

ALASKA'S WORKFORCE FUTURE

Executive Summary

Introduction

Alaska's Workforce Future is a partner-based initiative spearheaded by the Alaska Workforce Alliance¹ (AWA) and the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development (AKDOLWD), with support from the Denali Commission.

Inspired by the outcomes of the Alaska Workforce Investment Board's (AWIB) 2023 Industry Convening, the partners set out to systematically organize the feedback from the event, engage with a wide array of stakeholder groups to gather additional insights, and integrate all collected information—derived from the convening, surveys, follow-up forums, and interviews—into a comprehensive action plan. This plan outlines specific steps and ensures that all organizations and stakeholders are recognized as essential partners in shaping *Alaska's Workforce Future*.

Alaska's Workforce Future is a call to action – a guide for industry, government, nonprofits, and educators to collaborate in preparing Alaska's workforce for the future. The following pages are a blueprint for a coordinated statewide effort to address the pressing workforce shortages affecting all industry sectors in Alaska. Its primary goal is to ensure that Alaska remains economically vibrant, enhancing the lives of all Alaskans by developing a skilled, competitive workforce that can meet the evolving demands of the state's diverse industries.

Purpose and Need

Alaska is experiencing an exciting and unique time of economic growth. Private investment and infrastructure funding is on the rise, creating opportunities for employers and Alaskans. However, every Alaska industry is experiencing significant labor shortages with an abundance of jobs going unfilled. Workforce shortages are evident in every industry and region, which continue to be impacted by the trend of declining working-age population due to outmigration and other demographic factors.

Alaska employers will be further challenged by billions of dollars invested in new infrastructure and resource development projects over the next several years. These projects, funded in part by the federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), will create thousands of new jobs across various sectors. As the economy grows with these investments, another 20,000 new workers will be required to fill jobs in both private and public sectors, particularly in support fields such as healthcare, transportation, and public service, while also replacing workers leaving employment. The success of these projects

¹ Alaska Workforce Alliance is a subsidiary of the Alaska Safety Alliance, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.

and the positive economic impact they represent depend on a well-prepared workforce to meet the demand.

Though Alaska is facing significant workforce challenges, there is a shared commitment among stakeholders across the state to collaborate on strategies that will retain young and working-age Alaskans, provide them with essential skills, and create an employment climate that will enable them to become the workforce of tomorrow. Through this collective effort, we can equip Alaskans to fill high-demand, well-paid positions, increase local employment opportunities, and retain our Alaska residents.

Plan Development

BROAD-BASED COLLABORATIVE ENGAGEMENT

The development of *Alaska's Workforce Future* was a collaborative and inclusive effort that prioritized continuous engagement with a wide spectrum of stakeholders across the state. This process was carefully designed to ensure that the resulting shared goals and strategies reflect the diverse needs and challenges of Alaska's workforce, industries, and regions. Through virtual and in-person forums, key informant interviews, and collaborative sessions, input was gathered from employers, educators, students, job seekers, state agencies, Alaska Native corporations, rural and regional community representatives, and nonprofits, among others. The contributions of these diverse stakeholders were vital in shaping *Alaska's Workforce Future*.

AWIB INDUSTRY CONVENING

A pivotal catalyst of this collaborative work was the 2023 Alaska Industry Convening, coordinated by the Alaska Workforce Investment Board (AWIB). The event brought together industry leaders, educators, government officials, and workforce development professionals from across the state for a two-day strategic workshop. The convening served as a crucial platform for stakeholders to share insights, identify challenges, and collaborate on solutions, further solidifying partnerships and infusing momentum into the collective effort to address Alaska's workforce needs.

DATA-DRIVEN APPROACH

Alaska's Workforce Future was informed by extensive data collection and analysis, including labor market trends, industry projections, demographic studies, and existing workforce plans. Surveys, interviews, and forums with employers, educators, and workers were conducted to gather firsthand insights into the workforce challenges and opportunities across different regions and sectors. This data-driven approach ensured that the recommended strategies are grounded in the real-world experiences and needs of Alaskans.

The appendix sections of this report include comprehensive individual reports, each containing valuable data and insights that served as the foundation for the strategies outlined in this main document.

Shared Goals

Goal 1: Enhance Career Awareness and Pathways

Focus on expanding and improving career awareness initiatives across Alaska, ensuring that students, parents, educators, and the general public are informed about high-demand industries and the skills needed to succeed. By strengthening career pathway programs and increasing visibility of career options, we aim to guide more Alaskans into fulfilling, well-paying careers that align with the state's economic needs.

Goal 2: Develop a Skilled and Qualified Workforce

Close the gap between the skills required by Alaska's industries and the current workforce. By enhancing education and training programs, particularly in critical sectors, we seek to equip Alaskans with the qualifications necessary to meet future labor demands. The focus is on ensuring that our workforce is prepared for upcoming infrastructure and resource development projects, as well as emerging opportunities in various fields.

Goal 3: Retain Alaskans and Address Population Decline

To counteract the outmigration of young and working-age Alaskans, create attractive career opportunities and reduce barriers to employment and education, then communicate these opportunities through coordinated marketing efforts. By fostering a supportive environment that encourages local talent to stay and thrive in Alaska, we aim to maintain a robust and dynamic workforce that can sustain the state's economic growth.

Goal 4: Foster Regional Workforce Development

Recognize the unique needs and opportunities of different regions across Alaska. Promote the establishment of regional teams to coordinate efforts within their regions, ensuring that local knowledge and resources are leveraged to address workforce challenges effectively. Collaborate and communicate across regions and with the AWIB to align statewide efforts with regional priorities.

Goal 5: Improve Infrastructure and Access to Support Services

Ensure that Alaska's workforce has the necessary infrastructure and support services to succeed. Advocate for investments in housing, transportation, childcare, and other essential services; aim to create an environment where workers and their families can thrive, enabling full participation in the state's economic opportunities.

Goal 6: Ensure Sustainability and Continuity of Workforce Development Efforts

Achieving long-term sustainability in Alaska’s workforce development requires the establishment of a dynamic and enduring ecosystem. Central to this goal is the identification of a coordinating entity that will be charged with guiding the next phase of this effort, including developing and periodically revising a collaborative action plan, securing funding to support ongoing initiatives, fostering partnerships across sectors, and ensuring that all efforts remain coordinated, effective, and on course toward achieving shared goals.

The coordinating entity operates as a trusted partner to the Alaska Workforce Investment Board (AWIB), bringing additional resources and expertise that enhance the AWIB’s established roles and responsibilities as outlined in its [Bylaws](#). By working collaboratively with the AWIB, the coordinating entity adds value in areas such as securing private-sector funding and developing flexible strategies that respond to changing circumstances. These efforts are designed to complement and support the AWIB’s mission, ensuring that both organizations work together synergistically to achieve shared goals for Alaska’s workforce development.

The future of Alaska’s workforce is filled with opportunities across diverse industries. This plan aims to provide a call to action so Alaskans can gain the skills and knowledge needed to thrive in established occupations and emerging roles, ensuring that both individuals and communities benefit from the economic growth ahead. To remain effective, the implementation of this plan must be adaptive, continually responding to evolving industry demands and the unique challenges faced by our state.

The strategies and actions outlined in this plan are already being set in motion, with active participation from industry leaders, state agencies, and educational institutions. The continued dedication and collaboration of all stakeholders will be essential to achieving the goals set forth in this plan. Together, we can build a robust and resilient workforce that secures Alaska’s future prosperity.

ALASKA'S WORKFORCE FUTURE

Background

Alaska stands at a pivotal point in its economic and social development. The state's unique geographic location, abundant natural resources, and diverse cultural heritage have long been its strengths, driving economic growth and providing opportunities for its residents. However, in recent years, Alaska has been facing a series of challenges that necessitate a comprehensive and forward-thinking workforce development strategy.

Alaska is experiencing a confluence of workforce challenges that threaten the state's economic stability and growth. Workforce shortages are impacting all major industries, from construction and healthcare to energy and maritime sectors. The challenges and opportunities outlined below have spurred action and partnership among stakeholders, forming the basis of this collaborative work. Through the strategies and actions recommended in this plan, we aim to address these pressing issues and leverage the opportunities to strengthen Alaska's workforce and economy.

From 2013 to 2021, Alaska saw a significant decrease in its working-age population, which declined by approximately 5.6%. This contrasts with the national average, which experienced a 2% increase during the same period. This decline in Alaska's working-age population is due to several factors, including outmigration, an aging population, and lower birth rates. The shrinking labor pool resulting from these trends places increased pressure on existing workers and poses a considerable challenge for the state's economy.

A growing number of working-age Alaskans are choosing to leave the state in search of better educational and employment opportunities elsewhere. This outmigration contributes to a talent drain that exacerbates workforce shortages across various industries. The loss of skilled workers hinders economic growth and innovation, making it increasingly difficult for Alaska to meet its labor needs and remain competitive.

In addition to outmigration, Alaska faces significant challenges in ensuring that education and training opportunities are widely available and accessible. The state's geographic dispersion limits access to education and training programs, particularly in rural and remote communities, which creates barriers to workforce development. Ensuring equitable access to educational resources is essential for developing a competent and inclusive workforce that can meet the diverse needs of Alaska's economy.

Amidst the challenges above, the federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) presents Alaska with unprecedented opportunity. With over \$20 billion in planned infrastructure and resource development projects by 2030, these initiatives have the potential to create thousands of jobs across Alaska. However, this opportunity also

underscores the urgent need for a skilled and prepared workforce that can meet the growing demand for labor in our state.

Technological advancements are rapidly transforming industries and the nature of work in Alaska, necessitating continuous upskilling and reskilling of the workforce. As new technologies emerge, workers must adapt to remain competitive in the global market. This ongoing evolution presents both a challenge and an opportunity for Alaska, as the state must ensure that its workforce is equipped with the skills required to thrive in a technology-driven economy.

Finally, climate change and environmental concerns pose significant risks to Alaska's economy, but they also open new avenues for growth. The state's workforce must adapt to the realities of climate change, particularly in sectors such as renewable energy and sustainable development. By acquiring new skill sets relevant to these emerging fields, Alaska's workforce can contribute to a more resilient and sustainable economic future.

Given the scale and complexity of these challenges, a fragmented approach to workforce development is insufficient. Alaska's vast geography, small population, and diverse industries necessitate a coordinated, strategic response that can unify stakeholders across sectors and regions. The development of a comprehensive, cross-industry workforce initiative, endorsed and supported by all major stakeholders, is critical to ensuring Alaska's long-term economic resilience and growth.

Methodology

The methodology employed in the development of *Alaska's Workforce Future* involved a multi-faceted approach, integrating stakeholder engagement as well as quantitative, qualitative, and meta-analysis methods to assess Alaska's workforce needs. The process was guided by collaborative efforts among key participants, including industry leaders, Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development and other state agencies, workforce development experts, educational institutions, Alaska Native organizations and community members.

Stakeholder Engagement and Collaboration

This report draws extensively on the feedback and recommendations gathered during the Alaska Workforce Investment Board's Fall 2023 Industry Convening, a key event where stakeholders from across the state came together. The convening served as a vital platform for gathering perspectives and strengthening partnerships, reinforcing the collaborative momentum necessary to address Alaska's workforce challenges.

The Industry Advisory Council (IAC), comprising representatives from various sectors including energy, transportation, healthcare, education, construction, and others, played a key role in guiding this planning process. Regular meetings and work sessions were held to gather insights and recommendations.

Surveys

A student and job-seeker survey was designed to understand the perspectives of Alaskans entering the workforce regarding their knowledge of career education and training opportunities and their aspirations. The survey was distributed statewide over six weeks, reaching a wide geographic spread, and gathered responses from 353 participants. The survey results provided insights about individuals' career aspirations and perceived barriers to employment in Alaska.

A comprehensive employer survey aimed to capture the challenges faced by Alaska employers in their efforts to recruit, train, and retain workers. Conducted over three weeks, the survey achieved 576 responses from employers of all sizes and economic regions across 23 industries, providing a broad understanding of the workforce needs in Alaska.

Appendices 1 and 2 are summary reports of the surveys conducted for Alaska's Workforce Future.

Focus Groups and Key Informant Interviews

Targeted discussions were held with educators, administrators, and training providers from Alaskan institutions. These focus group sessions and interviews identified gaps in current career awareness efforts, funding, and programming, and explored opportunities for alignment with industry needs.

Regional focus groups and key informant interviews were conducted with organizations representing rural communities to ensure that the unique challenges and opportunities in Alaska's diverse economic regions are represented in setting goals, developing strategies, and defining desired outcomes.

Appendices 3 and 4 are summary reports of the focus groups and key informant interviews conducted for this report.

Meta Analysis

This report reviewed and analyzed over 50 publications, including industry specific workforce plans, regional plans, Alaska Native tribal organization workforce plans, and Comprehensive Economic Development Strategies (CEDs) to include relevant information reflective of Alaska's diverse workforce needs. Other publications reviewed in development of *Alaska's Workforce Future* include related education-led reports such as the [Alaska Career and Technical Education Plan](#) and the [Alaska College and Career Guidance](#) report.

Appendices 5 and 6 include a summary report and crosswalk of eleven Alaska workforce publications.

To capture a comprehensive view, research spanned several of Alaska’s critical industry sectors, reflecting the input from a broad but representative cross-section of the state’s economy. This involved analyzing employment data, training requirements, and the potential impact of upcoming mega-projects on workforce demand.

A careful review of the industry data allowed us to identify consistent themes impacting Alaska’s workforce. These insights, combined with findings from student surveys and broader research, were essential in shaping the strategies presented in *Alaska’s Workforce Future*.

Vision

The vision of *Alaska’s Workforce Future* was carefully crafted from the collective input and feedback of stakeholders. This inclusive approach ensures that the vision embodies the shared aspirations and priorities of Alaska’s workforce development community. It is anchored in the belief that a well-coordinated and inclusive workforce development effort is essential to the state's economic prosperity and the well-being of its residents.

“A resilient, skilled, and adaptable workforce that drives sustainable economic growth and enhances the quality of life for all Alaskans, with a steadfast commitment to equity and inclusion, ensuring that opportunities are accessible to every individual across the state.”

Shared Goals and Strategies

Goal 1: Enhance Career Awareness and Pathways

Strategy 1.1 – Boost Industry Career Marketing and Branding

Organize career awareness campaigns targeting students, parents, teachers, counselors, and working-age Alaskans to increase knowledge of high-demand industries and required skills. Catalog agencies and organizations engaged in career awareness initiatives locally, at the state level, and nationwide to share resources. Establish and maintain regular communications. Apply best practices for industry-specific outreach from example organizations such as Alaska Resource Education (ARE), Alaska EXCEL, Alaska’s Area Health Education Centers (AHEC), and others.

Utilize social media to expose young and working-age Alaskans to various job opportunities, featuring testimonials from current workers and employers, and guidance from career counselors and industry professionals.

Support, promote, and enhance websites and e-tools available in the state, working with partners to provide linkages between compatible tools, as appropriate. (University of Alaska’s Career Coach, ACPE’s AKCIS etc.) Work with

partners to explore other successful models such as “My Colorado Journey” to enhance and increase accessibility of Alaska’s available career information resources.

Strategy 1.2 – Strengthen Career Pathway Programs

Increase and improve career pathway programs at all educational levels, ensuring alignment with industry needs. Establish ongoing, scheduled methods for gathering industry feedback related to training and career pathways initiatives needed and underway impacting specific industries; ensure current and future needs are being addressed. Apply best practices, scale up effective programs, and expand to new industry sectors.

Provide support for developing and certifying current and new CTE instructors statewide at secondary and postsecondary levels, including industry trainers for job-based learning and apprenticeship programs. Assist in recruiting new CTE teachers.

Establish and expand Career Guidance initiatives as described in the Association of Alaska School Board’s Interview [*Finding and Resources: Alaska College and Career Guidance*](#) report published in August of 2023.

Advocate for consistent training for all career guides/navigators across the state.

Strategy 1.3 – Support Career Planning and Mentorship

Explore the feasibility of introducing required career planning classes for high school graduation.

Increase mentorship opportunities and support services, particularly for youth, to guide them into successful career paths.

Assist employers to engage in rural outreach and develop work-based learning initiatives. Launch employer communications plan to connect employers with cohorts graduating from training/certification programs essential to their industry.

Goal 2: Develop a Skilled and Qualified Workforce

Strategy 2.1 – Address Workforce Readiness

Organize Pre-Job Workforce Forums, especially for entities involved in IIJA projects, to prepare workers with the necessary qualifications.

Leverage large infrastructure projects to link economic development efforts with workforce development planning.

Strategy 2.2 – Expand and Improve Training Programs

Identify potential funding resources for high school and postsecondary CTE (Career and Technical Education) programs, independent of federal Carl Perkins funding requirements.

Build upon strategies and recommendations from the [Alaska Career and Technical Education Plan](#).

Support educational and training programs that prepare the workforce for emerging skills and technologies required by the changing Alaska workforce landscape.

Strategy 2.3 – Promote Apprenticeships and Internships

Create internship/apprenticeship expansion programs modeled after best practices in other states, potentially including employer subsidies and tax incentives.

Explore the establishment of a State Apprenticeship Agency (SAA) to streamline and expand apprenticeship opportunities.

Goal 3: Retain Alaskans, Attract New Alaskans, and Address Population Decline

Strategy 3.1 – Improve Access to Education and Financial Resources

Advocate for K-12 and post-secondary funding, especially for technical training programs.

Support initiatives like ACPE’s FAFSA completion campaign to ensure students can access the financial resources they need for post-secondary education.

Assist with job and training applications to reduce barriers for young Alaskans.

Advocate for tuition and student loan forgiveness for long-term residency; remove out-of-state tuition.

Strategy 3.2 – Strengthen Talent Pipelines

Increase career awareness and exploration opportunities among Alaska youth and working-age residents.

Establish programs that connect students to work experiences, particularly in rural areas.

Strategy 3.3 – Utilize Untapped Talent

Leverage the potential of untapped or under-utilized talent among current Alaskans, including veterans, the immigrant workforce, Alaskans with disabilities, and formerly incarcerated individuals.

Strategy 3.4 – Market Alaska’s Opportunities: Recruit In and Out of Alaska

Organize marketing campaign to encourage working-age adults to find work in and relocate to Alaska. Emphasize the “adventure” lifestyle that is unique to the state; seek to collaborate with organizations engaged in marketing Alaska as a place to live, such as the [Kenia Peninsula Economic Development District](#).

Share information about incentives that may be created through partnerships and/or put in place by state or local government agencies. Incorporate focused messaging for past Alaska residents that have moved away, encouraging them to return.

Strategy 3.5 – Elevate Programs that Foster New Alaskans

Support recruitment campaigns that bring new workers to Alaska and leverage opportunities to encourage seasonal, temporary or transient workforce to make Alaska their permanent home.

Address inefficiencies and delays related to occupational licensing processes, regulatory compliance such as background check delays, improving access to DMV services, enhancing CDL testing procedures, and streamline access to apprenticeship opportunities.

Simplify processes for reciprocal licensing for professionals and journey level trades; reduce waiting times. Expand reciprocal licensing agreements with other states.

Goal 4: Foster Regional Workforce Development

Strategy 4.1 – Establish Regional Teams

Identify or create regional teams to coordinate cross-industry workforce development planning based on regional knowledge of gaps and assets. Formally recognize partnerships between regional teams and the AWIB.

Align statewide workforce planning with regional efforts to ensure that initiatives reflect the unique needs of each area.

Strategy 4.2 – Consult Regional Knowledge for Workforce Projects

Support regional efforts to employ community representatives who act as liaisons between residents, state agencies, and employers to foster clear communication and retain local talent.

Use existing local workforce development groups and resources to guide regional workforce development.

Support efforts to ensure regional involvement in workforce development related to IJA projects to prepare workers for those specific opportunities.

Goal 5: Improve Infrastructure and Access to Support Services

Strategy 5.1 – Address Infrastructure Gaps

Advocate for infrastructure projects to include investments in housing, transportation, childcare, and eldercare, which are essential for enabling workforce participation and economic development.

Strategy 5.2 – Collaborate with Partners to Enhance Support Systems

Work with partners to address issues related to housing, transportation, and access to other critical services that affect workforce stability and mobility.

Goal 6: Ensure Sustainability and Continuity of Workforce Development Efforts

Strategy 6.1 – Establish a Centralized Coordinating Entity

Identify and empower a centralized organization to coordinate implementation of these strategies; facilitate ongoing workforce development efforts, ensuring that all stakeholder feedback is incorporated, and progress is continuously measured.

Given the need for consistent and uninterrupted progress, the coordinating entity is designed to function independently of political shifts and budgetary constraints, ensuring long-term success. At the same time, the AWIB's role as a connected and influential partner remains critical, facilitating essential coordination with state leadership. This dual approach leverages the unique strengths of both entities, fostering a resilient and adaptive workforce development strategy.

In partnership with the State of Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development and the AWIB, the coordinating entity is tasked with activities in

support of the shared goals, including facilitation and support of statewide convenings and regional teams. The AWIB will coordinate with other state offices, agencies, and departments.

Strategy 6.2 – Empower Coordinating Entity for Sustainability and Engagement

The coordinating entity will serve the collaborative effort by:

- Identifying, establishing, and maintaining sustainable funding streams to support long-term workforce development initiatives, ensuring goals can be met over time.
- Ensuring the continued involvement of industry and other partners to keep the workforce development plan dynamic and responsive to changing needs.
- Maintaining the Alaska Business Education Compact (BEC) and utilizing this forum as a feedback resource; continue to build BEC engagement across industry sectors, public and private training institutions, state and local agencies, and nonprofits and others providing supportive services.

Expected Outcomes

A Resilient Alaska Workforce and Economy

The implementation of *Alaska’s Workforce Future* is expected to significantly strengthen Alaska’s workforce, making it more adaptable, skilled, and capable of meeting the demands of a rapidly changing economy. By aligning training programs with industry needs and enhancing career pathways, the strategies are designed to reduce workforce shortages and ensure that Alaskans are well-prepared to take on high-demand roles across various sectors.

Retaining Alaska’s Talent

Providing clear career pathways, improving access to local education and training opportunities, and promoting the benefits of staying in Alaska, are steps we can take to stem the outmigration of young talent. This will help maintain a robust and dynamic working-age population that can support the state’s long-term economic growth.

Growth in Every Region

The establishment of regional teams is expected to lead to more effective and tailored workforce strategies across different regions of Alaska. By addressing the specific needs of local economies, these teams will help ensure that all areas of the state benefit from economic growth, leading to more balanced and inclusive development.

Ready for Alaska’s Growth Opportunities

Proactively preparing the workforce for upcoming infrastructure projects funded by the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) will ensure that Alaska is ready to capitalize on these opportunities. This preparedness will help the state meet the demand for skilled labor, maximize the economic benefits of these projects, and secure long-term prosperity for its residents.

Unified Workforce Efforts

Identifying and supporting a coordinating entity will enhance communication and collaboration among all stakeholders involved in workforce development. This centralized approach is expected to lead to more efficient use of resources, better alignment of efforts, and stronger partnerships between employers, educators, and government agencies.

Next Steps

As we move forward with implementing *Alaska’s Workforce Future*, the following initial steps will lay the foundation for our collective efforts. These steps are designed to be flexible and adaptable, recognizing that strategies will evolve as we receive feedback from stakeholders and the broader community. We anticipate that once the report is published, new ideas and strategies will emerge, offering valuable insights that will help us refine and expand our approach. Our commitment to these shared goals requires an openness to incorporate these contributions, ensuring that our efforts remain responsive and effective.

Formal Endorsement from Key Partners

- **Obtain AWIB Resolution of Support:** *Alaska’s Workforce Future* will be presented to the Alaska Workforce Investment Board (AWIB) to secure a formal resolution of support. The formal endorsement will demonstrate the public-private partnership established through this process and unified support for strategic implementation.

Identifying and Securing Funding

To successfully implement the strategies outlined in *Alaska’s Workforce Future*, securing sustainable funding sources is essential. The plan’s goals, including the establishment of a coordinating entity, the development of a comprehensive career awareness campaign, and the creation of a central hub for workforce opportunities, require dedicated resources. This includes funding for staff, website development, marketing, communications, and the deployment of recurring survey tools.

- **Initial Funding Secured:** The Alaska Safety Alliance (ASA) has recently been awarded \$260,000 from the Denali Commission to support this critical work. This

initial funding will be instrumental in jump-starting key initiatives and building the infrastructure necessary for ongoing implementation.

- **Pursue Federal and State Grants:** Identify and apply for relevant federal and state grants that align with the objectives of this plan. This could include workforce development grants, education and training program funds, and infrastructure support from initiatives like the IIJA. Collaborate with state agencies, such as the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, to leverage existing funding streams and explore new opportunities.
- **Engage Private Sector Partners:** Seek financial support from industry partners who will benefit directly from the plan's success. This could involve creating sponsorship opportunities for specific initiatives, such as the career awareness campaign or the development of a centralized workforce information platform. Building on the established public-private partnership, private sector investment will be crucial in sustaining long-term efforts.
- **Explore Philanthropic Funding:** Approach philanthropic organizations and foundations that focus on workforce development, education, and economic growth. These organizations may offer grants or donations to support specific components of the plan, such as outreach programs, workforce surveys, or the creation of educational resources.
- **Secure Legislative Support:** Work with state legislators to advocate for the inclusion of workforce development funding in the state budget. Legislative backing can provide a stable and ongoing source of funding, ensuring that the plan's initiatives are not only launched but sustained over time.

Ongoing Stakeholder Engagement

- **Establish Regular Communication Channels:** Set up regular meetings and forums to engage stakeholders across all sectors, including industry leaders, educators, government agencies, and community organizations. Utilize virtual platforms to ensure broad participation, particularly from remote and rural areas.
- **Create a Stakeholder Advisory Group:** Form an advisory group comprised of representatives from key sectors and regions to provide ongoing guidance and feedback throughout the implementation process. This group will act as a bridge between the coordinating entity and broader stakeholder networks.
- **Conduct Periodic Surveys or Focus Group/Key Informant Interviews:** Implement regular surveys to capture stakeholder perspectives and experiences as the plan progresses. Use survey findings to refine strategies and actions, ensuring they

remain aligned with stakeholder needs and priorities. Qualitative methods such as focus groups or key informant interviews may also be used for this purpose.

Communication of Plan Progress

- **Develop a Public Dashboard:** Create an online dashboard that tracks the progress of the plan’s implementation. This dashboard should be updated regularly with key metrics, milestones, and outcomes, providing transparency and accountability to the public and stakeholders.
- **Issue Regular Progress Reports:** Publish biannual or annual progress reports that summarize the achievements, challenges, and adjustments made during the implementation. These reports should be widely distributed to all stakeholders and made available on the plan’s website.
- **Host Public Forums:** Organize public forums or town hall meetings at key milestones to share progress, gather feedback, and discuss any necessary course corrections. These forums should be accessible to all Alaskans, with options for in-person and virtual participation.

Adjustments and Revisions

- **Implement a Continuous Improvement Process:** Establish a mechanism for regularly reviewing and updating the plan based on new data, stakeholder feedback, and changing economic conditions. This process should be flexible enough to adapt to emerging opportunities and challenges.
- **Conduct Annual Review Sessions:** Hold annual review sessions with the coordinating entity and key stakeholders to assess the effectiveness of the strategies and actions. Use these sessions to identify areas for improvement and to update the plan as needed.
- **Incorporate Feedback Loops:** Ensure that all feedback from stakeholders, whether through surveys, forums, or direct communication, is systematically reviewed and used to inform ongoing revisions to the plan. This will help keep the plan responsive to the evolving needs of Alaska’s workforce.
- **Ongoing Leadership, Adaptation, and Engagement:** The coordinating entity will be tasked with advancing this plan, guided by the recommendations of the 2023 AWIB Convening. This includes securing additional resources, hiring the necessary staff, and supporting the ongoing initiatives identified by the Convening.

In addition to these responsibilities, the entity will focus on maintaining widespread stakeholder engagement through future convenings, events, surveys, and forums. The Alaska Business Education Compact (BEC) will be utilized as a core feedback resource, helping to sustain engagement across diverse sectors, training

institutions, agencies, and service providers. The entity's role is to lead with a focus on long-term sustainability, fostering innovation, building resilience, and adapting to evolving workforce challenges.

Conclusion

Alaska's Workforce Future is not just a workforce plan; it is a shared vision for the state's economic prosperity and the well-being of its residents. This comprehensive, data-driven approach was built on the collaborative efforts of stakeholders from across the state, reflecting the diverse needs and opportunities that exist within Alaska's workforce. The goals and strategies outlined in this plan are designed to address the pressing workforce challenges we face, while also seizing the opportunities that lie ahead.

As we move into the implementation phase, the success of this plan will depend on the continued dedication and collaboration of all partners involved—industry leaders, educators, Alaska Native organizations, government agencies, and community groups. The early actions outlined in the Next Steps section will set the foundation for our efforts, but flexibility and adaptability will be key as we incorporate feedback and adjust to evolving conditions.

Together, we have the opportunity to build a stronger, more resilient workforce that not only meets the demands of today but also prepares for the challenges and opportunities of tomorrow. By staying committed to our shared goals and continuously engaging with all stakeholders, we can ensure that Alaska's Workforce Future is one that benefits every Alaskan, securing the state's economic vitality for years to come.

Acknowledgements

Alaska's Workforce Future was a collaborative effort of the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, the Alaska Workforce Investment Board, and the Alaska Safety Alliance/Alaska Workforce Alliance. Financial support provided by the Denali Commission, the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, and the Alaska Safety Alliance.

The Alaska Safety Alliance is an Alaska 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization comprised of more than 125 members, including private sector employers, education and training providers, Alaska Native corporations, and partner nonprofit organizations. Our mission is to ensure the availability of a highly trained workforce sufficient to staff Alaska's industries safely and competitively, now and in the future.

The Alaska Safety Alliance is grateful to all the individuals and organizations across Alaska that have contributed to *Alaska's Workforce Future*. We'd like to give special recognition to the following individuals who participated on the Industry Advisory Committee and other working groups for their dedication and commitment to creating opportunities for Alaskans in support of Alaska's business community.

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Acronyms

ACPE	Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education
AKDOLWD	Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development
AHEC	Area Health Education Centers
AKCIS	Alaska Career Information System
ASA	Alaska Workforce Alliance
AWA	Alaska Workforce Alliance
AWIB	Alaska Workforce Investment Board
BEC	Business Education Compact
CTE	Career and Technical Education
FAFSA	Free Application for Federal Student Aid
IIJA	Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act
IAC	Industry Advisory Council
SAA	State Apprenticeship Agency

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