

ALASKA COLLEGE ACCESS & SUCCESS PLANNING TEAM

MEETING – JANUARY 14, 2014

Alaska's statewide college access & success network planning team, consisting of Alaska leaders who participated in the 2013 Alaska College Access & Success Summit, convened once again in Anchorage. Attendees discussed opportunities to leverage Alaska's College Access Challenge Grant funding to create a statewide network.

Draft Network Mission Statement

- Increase the number of Alaskans who access and complete a postsecondary credential, particularly credentials relevant to Alaska's workforce needs.

Why a Network?

Participants agreed that, if well-designed, a statewide network has the potential to facilitate partnerships and produce collective energy and action focused on improving postsecondary access and success in Alaska. Network objectives would be to create synergy, reduce duplication of effort across membership, disseminate best practices and develop complementary messaging by state programs, agencies and organizations to encourage and support attainment. The network can begin to address Alaska's gaps in statewide messaging, K-16 communication, and professional development around postsecondary attainment - focus areas first identified at the 2013 summit.

Meeting Outcomes

Committed to Planning Effort

- February - July 2014
- Create Structure for Network
- Identify Long-Term Network Home
- Planning Team Membership will remain fluid to further diversity of representation

Decided to Refine Name for Planning Team & Network

- Consider Replacing "College" with "Credential"
- Acknowledge importance of sub-bachelor's credentials to Alaskan Economy

Drafted Initial Goal & Mission Statement

- Informed By:
 - Alaska Workforce Forecasts
 - Alaska Postsecondary Attainment Data
 - Discussion on Policy Goals for Alaska's Future

Next Steps

At the team's request, information about the structure, initiatives, and outcomes of other states' college access and success networks (Ohio & Michigan) are included in this summary.

- Members agreed to reach out to policymakers and leaders who bring more diverse and necessary perspectives to the group (either through formal membership on the planning team, or in an advisory capacity as a resource/subject matter expert), including: Secondary Education, Rural Alaska, Alaska Native, and Labor/Industry.
- Members will select a formal name for the planning team and network to use for statewide communication moving forward.

Possible Options to Rename Effort and Better Reflect Alaska's Workforce Needs

- Postsecondary Access and Completion Team (PACT)
- Alaska Workforce Credential Support Network (AWCSN)
- Workforce Credential Attainment Team (WCAT)
- Alaska Credential Access Team (ACAT)
- Credential Attainment Network (CAN)
- Alaska Postsecondary Access Network (APAN)
- Alaska Credential Attainment Network – (Alaska CAN)

Ohio CAN

- www.OhioCAN.org
- Priorities:
 - Platform for student voices
 - Tools to track outcomes
 - Identify & promote effective initiatives
- Current Initiatives

Michigan CAN

- www.MICollegeAccess.org
- Strategies:
 - Local network development
 - Statewide initiatives
 - Professional development
 - Advocacy
 - Coordination
- 2012 Annual Report

Alaska Occupational Projections: Looking Ahead to 2020

Current Education Status of Alaska's workforce (age 25-64):

- 28.2% Bachelor's+
- 8.8% Associates
- 12.7% Certificates
- Total: 49.7%**

To complement and expand on the *College Access and Success in Alaska: Data Analysis* presentation by the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems at the November summit, Dan Robinson, Research Chief for the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, provided a detailed current situation forecast regarding Alaska's industry and workforce needs. This was followed by discussion around appropriate encouragement for increased postsecondary attainment.

Bachelor's+ and Associates Degrees: U.S. Census Bureau, ACS (2012). Certificates: U.S. Census Bureau, SIPP (2011)

Key Take-Away Information from Presentation and Discussion:

Data Review Needs to Occur in Context of Larger Policy Goals Discussion

- Georgetown University model (based on education of current workers) forecasts higher Alaska workforce needs for postsecondary training than does the Bureau of Labor Statistics model (based on education requirements for positions)
- Regardless of methodology, it is clear Alaska is projected to experience a shortage of educated workers; and Alaska's top jobs will require education and training beyond high school
- Employers consistently express a need for a better-educated workforce
- A highly skilled workforce that meets or exceeds minimum education requirements creates opportunities to shift industry growth and create more higher-paying jobs with upwardly mobile career paths

Degree/Certifications at Many Levels Lead to Individual and Collective Benefits

- More education or training delivers individual benefits including more stable employment and higher wages
- Job seekers often seek out employers who provide training and education opportunities
- Sub-bachelor's credentials (associates, certificates, certifications, and others) are in high demand in Alaska
- In specific fields, sub-bachelor's credentials lead to employment in Alaska's top jobs, providing above-average salaries and job growth
- Subject matter of training or education and its relevance to workforce needs are more important for success in Alaska than credential level

Creating a Goal Statement

Members engaged in active discussion around the essential components for a meaningful goal statement for the network; informed by data presented, and complemented by a broader discussion on crafting policy to increase attainment levels beyond the status quo.

35/15/15 by 2025

30% Bachelor's Degrees or Higher / 15% Associates / 15% Certificates or credentials

The team determined:

- Relative to accurately understanding future state workforce needs, the Georgetown methodology (used by many other states for formation of similar goals), while not without weaknesses, provided the stronger starting point for creation of a SMART network goal.
- A greater emphasis must be placed on increases in credentials at the Certificate and Associate level.
- The target population would ideally include Alaskans age 18-64 to ensure high-value, short-term certificates earned by high school graduates, as well as next-career credentials, are captured.
Data on credential attainment is not reported for adults under 25; therefore, age 25-64 is used.