

## PREPARATION

**C+**

2008 Grade



Change Over Time

Alaska's fairly low performance in educating its young population could limit the state's access to a competitive workforce and weaken its economy.

- Eighth graders perform fairly poorly in math, science, and reading.
- There is a 13% gap between whites and all minorities in the percentage of young adults with a high school credential.

## PARTICIPATION

**F**

2008 Grade



Change Over Time

College opportunities for young and working-age adults are very poor.

- The percentage of working-age adults enrolled in higher education has declined by 39% since the early 1990s.
- Among young adults, 11% of Alaska Natives are enrolled in college, compared with 33% of whites.

## AFFORDABILITY

**F**

2008 Grade



Change Over Time

Higher education has become less affordable for students and their families.

- Poor and working-class families must devote 37% of their income, even after aid, to pay for costs at public four-year colleges.
- Financial aid to low-income students is low. For every dollar in Pell Grant aid to students, the state spends only six cents.

## COMPLETION

**F**

2008 Grade



Change Over Time

Despite some improvement, Alaska is one of the lowest-performing states in awarding certificates and degrees relative to the number of students enrolled.

- Twenty-two percent of college students complete a bachelor's degree within six years.
- Ten percent of Alaska Natives graduate within six years, compared with 25% of whites.

## REPORT CARD

Preparation	C+
Participation	F
Affordability	F
Completion	F
Benefits	C+
Learning	I

## BENEFITS

**C+**

2008 Grade



Change Over Time

Only a fair proportion of residents have a bachelor's degree, and this weakens the state economy.

- Eight percent of Alaska Natives have a bachelor's degree, compared with 32% of whites.
- If all racial/ethnic groups had the same educational attainment and earnings as whites, total annual personal income in the state would be about \$2 billion higher.

## LEARNING

**I**

2008 Grade

Like all states, Alaska receives an "Incomplete" in Learning because there is not sufficient data to allow meaningful state-by-state comparisons.

## WHAT DO THE ARROWS MEAN?



State has increased or remained stable on the key indicator in the category.



State has declined on the key indicator in the category.



Table II. Grant Dollars per Estimated Population, by State: 2007-08

State	Estimated Population	Total Grant Dollars/Population	State	Estimated Population Age 18-24	Total Grant Dollars/Population Age 18-24
1. South Carolina	4,407,709	67.63	1. South Carolina	430,834	691.85
2. Washington DC	588,292	56.94	2. Georgia	904,063	550.48
3. Georgia	9,544,750	52.14	3. West Virginia	159,200	518.77
4. Tennessee	6,156,719	46.15	4. Tennessee	551,709	514.95
5. West Virginia	1,812,035	45.58	5. Kentucky	383,950	487.01
6. Kentucky	4,241,474	44.09	6. Washington DC	73,708	454.44
7. New York	19,297,729	42.87	7. New York	1,974,693	418.99
8. Pennsylvania	12,432,792	37.96	8. Pennsylvania	1,197,002	394.30
9. New Mexico	1,969,915	35.62	9. New Jersey	766,049	383.64
10. Indiana	6,345,289	35.25	10. Indiana	605,135	369.63
11. New Jersey	8,685,920	33.83	11. Washington	597,971	344.33
12. Vermont	621,254	33.69	12. New Mexico	204,881	342.44
13. Illinois	12,852,548	32.50	13. North Carolina	855,111	342.05
14. Louisiana	4,293,204	32.32	14. Vermont	61,218	341.86
15. North Carolina	9,061,032	32.28	15. Florida	1,595,264	339.24
16. Washington	6,468,424	31.83	16. Illinois	1,292,270	323.24
17. Minnesota	5,197,621	30.12	17. Minnesota	507,397	308.56
18. Florida	18,251,243	29.65	18. Louisiana	466,256	297.57
19. Virginia	7,712,091	25.60	19. Virginia	761,134	259.38
20. California	35,553,215	22.89	20. Ohio	1,075,049	237.30
21. Texas	23,904,380	22.50	21. Texas	2,433,321	221.04
22. Ohio	11,466,917	22.25	22. Delaware	84,868	212.88
23. Oklahoma	3,617,316	20.99	23. California	3,832,021	212.35
24. Delaware	864,764	20.89	24. Oklahoma	371,780	204.27
25. Iowa	2,988,046	19.94	25. Nevada	210,117	200.80
26. Michigan	10,071,822	19.19	26. Connecticut	322,658	199.86
27. Missouri	5,878,415	18.71	27. Michigan	973,666	198.50
28. Connecticut	3,502,309	18.41	28. Missouri	558,372	197.02
29. Wisconsin	5,601,640	18.30	29. Iowa	305,420	195.05
30. Maryland	5,618,344	18.24	30. Maryland	539,889	189.78
31. Colorado	4,861,515	16.46	31. Wisconsin	549,793	186.49
32. Nevada	2,565,382	16.45	32. Colorado	451,917	177.02
33. Rhode Island	1,057,832	14.50	33. Maine	112,422	159.36
34. Maine	1,317,207	13.60	34. Arkansas	263,872	139.43
35. Massachusetts	6,449,755	13.39	35. Massachusetts	641,055	134.69
36. Arkansas	2,834,797	12.98	36. Rhode Island	114,510	133.93
37. Puerto Rico	3,942,375	9.45	37. Oregon	335,815	104.33
38. Oregon	3,747,455	9.35	38. Puerto Rico	396,057	94.04
39. Mississippi	2,918,785	7.86	39. Mississippi	302,407	75.86
40. Nebraska	1,774,571	7.06	40. Nebraska	186,756	67.13
41. Kansas	2,775,997	6.88	41. Kansas	289,947	65.84
42. North Dakota	639,715	5.91	42. Idaho	147,047	48.17
43. Idaho	1,499,402	4.72	43. Alabama	446,948	48.07
44. Alabama	4,627,851	4.64	44. Montana	94,164	46.38
45. Montana	957,861	4.56	45. North Dakota	83,331	45.34
46. Utah	2,645,330	4.41	46. Utah	327,682	35.63
47. South Dakota	796,214	3.03	47. New Hampshire	119,035	31.36
48. New Hampshire	1,315,828	2.84	48. South Dakota	82,237	29.38
49. Arizona	6,338,755	1.93	49. Arizona	590,943	20.68
50. Alaska	683,478	0.98	50. Alaska	73,172	9.16
51. Hawaii	1,283,388	0.32	51. Hawaii	123,412	3.31
52. Wyoming	522,830	0.31	52. Wyoming	52,944	3.06
<b>Nation</b>	<b>304,563,532</b>	<b>26.42</b>	<b>Nation</b>	<b>29,880,472</b>	<b>269.32</b>

July 2007 Population estimates from U.S. Census Bureau. See population data end note.

**Table 12. Estimated Undergraduate Grant Dollars per Undergraduate Enrollment, by State: 2007-08**

2007-08 Undergraduate FTE		Estimated UG Grant Dollars/UG FTE		Estimated Need-based UG Grant Dollars/UG FTE	
State		State		State	
1. Alabama	195,070	1. South Carolina	1,863.24	1. New York	975.07
2. Alaska	18,030	2. Georgia	1,568.36	2. New Jersey	962.64
3. Arizona	390,232	3. Tennessee	1,263.86	3. Washington	881.17
4. Arkansas	108,816	4. New Jersey	1,072.26	4. Pennsylvania	875.78
5. California	1,510,441	5. Kentucky	1,069.83	5. Indiana	803.15
6. Colorado	207,767	6. New York	999.64	6. Illinois	761.71
7. Connecticut	123,582	7. West Virginia	959.12	7. Minnesota	671.00
8. Delaware	34,690	8. Washington	895.85	8. North Carolina	647.52
9. Florida	610,074	9. Pennsylvania	875.78	9. Vermont	623.86
10. Georgia	317,316	10. Florida	873.79	10. Texas	590.96
11. Hawaii	42,164	11. Indiana	840.94	11. California	538.50
12. Idaho	57,775	12. New Mexico	832.81	12. Kentucky	527.82
13. Illinois	516,187	13. North Carolina	823.86	13. Connecticut	519.47
14. Indiana	265,985	14. Louisiana	821.20	14. Maryland	477.28
15. Iowa	175,964	15. Illinois	804.55	15. Oklahoma	434.64
16. Kansas	129,835	16. Minnesota	671.20	16. Ohio	424.79
17. Kentucky	174,782	17. Washington, DC	664.92	17. Wisconsin	418.53
18. Louisiana	167,252	18. Vermont	623.86	18. West Virginia	401.74
19. Maine	46,519	19. Texas	590.96	19. Delaware	387.41
20. Maryland	198,160	20. Virginia	565.76	20. Maine	385.13
21. Massachusetts	292,512	21. Ohio	563.88	21. Virginia	374.22
22. Michigan	405,775	22. Nevada	562.93	22. South Carolina	353.75
23. Minnesota	233,063	23. California	538.50	23. Tennessee	337.21
24. Mississippi	121,877	24. Connecticut	521.72	24. Iowa	335.96
25. Missouri	241,194	25. Maryland	503.26	25. Colorado	316.20
26. Montana	36,257	26. Oklahoma	499.36	26. Missouri	301.49
27. Nebraska	34,582	27. Delaware	489.47	27. Massachusetts	295.10
28. Nevada	69,474	28. Michigan	465.97	28. New Mexico	266.75
29. New Hampshire	50,325	29. Missouri	456.06	29. Oregon	261.48
30. New Jersey	272,789	30. Wisconsin	431.88	30. Florida	245.08
31. New Mexico	81,389	31. Maine	385.13	31. Rhode Island	243.86
32. New York	824,473	32. Colorado	362.23	32. Michigan	223.47
33. North Carolina	348,085	33. Iowa	338.55	33. Arkansas	217.55
34. North Dakota	37,164	34. Arkansas	310.38	34. Nevada	193.02
35. Ohio	451,846	35. Massachusetts	295.17	35. Puerto Rico	164.95
36. Oklahoma	151,840	36. Oregon	264.03	36. Nebraska	148.22
37. Oregon	132,697	37. Rhode Island	243.86	37. Kansas	146.07
38. Pennsylvania	525,763	38. Mississippi	188.09	38. Montana	120.44
39. Puerto Rico	193,340	39. Puerto Rico	164.95	39. Louisiana	117.23
40. Rhode Island	62,890	40. Nebraska	148.22	40. North Dakota	85.83
41. South Carolina	158,663	41. Kansas	147.03	41. Alabama	83.29
42. South Dakota	33,902	42. Montana	120.44	42. New Hampshire	74.09
43. Tennessee	220,989	43. Idaho	107.68	43. Utah	66.55
44. Texas	820,365	44. Alabama	101.71	44. Washington, DC	58.40
45. Utah	135,868	45. North Dakota	101.66	45. Alaska	37.17
46. Vermont	30,141	46. Utah	78.79	46. Idaho	35.22
47. Virginia	307,218	47. New Hampshire	74.17	47. Arizona	31.16
48. Washington	229,826	48. South Dakota	71.26	48. Mississippi	26.70
49. Washington, DC	50,376	49. Alaska	37.17	49. Hawaii	26.68
50. West Virginia	85,976	50. Arizona	31.21	50. Wyoming	25.22
51. Wisconsin	237,413	51. Hawaii	9.68	51. Georgia	3.69
52. Wyoming	22,468	52. Wyoming	7.22	52. South Dakota	-
<b>Nation</b>	<b>12,241,183</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>645.07</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>468.06</b>

FTE data from U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), Integrated Postsecondary Data System (IPEDS), Fall enrollment data file, 2007.

# Postsecondary Education OPPORTUNITY

Public Policy Analysis of Opportunity for Postsecondary Education

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## College Participation Rates for Students from Low Income Families by State FY1993 to FY2006

The college participation rate for dependent students from low income families was 23.8 percent in 2005-06 (FY2006). Out of 8,389,184 4th to 9th graders in 1996-97 from low income families, 1,999,373 were enrolled in college with Pell Grants by 2005-06.

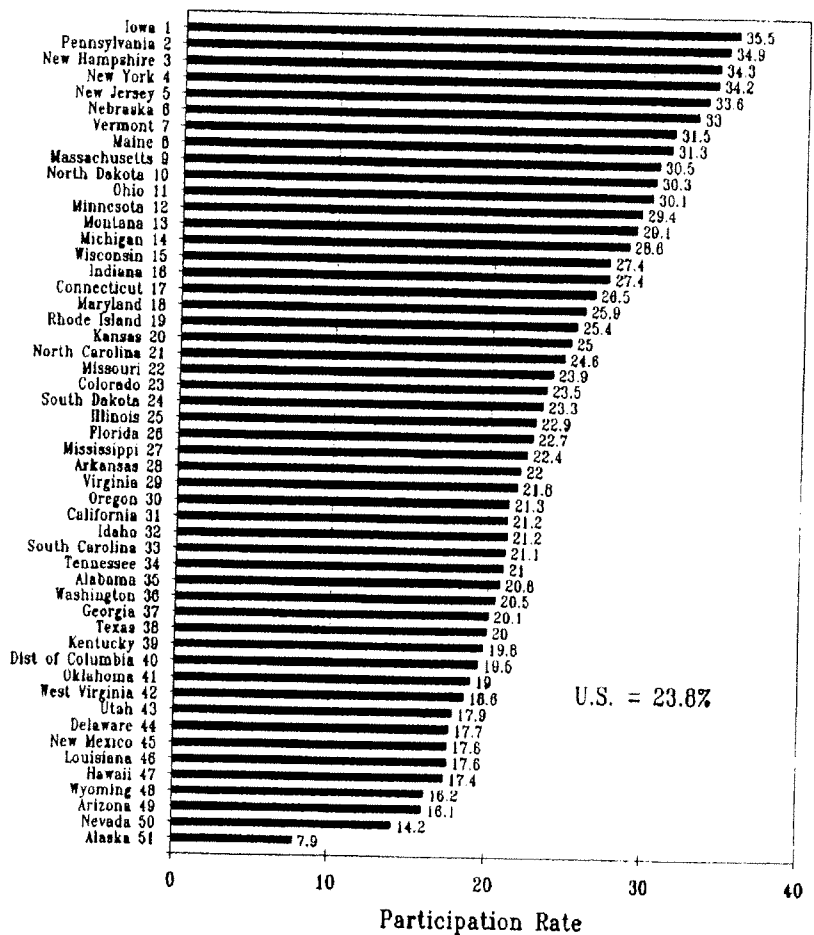
The FY2006 college participation rate of 23.8 percent was down from 25.4 percent in FY2005, down from 25.9 percent in FY2004 and below the peak of 27.6 percent in FY1999.

By comparison the college participation rate for 18 to 24 years olds without Pell Grants was 45.4 percent. This was up from 43.2 percent in FY2005 and 42.7 percent in FY2004.

In fact while the college participation rate for students from low income families has declined by 3.8 percentage points between FY1999 and FY2006, the college participation rate for 18 to 24 year olds without Pell Grants increased by 6.2 percentage points. The gap between these two rates was wider in FY2006 than it has been at anytime since these data were first reported in FY1993.

This analysis of college participation rates for students from low income families is an update and extension of our previous report in OPPORTUNITY in February 2007. This report adds FY2006 data, improves data quality for the four

College Participation Rates by State  
for Students from Low Income Families  
FY2006



years from FY1998 through FY2001, and extends the comparison of college participation rates between Pell Grant

recipients and students ages 18 to 24 years who are not Pell Grant recipients. The aggregate analysis for

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## AlaskAdvantage™ Education Grant

The AlaskAdvantage Education Grant program was created by the Alaska legislature to provide financial assistance to eligible Alaska students attending qualifying postsecondary educational institutions in Alaska. The program was specifically designed to set aside a portion of available grant funds as priority awards for applicants enrolled in qualifying workforce shortage programs, and for applicants demonstrating exceptional academic preparation for higher education (as documented by top quartile SAT or ACT scores).

The AlaskAdvantage Education Grant is a need-based program funded by the Alaska Student Loan Corporation, which provides the state match dollars required for participation in the federal LEAP program (Leverage Educational Assistance Partnership Program). Grant awards range from a minimum of \$500 to a maximum of \$2,000 per academic year for students who have qualifying unmet financial need.

All Alaska residents who complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) by April 15<sup>th</sup> of each year, and who list at least one qualifying Alaska institution of higher education, will be considered as having applied for the grant program. Qualifying applicants will be prioritized based on financial need. Students with the highest financial need will be awarded in order of need until funds are exhausted. All applicants must complete a new FAFSA each year.

### Eligibility

- Alaska resident and U. S. citizen or permanent resident alien
- High school diploma or GED
- Admitted into an undergraduate degree or vocational certificate program at a qualifying institution in the state of Alaska
- Minimum half-time enrollment
- Unmet financial need in excess of \$500
- Not have earned a baccalaureate degree
- Meet satisfactory academic progress standards
- Eligible for federal Title IV aid

### How to Apply

Please note that receiving a grant award in one year does not guarantee that you will receive an award in subsequent years. In order to be considered eligible each year you must:

1. Complete a federal Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) between January 1<sup>st</sup> and April 15<sup>th</sup>. FAFSAs submitted after the April 15<sup>th</sup> filing deadline will not be considered. You can complete the FAFSA on-line at [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov).
2. If the Student Aid Report (SAR) generated from your FAFSA shows you meet the residency and financial need requirements, the Commission will notify you of your potential eligibility. Note that you may be required to submit supplemental information for the purpose of determining your award eligibility.
3. Your school will certify that you are admitted and otherwise eligible. Be sure to apply and enroll as early in the year as possible.
4. Each year, the Commission will process certified grant applications and notify your school if you have been awarded an AlaskAdvantage Education Grant.

### 2008/09 Qualifying Workforce Shortage Programs:

- Allied health sciences;
- Community or social service; and
- Teaching; and
- Process industries/natural resources extraction support

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**Alaska Advantage Education Grant Program**  
**Program Year 2009-2010 Summary as of March 12, 2010**

<b>Population Characteristic</b>	<b>Total FAFSAs*</b>	<b>Total Alaska FAFSAs</b>	<b>Eligible Population**</b>	<b>Certified &amp; Disbursed</b>
# of Students	21,236	17,282	5,761	876
Average Age	27	28	27	31
Average AGI	\$52,115	\$53,945	\$35,501	\$16,966
Average Unmet Need	\$8,823	\$8,469	\$10,973	\$14,566

\*Alaska Residents or non-residents indicating attendance at an Alaska school

\*\*Alaska residents only; FAFSA filed by deadline and reporting qualifying enrollment and need.

**Disbursements by Institution of Attendance**

<b>School Name</b>	<b>Eligible Population</b>	<b># of Student Recipients</b>	<b>Total Disbursed</b>	<b>% Total Dollars</b>
APU	154	3	\$5,000	0.6%
AVTEC	113	7	12,340	1.5%
Career Academy	117	8	3,960	0.5%
Charter College	295	43	24,420	2.9%
Ilisagvik College	11	0	0	0.0%
UAA	3,489	591	553,875	66.1%
UAF	1,219	181	199,750	23.8%
UAS	333	37	36,000	4.3%
Wayland Baptist (Anchorage)	30	6	2,310	0.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,761</b>	<b>876</b>	<b>\$837,655</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

**Projected Disbursement Amounts by Funding Source**

<b>Source</b>	<b>Total Funds</b>	<b>% of Total</b>
General Funds	\$619,520	50.2%
Corporation Funds	\$500,000	40.6%
LEAP	\$49,666	4.0%
SLEAP	\$63,858	5.2%

- Average Unmet Need of Grant Recipient: **\$14,566**
- Average Grant Amount: **\$ 956**
- Average Post-Award Remaining Unmet Need: **\$13,610**

**Alaska Advantage Education Grant Program  
Program Year 2008-2009 Summary**

<b>Population Characteristic</b>	<b>Total FAFSAs*</b>	<b>Total Alaska FAFSAs</b>	<b>Eligible Population**</b>	<b>Certified &amp; Disbursed</b>
# of Students	17,158	14,308	4,341	2,106
Average Age	28	28	28	30
Average AGI	\$51,241	\$51,442	\$33,917	25,891
Average Unmet Need	\$7,967	\$7,862	\$10,160	11,523

\*Alaska Residents or non-residents indicating attendance at an Alaska school

\*\*Alaska residents only; FAFSA filed by deadline and reporting qualifying enrollment and need.

**Disbursements by Institution of Attendance**

<b>School Name</b>	<b>Eligible Population</b>	<b># of Student Recipients</b>	<b>Total Disbursed</b>	<b>% Total Dollars</b>
APU	120	32	\$40,500	2.0%
AVTEC	92	16	23,000	1.2
Career Academy	68	7	11,500	0.6
Charter College	138	69	46,991	2.4
Ilisagvik College	1	0	0	0.0
UAA	2,763	1,393	1,282,918	64.9
UAF	916	457	464,250	23.5
UAS	228	124	102,250	5.2
Wayland Baptist (Anchorage)	15	8	6,175	0.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,341</b>	<b>2,106</b>	<b>\$1,977,584</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Disbursement Amounts by Funding Source**

<b>Source</b>	<b>Total Funds</b>	<b>% of Total</b>
General Funds	\$1,306,113	66.1%
Corporation Funds	561,922	28.4
LEAP	47,762	2.4
SLEAP	61,437	3.1
Donation (Anonymous)	350	0.0

\* Corporation funding consisted of: LEAP Match (\$ 47,762), SLEAP Match (\$122,874), Over-match (\$391,286).

**Disbursements by Income Level**

<b>Dependency Status</b>	<b>Income Level</b>	<b>Number Of Students</b>	<b>Amount Disbursed</b>
Dependent	\$0 to \$19,999	106	\$102,354
Dependent	\$20,000 to \$39,999	158	148,070
Dependent	\$40,000 and Over	261	261,447
Independent	\$0 to \$19,999	833	798,276
Independent	\$20,000 to \$39,999	496	438,602
Independent	\$40,000 and Over	252	228,835

- Average Unmet Need: **\$11,523**
- Average Grant: **\$ 939**
- Average Post-Award Remaining Unmet Need: **\$10,584**



**AlaskaAdvantage Education Grant Program  
Program Year 2007-2008 Summary**

<b>Population Characteristic</b>	<b>Total FAFSAs*</b>	<b>Total Alaska FAFSAs</b>	<b>Eligible Population**</b>	<b>Certified &amp; Disbursed</b>
# of Students	15,136	12,696	4,552	672
Average Age	29	29	29	33
Average AGI	\$48,667	\$49,301	\$34,398	\$17,346
Average Unmet Need	\$9,320	\$9,109	\$10,520	\$13,043

\*Alaska Residents or non-residents indicating attendance at an Alaska school

\*\*Alaska residents only; FAFSA filed by deadline and reporting qualifying enrollment and need.

**Disbursements by Institution of Attendance**

<b>School Name</b>	<b>Eligible Population</b>	<b># of Student Recipients</b>	<b>Total Disbursed</b>	<b>% Total Dollars</b>
APU	150	8	\$10,500	1.5%
AVTEC	85	3	3,000	0.5%
Career Academy	72	2	3,000	0.5%
Charter College	70	23	20,949	3.1%
Ilisagvik College	6	1	500	0.1%
UAA	2,988	524	528,250	78.8%
UAF	903	73	70,000	10.4%
UAS	240	27	27,250	4.1%
Wayland Baptist (Anchorage)	38	11	6,825	1.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,552</b>	<b>672</b>	<b>\$670,274</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Disbursement Amounts by Funding Source - PY0607**

<b>Source</b>	<b>Total Funds</b>	<b>% of Total</b>
Corporation Funds	\$558,891	83.4%
LEAP	\$48,399	7.2%
SLEAP	\$62,984	9.4%

\* Corporation funding consisted of: LEAP Match (\$48,399), SLEAP Match (\$125,968), Over-match (\$384,524).

**LEAP/SLEAP - Disbursements by Income Level**

<b>Dependency Status</b>	<b>Income Level</b>	<b>Number Of Students</b>	<b>Amount Disbursed</b>
Dependent	\$0 to \$19,999	3	\$2,500
Dependent	\$20,000 to \$39,999	8	\$7,250
Dependent	\$40,000 and Over	1	\$2,000
Independent	\$0 to \$19,999	450	\$449,719
Independent	\$20,000 to \$39,999	150	\$152,565
Independent	\$40,000 and Over	60	\$56,240

- Average Unmet Need of Grant Recipient: **\$13,043**
- Average Grant Amount: **\$ 997**
- Average Post-Award Remaining Unmet Need: **\$12,046**

**Alaska Advantage Education Grant Program  
Program Year 2006-2007 Summary**

<b>Population Characteristic</b>	<b>Total FAFSAs*</b>	<b>Total Alaska FAFSAs</b>	<b>Eligible Population**</b>	<b>Certified &amp; Disbursed</b>
# of Students	16,091	13,640	4,359	581
Average Age	30	30	31	35
Average AGI	\$46,235	\$46,514	\$32,042	\$14,337
Average Unmet Need	\$8,142	\$8,263	\$10,075	\$12,237

\*Alaska Residents or non-residents indicating attendance at an Alaska school

\*\*Alaska residents only; FAFSA filed by deadline and reporting qualifying enrollment and need.

**Disbursements by Institution of Attendance**

<b>School Name</b>	<b>Eligible Population</b>	<b># of Student Recipients</b>	<b>Total Disbursed</b>	<b>% Total Dollars</b>
APU	185	26	\$29,639	5.0%
AVTEC	118	8	7,500	1.3%
Career Academy	60	3	4,000	0.7%
Charter College	87	7	11,750	2.0%
Ilisagvik College	16	0	0	0.0%
UAA	2,817	405	412,000	70.2%
UAF	806	100	92,500	15.8%
UAS	251	28	24,250	4.1%
Wayland Baptist (Anchorage)	19	4	5,000	0.9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,359</b>	<b>581</b>	<b>\$586,639</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Disbursement Amounts by Funding Source**

<b>Source</b>	<b>Total Funds</b>	<b>% of Total</b>
Corporation Funds*	\$458,846	78.2%
LEAP	\$47,793	8.2%
SLEAP	\$80,000	13.6%

\* Corporation funding consisted of: LEAP Match (\$47,793); SLEAP Match (\$160,000), Over-match (\$251,043)

**LEAP/SLEAP – Disbursements by Income Level**

<b>Dependency Status</b>	<b>Income Level</b>	<b>Number Of Students</b>	<b>Amount Disbursed</b>
Dependent	\$0 to \$19,999	2	\$3,000
Dependent	\$20,000 to \$39,999	3	\$3,750
Independent	\$0 to \$19,999	426	\$427,139
Independent	\$20,000 to \$39,999	118	\$119,000
Independent	\$40,000 and Over	32	\$33,750

- Average Unmet Need of Grant Recipients: **\$12,237**
- Average Grant Amount: **\$ 1,010**
- Average Post-Award Remaining Unmet Need: **\$11,227**

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## Proposed gas line projects face in-state labor shortfall

**LABOR CRUNCH: State seeks to ramp up training as work force gets grayer.**

By ELIZABETH BLUEMINK

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The Alaska labor force may be headed for a historic test: building a North Slope gas pipeline.

But it remains an open question how many of those thousands of high-paying jobs could be filled by state residents versus nonresidents.

Even if the long-sought gas line linking the Slope's vast gas deposits to Lower 48 markets is delayed for years, Alaska faces a labor crunch. Many workers in the state's major industries are nearing retirement age.

"We do know there's a gap," said Gerry Andrews, who runs the Alaska Department of Labor's gas-line job education and training initiative.

Under the proposed timeline for gas line construction, many of the skilled workers needed for such a project -- welders, truck drivers and engineers, to name a few -- will retire before it begins, economists say.

Even though no one has committed to build a gas line yet, the Labor Department is under a legal mandate to prepare Alaskans for jobs in construction and operation of the pipeline.

The mandate was set three years ago by the Palin administration when it signed the Alaska Gasline Inducement Act. But for years, some educators and in the state's construction industry had been beating the drum for better training opportunities.

"There's a grave concern about our work force," said Rick Rios, the Anchorage School District's coordinator of career and technical education.

### RAISING STUDENTS

Rios is part of the statewide push to better prepare students for gas line jobs and reverse the aging of the state's work force. He said he's already seeing a few results. Three years ago, he said, the state funded one construction academy to provide hands-on training for high school students in Anchorage. Now, legislative funding has expanded construction academies to five school districts, with nearly 1,000 students signed up for classes this year.

Rios said the students he talks to are eager for work. "We had 20 seniors sign up for a (carpentry) institute over spring break -- an eight-day, intensive study," Rios said.

"They gave up their whole break for the 60 hours to be prepared for a job," he said.

Engineers are also in high demand for future pipeline work. Even now, the state is already facing a dire shortage of engineers, industry officials said last week.

An estimated 35 percent of the engineers in some disciplines in Alaska are nonresidents, according to the University of Alaska. Statewide, the university system is seeking to double the amount of its graduating engineers by 2014.

"That probably doesn't even touch what's needed," said Todd Bergman, a former state educator who now runs the Alaska Process Industry Careers Consortium, which assesses work force needs for the oil, gas and mining industries, among others.

### TRAINING ADULTS

Unions in Alaska said they are trying to boost the number of the people they train despite the slow economy.

Charles Engblom, apprenticeship coordinator for the Ironworkers Local 751 in Anchorage, said his union has 70 fewer apprentices in Alaska than it might need for a gas line project, based on some rough numbers he received from the state over a year ago.

"We've got right about now 50 apprentices," he said.

He said he's gearing the program to "hopefully" handle the amount of apprentices needed for a pipeline project, but he

pointed out that for now, there aren't a lot of new jobs to put them in. "Last year was lean for us and this work season is similar to last year," he said.

### **MEETING THE MANDATE**

Since Palin signed AGIA, the Labor Department has identified 113 occupations -- from pile-drivers to paramedics -- that would be needed for gas-line construction and operation.

Here are some other things the department has done relating to its gas-line mandate:

- Worked with other government officials, private industry, and unions to establish training academies for people interested in careers in construction and engineering.
- With the Alaska Department of Education, began designing a plan to streamline the state's career-training for kids and adults.
- Assisted with the creation of new apprenticeship programs, including electrical and drilling.

But the Labor Department is still lacking some key information to meet its mandate.

Just how many jobs are needed for a pipeline project? Previous estimates have ranged widely, from 4,500 to 9,000.

Two North Slope gas line proposals are now being pursued by pipeline companies. More recently, the state has begun talking about building a smaller-diameter gas line from the North Slope to the Railbelt to supply the region's energy needs.

In general, it doesn't matter if a long-sought pipeline ends in Canada or Alaska. Or, if the state first builds a smaller, in-state pipeline that ends somewhere in Southcentral. Any of the projects will require lots of people to dig dirt, weld pipe, cook camp food, and drive trucks. And a lot of people to operate and maintain the line for decades.

The state has asked the competing pipeline companies to submit their manpower needs for pipeline construction and operation for a line from the North Slope to Alberta, Canada or from the North Slope to Valdez.

The Labor Department expects to have that information by the middle of July, Andrews said.

From that, the Labor Department can crunch numbers to determine how many jobs of those jobs can be filled from the state's existing work force, Andrews said.

State and industry officials agree that gas line construction will bring nonresident workers to Alaska. But, they said, the work conditions will be different than the hectic 1970s construction of the trans-Alaska oil pipeline, when thousands of nonresidents moved to the state.

For several reasons, they say, the peak work force for building a gas line will probably be smaller than the 28,000 people required for the oil pipeline. Depending on how it is built, the gas line may not require bulldozing a new right-of-way. The gas line will also offer less jobs over its life span, too. Since the gas would be pressurized, there would be no need to build and maintain a series of pump stations along its path.

On the other hand, gas-line construction jobs will last longer than the trans-Alaska oil pipeline construction jobs, Andrews said.

"Instead of a two-year window, it will be spread over a longer period," he said.

"We will use less individuals building this at any one time, but more man days," he said.

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### **Training for oil industry jobs**

Training opportunities for gas-pipeline-related construction jobs and careers:

- Alaska Construction Academy: Training courses for high school and adults available in five Alaska school districts.
- King Career Center: Course work for Anchorage high school students to prepare them for various careers; for those eligible, on-the-job training and college credit.
- Alaska Works Partnership: Union-supported gateway to construction and pipeline-related apprenticeships.
- Alaska Vocational Technical Education Center: technical certificate programs for many job fields.
- Alaska Process Industry Careers Consortium: career guidance and school-based training to support oil, gas, mining, seafood processing and other major industries.

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