

Department of Labor and Workforce Development Career and Technical Education in Alaska

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Alaska Workforce Investment Board



ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
Cathy Muñoz, Commissioner



Alaska Workforce Investment Board (AWIB) Overview

- ~570 workforce investment boards operating across the US and its territories
- Alaska model has a single statewide board for unified, statewide coordination and efficiency
- Alaska's federally recognized board under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)
- Responsible for statewide workforce strategy, coordination, and oversight
- Aligns education, training, and industry needs across Alaska
- Provides oversight of state and federally funded job training and vocational education programs



Alaska Workforce Investment Board Overview (cont.)

- \$25 million in state and federal grants administered in FY2026
- Administers nine of 12 current Alaska Technical Vocational Ed Program (TVEP) recipients
- State Training and Education Program (STEP) grants awarded via competitive process
- Apply for and receive federal workforce grants when they become available



*State Apprenticeship Expansion Formula (SAEF), Rounds 2 and 3

Career and Technical Education (CTE) in Alaska

- Career pathways = system, not program
- They are a connected system from school to training to employment to career advancement
- Requires alignment across education, workforce, and industry

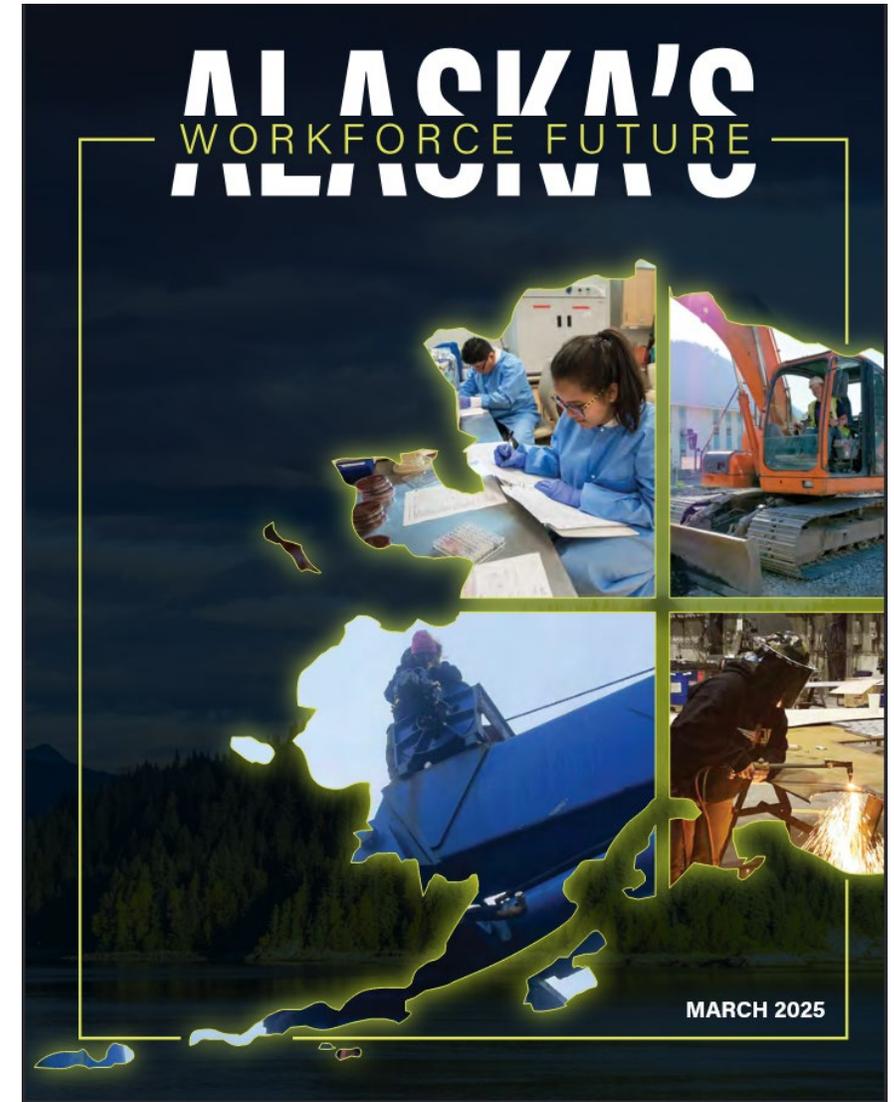


Career and Technical Education in Alaska (cont.)

- State/Public System Anchorage
 - Alaska Department of Education & Early Development (DEED)
 - Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development (DOLWD)
 - University of Alaska (UA)
- Core State Training Centers/Providers
 - Alaska Vocational Technical Education Center (AVTEC)
 - Alaska Regional Training Centers/TVEP Recipients
 - Other approved training providers on the states Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL)
- Other
 - Short-term training providers
 - Industry-specific training

Why Career and Technical Education Matters

- Employers across Alaska consistently reported difficulty filling jobs, with zero percent indicating hiring is “easy”
- Workforce challenges driven by:
 - Lack of career awareness
 - Misalignment between training and industry demand
 - Geographic and infrastructure barriers (housing, childcare, transportation)
- Alaska has strong programs, but they operate in disconnected pockets rather than a coordinated system
- Without alignment, investments in education and training do not consistently translate into employment outcomes



What We Heard From Industry

- Employers need:
 - More industry-specific training aligned to real jobs
 - Expanded apprenticeships and work-based learning
 - Better visibility into upcoming trained workers (pipeline transparency)
- Employers are willing to:
 - Participate in internships, apprenticeships, and training design
 - Help shape curriculum and career pathways
- Top workforce challenges identified:
 - Workforce shortages
 - Lack of career awareness
 - Limited relocation and retention of workers

Career Awareness is a Core Gap

- Career guidance was identified as a consistent statewide need
- Students often lack:
 - Awareness of high-demand careers in Alaska
 - Understanding of training pathways
 - Connection to employers and real work experience
- Career guidance efforts exist, but are not yet:
 - Consistent statewide
 - Connected to training and employment pathways

Career Pathways System

- A strong workforce system connects:
 - Education → Training → Work-based learning → Employment → Advancement
- Pathways must:
 - Be aligned to industry demand
 - Provide clear next steps at every stage
 - Avoid “dead ends” in training
- Career guidance is the entry point into this system, not the end

Where the System Breaks Down Today

- Education, workforce, and industry efforts are often not fully aligned
- Students receive guidance, but:
 - Do not always transition into training
 - Do not always connect to jobs
- Training programs are not always:
 - Aligned to real-time labor market demand
 - Coordinated across regions
- Employers lack visibility into the workforce pipeline

What Alaska Already Has

- Strong regional and industry-led initiatives:
 - AVTEC partnerships
 - Alaska Native Corporation workforce programs
 - CTE and K-12 models
- Active employer engagement and willingness to participate
- Existing workforce programs and funding streams (WIOA, STEP, apprenticeships)
- Dedicated statewide board (AWIB) with cross-sector representation

What a Strong System Requires

- Alignment across education, workforce, and industry
- Employer-driven pathways tied to real jobs
- Work-based learning opportunities (apprenticeships, internships)
- Clear, stackable credentials and career progression
- Data-driven decision making and outcome tracking
- Support services to reduce barriers (housing, childcare, transportation)
- Regionally driven workforce solutions

Key Takeaways

- Alaska has strong programs, but they are not fully connected
- Career guidance and CTE are a critical entry point into the workforce system
- Employers are ready to engage, but need better alignment
- A coordinated, data-driven system improves outcomes for Alaskans



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