, travel and per diem expenses to the worksite, and college credits. This model includes educators representing both academic and vocational disciplines in order to better prepare youth for the rigors of the workplace. Innovative strategies that meet the goals identified above are also a high priority.

Unlike other AYF service categories where the Division is looking for a relatively small number of individuals to provide employment services to a large number of youth, applicants requesting funds for Educator Externships will be implementing and administering a broad externship program including:

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- identification of host organizations in the priority industries identified for Alaska: construction; education; health care; hospitality and tourism; information technology; natural resource development; seafood harvesting and processing; and transportation;
  - the implementation of formal memoranda of agreements with those host organizations that provide for 80 hours of on-site work for the educator participants;
  - arrangement of continuing education credits with a nationally-certified college or university that maintains a campus in Alaska;
  - an orientation session for the host organizations and 20 or more educator participants;
  - travel and lodging expenses for the orientation, three (3) continuing education credits, and a \$2,000 stipend for each educator participant; and
  - collection and delivery to the Division of new or modified curricula developed by the educator participants that clearly reflect the experiences of the externship and that demonstrates for students a better connection between what they're learning and their future work experiences. Details of how the curricula will be implemented are also required.

Statewide, 50 educators are expected to participate in this program. Externships in specific high growth industries (healthcare, oil and gas, mining, construction, and transportation) are encouraged.

Although the AYF program is made up of the components described above, applicants do not need to provide all of these components to be considered for an award. In addition to the identified components, funds may also be allocated for school-to-apprenticeship, school-to-pre-apprenticeship, or innovative programs. For innovative programs, the Division looks for strategies that relate academic and applied learning to real world experiences including, but not limited to, entrepreneurship, customer service, and geographic information systems. For example, students who learn how to use a GPS device are better prepared and can apply mapping skills to business and industry issues. An innovative program may include services to youth younger than 14 years old.

Any support services provided to participants considered essential to achieving the performance outcomes, including, but not limited to, transportation to service locations; lodging, meals, and local transportation; tools; supplies; and licenses or certifications, must be included in the grant application. If the grant applicant is unable to provide the necessary support services, it is incumbent upon the grant applicant to either form a partnership with an organization that can provide the services, or subcontract the services to another organization. In either case, the services must be included in the detailed budget submitted in response to this RGA.

Grant proposals providing only support services, either to participants or to the project, without also contributing directly to the required performance outcomes will not be considered.

**Applicant Eligibility:** Applicants may be non-profit or for-profit organizations, educators, industry trainers, employers, community service agencies, Alaska Native Organizations, or other organizations with the capacity, independently or with a subcontractor or partner, to provide or facilitate the services described in this proposal.

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**Participant Eligibility:** Except for the Educator Externships category, eligible participants are youths ages 14 to 24. Services to youth younger than age 14 may be approved as an innovative service. For the Educator Externships category, eligible participants are educators who are certified Alaska middle and high school educators (teachers, school counselors, career counselors, and administrators) working with students in grades 7-12.

**Performance Outcomes:** An expected outcome of any funded project is a pathway to employment for the youth participant, or at a minimum, clear progress toward eventual employment. Specific expected results include:

- Youth Employability Skills: Records of certification programs completed.
- Applied Academic Training: Records of certificates or diplomas earned.
- Educator Externships: Development of a new or modified curriculum that clearly reflects the experiences of the externship and that demonstrates for students a better connection between what they're learning and their future work experiences. The curriculum will be submitted along with the final report.

**Funding:** The Alaska Youth First program may provide funding for tuition, books, fees for certifications, driver's licenses, work experience, and other related activities. There are no limitations on funding levels for individual grants; however, costs must be reasonable and commensurate with the type of training proposed. No more than 12 percent of grant funds can be applied toward administrative expenses.

## **SECTION II: GENERAL APPLICATION INFORMATION**

**Application:** Applications will only be accepted through EGrAMS, the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Division of Business Partnerships (hereinafter "Division") **Electronic Grants Administration and Management System**. Application information shall not be treated as public information any time prior to the notices of award or denial, but is subject to public disclosure after the notices are issued. Upon receipt, all applications and their contents become property of the Division.<sup>AI</sup>

**Application Deadline:** Only applications received by the deadline will be considered; EGrAMS will not allow submittal of applications past the submission deadline.

**Cost Reimbursement Grants:** Grants awarded are cost reimbursement grants; no advance payments will be made. Costs incurred by the applicant, including, but not limited to, the cost for the preparation and submission of an application, prior to the full execution of the grant agreement, are the sole responsibility of the applicant.

**Budget Costs:** The applicant must provide a detailed budget that reflects the anticipated costs of the project. The budget must be reasonable and practicable, and account for the expenditure of all funds prior to the end of the FY 2015 fiscal year. Unless specifically approved by the Division, incentives, promotional items and memorabilia, gifts, and souvenirs are not allowed.

**Grantee Contribution:** A grantee contribution includes all resources, including cash, in-kind, and leveraged, used by the applicant to support grant activity and outcomes. Applicants are

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encouraged to provide a contribution to the greatest extent feasible. Although contributions are not a requirement for an award, applicants that provide contributions demonstrate an additional commitment to meeting the objectives of the program.<sup>AI</sup>

Grantee contributions specified in the budget require expenditure documentation and will be considered in the overall grant performance evaluation that occurs at the end of the grant period.

### **SECTION III: AWARD/DENIAL PROCESS**

**Application Review:** The Division will perform an initial review of all properly submitted applications. All complete, responsive, and eligible applications will be evaluated by a review committee, which will make funding recommendations to the Division. Applicants whose applications are deemed incomplete, non-responsive, or ineligible will be notified, and those applications will not be reviewed by the review committee.

**Evaluation:** A review committee will evaluate applications using the evaluation criteria specified in EGrAMS. The Division will consider the results of the review committee's assessment along with other relevant criteria and information, including budgetary information, training schedules, and state priorities, when making funding recommendations to the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development commissioner. The Division may request additional information from applicants if it is needed to make funding recommendations. The commissioner is solely responsible for making all award or denial decisions under this solicitation.

**Results of Application Review and Evaluation:** Each application approved by the commissioner will be provided a written Notice of Intent to Award. Upon issuance of a Notice of Intent to Award, the application will move to grant negotiations with the Division. The Division reserves the right to revoke a Notice of Intent to Award if it is subsequently found to be in error, made on the basis of inaccurate information, or not in the best interest of the state.

An applicant whose application is not recommended for an award will receive a written Notice of Award Denial. Applicants receiving a Notice of Award Denial have ten working days to request reconsideration.<sup>AI</sup>

**Grant Negotiations:** The Division will negotiate the grant award amount, performance, reporting levels, and any conditions to a grant award that it determines are prudent and in the best interest of the state. All grants awarded under this solicitation are contingent upon the appropriation of sufficient funds by the Alaska legislature or the federal government, as applicable. In the event that funding is withdrawn, reduced, or limited in any way after the effective date of the grant agreement, grants awarded are subject to termination, reduction, or re-negotiation subject to the new funding limitations or conditions imposed by the legislature.

**Due Diligence:** All grant recipients and any sub-contractors or sub-recipients receiving over \$25,000, which are not state agencies, are required to go through a multi-step due diligence process to demonstrate their suitability to receive grant funds. Applicants that fail to meet a due diligence condition will be allowed five working days to correct the deficiency or the grant award may be withdrawn.<sup>AI</sup>



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## SECTION IV: GRANT TERMS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

**Certificate of Insurance:** The types of insurance coverage required are specific to the project. If an applicant is not able to provide a Certificate of Insurance certifying the minimum coverage, the applicant must provide documentation to demonstrate it will obtain the necessary insurance coverage within 30 days of receipt of award.<sup>AI</sup>

**Progress Reporting:** Grant recipients must complete and submit progress reports in EGrAMS. Progress reports must include narrative updates on the progress of the project and statistical data related to the grant recipient meeting the goals and objectives of the project scope. Upon completion of the project, the grant recipient is required to submit a final progress report.

**Equal Opportunity Responsibilities:** Grant recipients must disseminate, and prominently display in a conspicuous location, the *Equal Opportunity Is the Law* notice, providing initial and continuing notice that it does not discriminate on any prohibited basis. Grant recipients will also maintain a signed copy of the *Equal Opportunity is the Law* certification form from each subcontractor or partner, and from each organization that receives services under this grant. All organizations that provide training or services for which participants must apply or register must maintain a signed copy of the *Equal Opportunity is the Law* certification form from each applicant or registrant.<sup>AI</sup>

**Release of Information:** Success stories and photographs are critical components to the continuation of the program and can be submitted at any time, but the grant recipient must submit three success stories by the completion of the grant period. Grant recipients must keep a Photo Consent and Release form on file for each participant included in a photograph.

**Financial Reporting:** It is critical to the success of the program that grant funds are fully expended by the end of the award period. To ensure that budgets are on target, grant recipients are periodically required to demonstrate how their budget will be fully expended by the end of the period of performance. Grant recipients that are not meeting their planned expenditures may have their grant awards reduced.

The Division will provide electronic forms to request reimbursement of expenditures and submit quarterly program and fiscal reports. Reimbursement requests and grant contributions must be supported with clear and concise financial reports and expense documentation.<sup>AI</sup>

**Participant Data Collection and Reporting:** Grant recipients will gather and record information pertaining to participant demographics and other information using a data collection system provided by the Division. Files, including applications and documentation of eligibility, must be kept for each participant.<sup>AI</sup>

**Monitoring:** Grant recipients are subject to monitoring. This will include, but is not limited to, review of grant recipient files and records to ensure adherence to the project scope, objectives, goals, training schedules, financial, and equal opportunity compliance. Monitoring may be conducted on-site, through written requests for information, or by distance-delivery.

**Correspondence, Publications, and Promotional Materials:** Correspondence, publications, and promotional materials for this program will include the following statement; “This training

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is funded in part by the Alaska Youth First Program through the Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Business Partnerships Division.”

**Record Retention:** All records related to this grant agreement shall be maintained by the Grant Recipient for a period of six (6) years following the grant closeout, or until completion of an audit and/or resolution of audit findings, or pending litigation, whichever is longer. As the Grant Recipient may not be aware of legal proceedings relative to specific grant programs, the Grant Recipient should request approval from the Grantor before disposing of any records.

**Equipment Retention:** Any inventoried equipment that is approved and purchased with these grant funds must be retained by the applicant for a period of at least six (6) years from the end of the grant fiscal year. During that time it may not be sold, given away, surplus, or otherwise disposed of without prior approval from the department.<sup>AI</sup>

**Confidentiality of Participant Information:** In accordance Alaska Statute, all grant recipients, sub-recipients, or sub-contractors must keep social security numbers, identifying information, and personal information confidential in accordance with state and federal law. Failure to maintain the confidentiality of such information may subject a grant recipient to civil or criminal liability and is grounds for termination of any grant agreement.