

Alaska's Oil and Gas Training Plan: Executive Summary

Call to Action; A Skilled Alaskan Workforce for the Oil and Gas Industry

Introduction

The purpose of the Alaska Workforce Investment Board (AWIB), a division of the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development (DOLWD), is to develop and implement an efficient, effective and integrated state human resource investment system. This comprehensive system provides employment education and training programs, and services to insure that all Alaskans have the skills and opportunities necessary to earn a living wage. A skilled workforce is critical in meeting future business and industry needs of the state, in addition to encouraging the growth of business and industry.

The AWIB has approved the following workforce plans: Construction (2001); Alaska Gasline Inducement Act Training Strategic Plan (2007); Alaska Career and Technical Education Plan (2010); Alaska Health Workforce Plan (2010); and Alaska State Energy Sector Partnership Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Workforce Plan (2011). All plans will be updated when a significant project or industry training need has changed to ensure the most recent information is available.

The Alaska Gasline Inducement Act Training Strategic Plan (2007) update will reflect a title change to The Alaska Oil and Gas Training Plan; recaps the vision and progress of the original plan; identifies future investments; and offers a skilled workforce to the industry. This revision of the Alaska Gasline Inducement Act Training Strategic Plan will not diminish the importance of the original work or the accomplishments of the stakeholders. The partnering of industry and government continues to be necessary to implement the plan.

Alaska's leaders have sought to raise awareness of oil and gas industry opportunities and develop a system to prepare Alaskan residents for related careers. Cooperative opportunities to create a connected education and workforce development system have been identified by industry, education, and labor.

The Need: Close the Alaskan Skills Gap

Annually over 10,000 Alaskans earn a high school diploma or a Graduate Equivalency Diploma (GED). When asked, most students entering the workforce stated they would like to live and work in Alaska. In May 2008, the [University of Alaska Anchorage Institute for Social and Economic Research \(UAA/ISER\)](#) reported that one third of Alaska's students don't graduate high school, and half of those that do graduate don't enroll in college. Only 20% of students continuing their education choose to do so in Alaska; many attend university outside of Alaska. This is not viewed as a failure of any component of the system. This is a call to action.

Education becomes more relevant when the system is defined and aligned. In Alaska career pathways, programs of study, personal learning career plans and tech prep along with school-to-apprenticeship, registered apprenticeship, and structured work experiences are some of the elements of a well-connected education and workforce development system. Students, parents and the state benefit from the implementation of both the Alaska Career and Technical Education Plan and the strategies of this plan. Through appropriate career awareness in K-6, career exploration in grades 7, 8 and 9 and career development in grades 10, 11 and 12, students have the ability to choose an

industry to work in after high school. They also receive trade knowledge, portable credentials and gain experience to make better informed decisions towards a career or university degree.

The value of funding education and sponsoring experiential learning is maximized if followed by gainful employment. Registered apprenticeship or structured work experience are great options and tools. In order for Alaska to develop its resources it must commit to investing and developing its most important resource; i.e. Human Resource. This can only be done through a commitment of funding, hiring and developing a local skilled Alaskan workforce. There are different routes to acquire skills beyond high school; e.g. certification, registered apprenticeship, and university degree. For this plan to succeed, employers must be engaged with high schools, university program advisory boards, and registered apprenticeship training committees. A skilled Alaskan workforce plan will assist employers and industry to navigate an industry-driven system of education and workforce development.

The Promise: Put Alaskans to Work

According to the [Alaska Economic Trends, January 2012](#) issue, Alaska's oil and gas industry is expected to maintain the same amount of workers as seen over the last four years, an estimated 16,500 workers. In January 2012, the Alaska Senate Finance Committee was presented the McDowell Group's report, "[Oil and Gas Industry Employment on Alaska's North Slope](#)". According to the McDowell Group, 44 percent of the North Slope's 2010 new employees were not Alaskan residents; the highest annual rate in the past seven years.

The potential construction of an Alaskan gas pipeline is a promising economic driver for the oil and gas industry. It is critical that employers commit to hiring Alaskans. This is the final call to action, a true public and private partnership to hire Alaskans.

Four Strategies

Four broad strategies are expanded to address the workforce development needs in the oil and gas industry. The strategic elements have developed through the partnership of industry, education and labor, resulting in a more comprehensive plan for the oil and gas industry. The four strategies are:

1. Increase career awareness and access to training opportunities in oil, gas and natural resource development occupations
2. Develop a comprehensive, integrated career and technical education system that aligns training institutions and coordinates program delivery
3. Increase opportunities for registered apprenticeship in skilled occupations and expand other structured training opportunities
4. Increase opportunities for development of appropriate training programs for operations, technical, and management workers

Three Phases

The training plan outlines a three-phased approach for accomplishing its strategies:

- Phase one
 - Identify oil and gas occupations needed for the industry and pipeline project.
 - Identify current training available in Alaska for those occupations.
 - Focus on developing a connected training system for required occupations.

- Phase two
 - Address the existing “skills gap” and will require significant new investments in public K-16 CTE programs with significant expansion of registered apprenticeship
- Phase three
 - Establish skill standards for industry and career and technical education programs and extend accreditation to regional training centers
 - Apprenticeable occupations have established training standards however skill standards may need to be developed

The Call for Action: Engage Stakeholders to Build Capacity

This final call for action is to continue to engage businesses and industry, government, educators, trainers, and sponsors of registered apprenticeships in committing to finance and execute the plan's strategies. The results will transform Alaska's workforce system, align it with Alaska's educational system and catalyze a spirit of innovation. This will ultimately create a new economy, beyond the boom and bust cycle of the past, where businesses and industry can count on and employ a local skilled workforce of Alaskans, now and into the future.