



THE STATE
of **ALASKA**
GOVERNOR MIKE DUNLEAVY

**Department of Labor and
Workforce Development**

ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES
Management Services

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March 11, 2024

The Honorable DeLena Johnson
Co-Chair, House Finance Committee
State Capitol, Room 505
Juneau, AK 99801

Dear Co-Chair Johnson:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide the Department of Labor & Workforce Development's FY2025 budget overview to the Finance Committee on March 1, 2024. Below are responses to questions raised by members during the hearing.

Please provide the expected number of legal refugees Alaska is expecting, where they are settling in Alaska, and the source of information (Representative Johnson).

- **The number of refugees in question:**
 - From October 1, 2019, to January 2024, Alaska has welcomed 917 immigrants and refugees. A little less than 500 immigrants/refugees are expected to arrive in Alaska in 2024. This data does not account for all persons living and working in Alaska that are typically counted as "immigrants" and "refugees" because enrollment in programs is not mandatory. (See more information below).
 - For context, the previous average number of refugees arriving in Alaska annually was about 100 persons. However, over the past few years, this number has grown to about 500 new arrivals per year.
- **Settlement locations:**
 - Refugees are settling (in order, from highest to lowest) in: Anchorage (527 persons), Mat-Su (226), Southeast Census Area Delta Junction (90), Juneau (30), Fairbanks (23), and other (21).
- **Sources for the information provided:**
 - This information comes from Catholic Social Services, which houses the Office of Refugee Resettlement agency in Alaska. Catholic Social Services receives federal

funding, under the 1980 Refugee Act, to serve persons under the following visa statuses: refugees, asylees, Cuban/Haitian entrants, Special Immigrant Visas (Afghans), victims of human trafficking, Afghan Humanitarian Parolees, and Ukrainian Humanitarian Parolees.

- Catholic Social Services does not serve all persons in Alaska that are considered immigrants or refugees. This could include persons who do not want to receive services from Catholic Social Services or are in Alaska under a different visa status (ex: temporary protected status, or who have legal work authorization as part of another visa program such as J-1 or H-2B visas, etc.).
- The only agency that has a completely accurate count of the total number of immigrant/refugees is U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service. We are uncertain if we can obtain that information from USCIS without support from our Congressional delegation.
- The Office of Citizenship Assistance is tasked with serving all “legal aliens,” which encompasses a wide range of persons coming to Alaska looking to work temporarily, or who are here to build a new life.

There is a deficit of teacher, para educators, and spec ed providers. What is Labor doing to improve those numbers? Please provide a count of how many teachers, para educators, and special education providers etc. the department is helping to produce, and the role Labor is playing in that process (Representative Galvin).

Below is a summary of the status of the Alaska Workforce Investment Board (AWIB)’s current work with teacher apprenticeships. The department is excited to be involved in the early stages of these initiatives.

Bristol Bay Teacher Apprenticeship:

The department is currently partnering with the Bristol Bay Regional Career & Technical Education Consortium (BBRCTE) to develop a Teacher Registered Apprenticeship Program (RAP) tailored for the Southwest Region School District, Dillingham City School District, Bristol Bay Borough School District, and Lake and Peninsula School District. The shortage of teachers in these areas has led to the certification of emergency teachers, with limitations on extending these certifications beyond one year. In addressing this challenge, we are working with Head Start and Native Associations. The BBRCTE is currently drafting a proposal for this initiative that we intend to review and present to our Federal Project Officer for consideration under the State Apprenticeship Expansion, Equity, and Innovation (SAEEI) grant. Currently, the program is estimated to have approximately 20 participants.

Department of Education and Early Development (DEED):

AWIB is actively engaged in a collaborative effort with DEED to create apprenticeship pathways specifically designed for young adults seeking entry into apprenticeship programs. This collaboration involves close cooperation with DEED staff and school districts to meticulously develop and refine these apprenticeship pathways, ensuring they align with the needs and aspirations of the targeted demographic.

AWIB is also in discussions with DEED regarding the implementation of a teacher apprenticeship program within school districts. To fund this, we are drafting an application for the competitive portion of Round 2 U.S. Department of Labor State Apprenticeship and Expansion Grant (SAEF) to be finalized in April. This initiative aims to provide a structured and effective model for teacher apprenticeship, offering valuable opportunities for individuals aspiring to enter the teaching profession.

State Apprenticeship Expansion, Equity and Innovation funds:

Job centers are utilizing SAEEL funds to support apprenticeship programs by allocating resources for related instruction (RI) and essential supportive services. This strategic use of funds within the job centers contributes to the overall success and sustainability of apprenticeship initiatives, fostering a conducive environment for skill development and professional growth among apprentices.

Please let me know if you or the committee have any additional questions or would like more information.

Sincerely,

DocuSigned by:

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Dan DeBartolo

Administrative Services Director

cc: Laura Stidolph, Director, Governor's Legislative Office
Jenny Lagundino, Budget Analyst, Office of Management and Budget