

Senate Education Committee
Alaska State Legislature

Senate Bill 139

Responses from Amundsen Educational Center

1. How long have you been in operation?

We held our first classes in 2001, having been incorporated in 1997. In 2008 we merged with New Frontier Vocational Technical Center, which had been in operation since 1985.

2. What is your governance structure?

We are a non-profit organization, governed by a Board of Directors.

3. What manner of public/private partnerships do you share?

Amundsen Educational Center partners with public agencies such as Department of Vocational Rehabilitation, Workforce Investment Act, the Job Center, and Career Support and Training Services to recruit and fund students. We often have students for re-training funded by worker's compensation.

Amundsen Educational Center partnered with Samaritan's Purse to build our new 4800 sq ft training facility. Samaritan's Purse provided much of the funding and volunteer labor to help us with this new infrastructure.

We partner with our local Kenaitze Indian Tribe for student recruitment and funding, and medical support for Alaskan Native students. We also partner with other native organizations and corporations throughout the state such as CIRI, Kawerak, Aqqaluk Trust Fund, the Alaska Council of Village Presidents, Norton Sound Economic Development Corporation and Bering Straits Foundation to name a few, for funding and recruitment of students.

We partner with Alaska Christian College through our residence life program to offer social and ministry opportunities. We partner with New Hope Counseling Center to offer support and counseling to students at discounted rates.

We partner with the Learning Center at the University Of Alaska Kenai River Campus (KPC) for students who need to obtain their General Education Diploma.

We partner with local businesses such as First National Bank Alaska, Freedom Realty and Residential Mortgage to fund and sell the spec homes that our residential construction program builds. We use many local businesses as subcontractors on the homes.

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For our educational delivery, we partner with LS Coding and Education from Arizona as a distance learning provider for our Professional Medical Coding Program. We partner with McGraw Hill to offer the most up to date curriculum in our Office Occupation programs.

We partner with churches locally, statewide and nationally who support our organization financially, send volunteer work teams and help us with advertisement and recruitment. We also partner with Covenant Youth of Alaska for recruitment of students.

4. What specific training programs do you offer?

We offer training in Office Occupations which includes Accounting Clerk, Computer Information Processor, General Office Clerk and Administrative Assistant.

We offer Professional Medical Coding with the recent upgrade to ICD-10.

We offer a Residential Construction Program.

We offer Individual Course Offerings for students who do not wish to take a full program, but need training in a specific area. Many times this is a person who is gaining specific training for their present job.

5. How many participants do you currently have in those respective programs?

Professional Medical Coding – 7

Office Occupations – 6

Residential Construction – 2

6. What do you offer in the form of degrees and/or certificates in these programs?

We offer Diplomas which are authorized by the Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education. We also offer a certificate of completion to students who take Individual Course Offerings.

7. How many certifications have you issued and in what training fields, since you began operating? Since beginning to receive TVEP funds?

In the five years of receiving TVEP funding we have awarded 157 Diplomas and Certificates:

Building Hope Construction - 32

Professional Medical Coding - 29

Office Occupations – 70

Individual Course Offerings – 26

Before New Frontier Vocational Technical Center merged with Amundsen Educational Center in 2008, it awarded over 1000 diplomas in office occupations. Amundsen Educational Center awarded over 50 diplomas in residential construction in the period between 2001-2008.

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8. Describe the demographic profile of your student body.

Our student body is comprised of students ranging from 16 – 70 years old. We have students from the central Kenai Peninsula and from rural Alaskan villages including, but not limited to, Hooper Bay, Koyuk, White Mountain, Mountain Village, Unalakleet and Norvik.

9. What are the technical and vocational labor demands in your region and how successful are you in satisfying that demand?

All three of our programs, Residential Construction, Professional Medical Coding and Office Occupations are listed as “Hot Jobs” by the State of Alaska.

Our Residential Construction program has gained a solid reputation in our community, having now built over \$2,225,000 worth of real estate on the Kenai Peninsula. The present project was sold before construction began based solely on our reputation as contractors. We have been approached by several local builders who have jobs waiting for our students upon completion of our program.

Professional Medical Coding training is a high demand job. A major change is coming in October, 2014, moving from ICD9 with 14,000 codes, to ICD 10 with 60,000 codes. We are offering the new training to match the demand. Our students take the National Exam through the American Academy of Professional Coders (AAPC). Certified Coders are required to earn 36 Continuing Education Units every 2 years. Our Anatomy class provides 24 CEUs.

The Accounting Clerk and Bookkeepers are also listed among the “Hot Jobs” in Alaska. There has also been a demand for receptionist, schedulers, data entry clerks, and basic computer information processors and administrative assistants. We have a good reputation in our community for providing employees to companies, offices and organizations such as oil field jobs, doctor’s offices and non-profits.

10. What is your annual budget? What other sources of funding do you have besides TVEP?

Our current operating budget is \$589,888. Our TVEP funding for 2013-14 is \$215,000. Our other sources of income are tuition, donations and the sale of the spec house. Tuition is often paid by a funding source such as native tribal organizations, Department of Vocational Rehabilitation and Workforce Investment Act funds.

11. What annual level of funding have you received historically and to date?

FY 10 - \$188,900
FY 11 - \$195,000
FY 12 - \$201,700
FY 13 - \$218,000
FY 14 - \$215,200

Total Funds received to date: \$1,018,800

12. What specifically do TVEP funds pay for at your training center?

Personnel services, local travel, advertising, utilities, consultant services, telecom, facilities, computer software and IT support, office supplies, accountant and insurances.

13. What would you do if TVEP were reduced or eliminated? Increased?

If our TVEP funding were to be eliminated or reduced we would need to immediately scale down the programs we offer to students. If our funding were to increase, we would be able to offer a larger variety of programs for training and preparation for high demand jobs in the workforce both locally and statewide. One such program we would like to start is an IT program. A critical need exists for IT personnel in rural Alaskan villages.

14. Do you operate a residential facility in conjunction with your programs? If so, please give some history of its construction, and current manner of operation and maintenance. Current number of residents?

We do have a residential facility. We are a faith-based non-profit organization and our residence program focuses on mentoring and teaching life skills. We conduct Bible studies and give discipleship training. Because this component is religious in nature, it is completely separate from our training programs. Our residence life program mainly targets young people from off road system villages.

As stated previously, one of our programs is residential construction. The first three years of the school's existence, the students built campus infrastructure as part of their training. Funds for the materials were raised through donations. The land was donated by a local businessman. We now have three cabins and a shop/student lounge building on our 48 acre campus.

Currently, we have a Residence Life Director who, along with his family, lives in one of the cabins. The other two cabins are available for student housing and the fourth building serves as a student lounge and laundry facility. The first semester this year we had 4 students living on campus. Currently we have one married couple living on campus.

15. What is your student/teacher ratio?

Maximum ratio is 12:1. Currently our ratio is 6:1 in Office Occupations; 7:1 in Professional Medical Coding and 2:1 in Residential Construction.

16. How many faculty do you employ? Describe their certification levels.

We have four faculty members on our staff:

Judi Walgenbach, Program Director

B.B.A. in Business Administration, University of Iowa

M.A. in Business Education, University of Iowa

Keith Pieh, Lead Instructor for Building Hope Construction:

General Contractor with a Residential Endorsement

BA North Park College;

Nikki Cloud, Professional Medical Coding Facilitator

Certified Professional Coder, American Academy of Professional Coders

Accounting Clerk Diploma, New Frontier Vocational Technical Center

4 years, United States Navy

Master of Arts in Leadership and Administration, Theological University of America

Master of Arts in Biblical Information and Resource Management, Theological

University of America

Jacki Walgenbach, Office Occupations Facilitator

Over 14 years experience as Administrative Assistant

1 year, Kenai Peninsula College

17. Describe how your training center benefits your local community or region.

We develop programs to meet the needs of our community. It allows students to stay local and still develop a career they enjoy and get them quickly into the workforce.

We reach beyond our local community to remote Alaskan villages to provide students with career training and life coaching that can be utilized in their village in construction, office occupations or the medical field.

By offering the latest training in Professional Medical coding, we are helping to keep the growing medical community on the Central Peninsula supplied with coders who have been trained for the new requirements.

18. Please share any other highlights and needs of your training center.

The best feature of our training center is the ability to deliver vocational training to a wide demographic. We are able to give marketable training in concentrated, focused programs,

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allowing our students to economically and efficiently receive training and get into the workforce quickly.

Our new training center is giving us a higher profile in our community and providing students with a pleasant, modern environment in which to train.

Our number one need is to develop more programs, such as the above mentioned IT program, to offer a wider variety of training for hot jobs.

19. Are there other regional training centers you feel should be receiving TVEP funds?

There are none that we are aware of.

20. Do you believe the current allocation structure for distributing TVEP funds is adequate and fair? If not, how would you recommend adjusting it?

We have no recommendations at this time.