

August 20, 2003

Acting Federal Coordinator Dolores Beran-Hall
US Department of Labor
Employment Training Administration
200 Constitution Avenue NW
Washington DC 20210

Ms. Beran-Hall:

I am pleased to submit our amended Alaska State Unified Plan Modification. Thanks to the valuable public comment and the efforts of staff from the Employment and Training Administration, Alaska is submitting a plan that provides for better services, more accountability and improved efficiencies.

When Governor Murkowski assumed office he identified workforce development as an area in which he wanted to see improvement. Alaska has focused the energy of this department on the goal of creating good jobs for qualified Alaskans. This modification is the first step in achieving that goal.

Attached is the Alaska State Unified Plan Modification with amendments in accordance with the Workforce Investment Act Regulations: 20 C.F.R. 661.230(b)2 and attachments. Your approval of this plan modification is appreciated. If you should have questions I can be reached at (907)269-7490.

Sincerely,

Katherine Farnham, Executive Director
Alaska Workforce Investment Board
Division of Business Partnerships

Enclosure:

cc: Armando Quiroz, Regional Administrator, US Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration Region VI
Greg O'Claray, Commissioner, Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development
Alice Galvin, PhD, Chair, Alaska State Workforce Investment Board

Alaska Unified Plan Modification 1



For State Unified Plans
Submitted under Section 501 of the
Workforce Investment Act of 1998
For the period of June 2000 to June 2005

*In Accordance with the
Workforce Investment Act Regulations:
20 C.F.R. 661.230 (b) 2*



Final
Amended August 15, 2003
April 18, 2003
Anchorage, Alaska

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Section N, Page 210: Waiver and Work-Flex Requests

Modification:

Since developing the Unified Plan, Alaska has submitted three requests for waivers. These waivers have focused on customer needs as they relate to performance. First the youth ITA waiver, in rural Alaska young people are independent at a much earlier age. They can benefit from vocational training while many other students are trying to remain in school. Alaska also has a young urban population with ever growing responsibilities. More and more young people are anxious to earn good wages to support or assist their families. This waiver will provide them the opportunity to train in high wage, high demand jobs.

The second waiver is our request to serve seasonal workers. Several of Alaska's major economic industries are seasonal in nature, such as tourism, fishing and rural construction. Unfortunately because of the retention expectation, workers in these industries are discouraged from assistance by WIA because of the negative impact on the retention performance measures. Our waiver proposes a separate performance measure for those working in seasonal industries.

Finally, Alaska is seeking a waiver to transfer more than 30% of dislocated worker funds to the adult program. This waiver will encourage economic growth and align limited workforce development resources with the current demands of the state. Alaska is likely to experience slow steady growth over the next several years. If additional adult funding is not likely, then the flexibility to transfer funds assures that a state will have more options to address workforce and economic development concerns.

In addition to the three waiver requests referenced above, Alaska, with the submission of this modification, is formally requesting a waiver to apply 20 CFR 661.300(f) (which permits a state board to carry out the roles of a local board in a single local area state) to a statewide regional planning area. With the waiver, the Governor may designate the state board to carry out any of the roles and responsibilities that would otherwise be carried out by local boards. Approval of this waiver will enable the Governor to establish a governance structure that is responsive to the unique requirements of Alaska. Further, the Governor can streamline the administration of services, increase efficiency, and avoid duplication across the workforce investment system.

Alaska also formally requests a waiver of the requirements relating to local area performance in WIA sec.136(c). Alaska, in functioning as a statewide region, will report statewide data and meet applicable state performance requirements without providing data for each local area. This will enable the AWIB to monitor progress throughout the state, take appropriate corrective action promptly, and will lead to improved statewide performance.

State of Alaska Unified Plan Modification 1

The waivers are submitted in accordance with 20 CFR 661.420(a)(1) and are expected to result in improved programmatic and performance outcomes. This Unified Plan modification is intended to supplement the waiver plan submitted on February 3, 2003, and contains the information required by sec. 661.420(c). These waiver requests will lead to the outcomes identified in February 3, 2003 waiver plan. They will streamline the administration of services, increase efficiency, and avoid duplication across Alaska's workforce investment system.