

March 20, 2014

Senate Finance Committee
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

Dear Senate Finance Committee:

Cook Inlet Tribal Council (CITC) strongly supports maintaining funding levels for residential substance abuse treatment and youth labor programs in the FY'15 state operating budget. Therefore, CITC supports the Senate version of the operating budget for residential treatment (Department of Health and Social Services) and opposes the budget cuts to Alaska First Youth labor programs (Department of Labor).

Residential Substance Abuse Treatment Program Cuts

CITC endorses the full funding level as proposed in Senate Finance Committee version of the operating budget. CITC opposes the House version which reflects a reduction of over \$2 million in Behavioral Health Grants for residential treatment, which further burdens already limited program operating funds to address this critical need throughout the state. As a practical matter, funds dedicated to residential treatment have been declining for a decade, and this has placed great pressure on existing programs. In addition, the House funding moves residential funds into outpatient treatment, which further reduces funding available to residential programs. In Anchorage, several programs, CITC's included, have space available but insufficient operating funds to open beds to the people seeking to improve their lives and achieve sobriety. For example, CITC's programs have served nearly 3,300 participants during the past five years. Another 1,389 unique participants received intervention services such as assessment, diagnosis, referral and linkage. However, CITC currently has ten beds that we cannot fill because of the lack of operating funds.

- 75% of residential program graduates report abstinence at 12 months and
 - 88% of residential graduates report stable housing at 12 months
- CITC (ETC) also operates the only medical and social detox unit in Anchorage
- 81% of social detox graduates were provided referral and linkage into treatment services
 - 58% of those who moved from CITC detox to CITC residential treatment completed services.

Removing Alaska Youth First Program Grant Funding from the Base Budget

The Senate Finance Labor Subcommittee removed \$2,391,700 from the base budget for the Alaska Youth First Program grant funding and restored \$1,400,000 as one-time funding. Although CITC appreciates the partial restoration, this still results in a cut of \$991,700 to the program. The House version of the budget proposes a similar reduction from the base but does not restore any level of funding.

This grant supports youth employment programs throughout the state serving over 17,400 young people aged 18-24. Public testimony during the legislative budget process emphasized how important viable employment is to ensure success in many domains; therefore, removal of these funds undermines crucial preventive services that promote self-esteem and contribution to society. In the absence of these developmental services, youth can end up costing the State more in corrections costs, public welfare, health, and other public services. Since it was created by the Alaska Legislature in 2007, the program has awarded grants to 126 agencies that have provided 173,327 services to Alaska youth through 2013.

- Grants support
 - Career Guides working in middle and high schools to create industry awareness in youth and young adults by providing up-to-date information on Alaska's high wage, high demand occupations.
 - Basic youth employability skills in the areas of applied math and language arts, youth also need opportunity to develop employability skills including the emotional and work maturity skills necessary for successful employment.
 - Work experience to provide practical on-the-job training critical for youth who are just entering the work force. This may be through an intensive short term work experience, unpaid work experience, or job shadowing experience.
 - Applied Academic Training for high-wage, high-demand occupations that require competency in reading, math and communication. Applied Academic Training ensures that youth are prepared for apprenticeships and other training opportunities.
 - Teacher-Industry Externships that allow educators to learn about new career opportunities in Alaska industries. The knowledge teachers bring back to the classroom helps youth understand how curricula relate to real world experiences like the teacher externships.
 - School-to-Apprenticeship or Pre-Apprenticeship that links vocational education programs and industry apprenticeship training programs. They are innovative

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approaches to education and training that allow secondary students to become registered apprentices while completing their education.

- o Innovation Grants that foster youth employment and completion of educational goals. Applicants are encouraged to train unemployed and undereducated youth for entry level positions in the demand industries of construction, transportation, health care, and gas pipeline construction, operation, and maintenance.

CITC final overall participant count for the Youth First Grant 2012-13 is 896 participants, 584 in Career Guide activities and 312. CITC strongly supports restoring full funding for the Youth First Program grant.

Please feel free to contact me with further questions.

Sincerely,



Gloria O'Neill
President/CEO