

ALASKA CAN! 65% by 2025

Interior Alaska Postsecondary Access and Completion Strategy

The Alaska Postsecondary Access and Completion Network, in close coordination with state educators, industries, and other education professionals, aims to realize a statewide vision rooted in a set of regional action plans. In each region, a strategy specific to a regional vision, goals, objectives, timeline, and evaluation measures will support and complement statewide efforts. Interior Alaska is one of six regions for which plans are being developed.

The Interior Alaska Postsecondary Access and Completion Strategy will be an active component of the Network's statewide commitment to "create synergy across Alaska" on postsecondary access and completion. The Network adopted the following statewide vision and goals to guide this effort.

Network Statewide Vision

Alaska's economy will be driven by Alaskans, with relevant credentials to attain individual and collective economic independence.

GOALS

1. Engage key players who influence postsecondary attendance, persistence, and completion of programs.
2. Foster a statewide partnership to positively affect postsecondary participation and completion.

In partnership with Interior Alaska community members, the Interior Network Steering Committee has developed the following vision. This vision guided action plan development and will continue to support plan implementation.

Interior Network Vision

Interior residents live in healthy communities that provide opportunities for career growth, living wages, and a high quality of life within the region. Within the workforce, employees have access to satisfying jobs, stable careers, and health care benefits. The workforce and quality of life are supported by available and affordable housing, social services infrastructure that addresses mental health, substance abuse, crime and other issues.

This lifestyle is underpinned by an education system that provides high quality education options for students from Pre-K through postsecondary levels. Enrollment and completion rates are high within the system, and students are motivated to stay in Alaska because of education quality and employment opportunities within the region. Effective programs are in place to help students transition between secondary and postsecondary training and programs.

Strategy Organization

This strategy begins with a matrix that describes the goals, problem statements, and strategy areas associated with each theme. A table with action items follows the matrix, identifying actions to be taken to affect change in each theme and outlining priorities, potential support organizations and individuals, and evaluation measures for the actions.

The Interior Network Steering Committee will continue to oversee this action plan as the plan is implemented and augmented through 2025 and to report on evaluation measures to understand how the plan is supporting Network goals.

Interior Postsecondary Action and Completion Strategy

The strategy is organized into six themes of postsecondary education critical to meeting regional postsecondary access and completion goals: Employment Opportunities and Career Exploration, Education Infrastructure, Preparation for Postsecondary Education and Training, Culturally-Relevant Education, Education Benefit/Cost, and Postsecondary Completion and Enhancement. The following goals, problem/need statements, and strategic focus areas guided development of specific actions to improve postsecondary progress in the region.

Interior Alaska Network Action Planning Matrix

Postsecondary Education Themes	Goal	Problem/Needs Statements	Strategies/Focus Areas
Employment Opportunities and Career Exploration	Expand employment opportunities, especially in remote communities, and develop pathways for students to achieve employment goals.	<p>Employment opportunities are limited in many communities in the region, as is information about pathways to available careers.</p> <p>Existing employment opportunities may go unfilled due to difficulty finding qualified candidates.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internships/Apprenticeships • Gender Equality • Career Counseling • Industry-Education Collaboration • Union/Trade Participation • Centralized Information • Strengthen CTE • Impact of substance abuse
Education Infrastructure	Improve access to postsecondary education through improved technology and communications.	<p>Geography, distance, and small community sizes cause rural and urban areas in the Interior to face basic infrastructure-related barriers to postsecondary education.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internet Connectivity • Housing • Transportation • Disability Access • Social Services
Preparation for Postsecondary Education and Training	Adequately prepare all students and facilitate entry into postsecondary education and training.	<p>Pre-K impacts learning and academic/social-emotional success over a lifetime.</p> <p>Adequate preparation in K-12, is necessary for success in postsecondary - in academic subjects and basic life skills.</p> <p>Testing logistics and relevance and support for alternative systems like the GED need examination.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-K • K-12/Postsecondary Partnerships • Life Skills • Mentoring • Experiential Learning • Testing
Culturally-Relevant Education	Incorporate local cultures/practices into education delivery and communication.	<p>Cultural history, ideals, attitudes and perceptions regarding current education systems need to be recognized and incorporated into how education is delivered, what is offered, and how it is perceived within communities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication • Cultural-Responsiveness/Knowledge • Local Focus • Tribal Entities • First-Generation
Education Benefit/Cost	Communicate the value of postsecondary education; help students choose certificates and degrees centered on employability outcomes.	<p>Many students don't understand or appreciate the increased income potential of postsecondary degrees and credentials.</p> <p>Credentials need to be linked to economic outcomes.</p> <p>All degree types, including two and four-year programs and certificate credits, are priced equally regardless of value students receive from the courses.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site Visits • AKCIS
Postsecondary Completion and Enhancement	Accommodate returning and mid-career students.	<p>Education for returning students and those seeking mid-career advancement can require flexibility and additional personal assistance in class scheduling and delivery.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial Support • Flexibility • Technology/Basics Training • Credit for Experience • Work/Life Balance • Marginalized Populations

Interior Alaska Network Action Strategy

Action Item	Organizations/Contacts	Committee Point Person
Employment Opportunities and Career Exploration		
Coordinate Interior Trade Exposition between YKSD, FBNSSD, Doyon and home school programs	YKSD, FNSBSD, Doyon	Ryan
Promote elder/mentor program to accompany apprenticeship/training program participants from rural communities	YKSD, Denakkenaaga (Sharon McConnell)	Ryan, Michelle, Dan
Contact DOL re: facilitating broader adoption of standards to mitigate liability concerns with workplace learning programs	DOL, AACTE	Dan Mindy
Promote AKCIS as a resource through various events and organizations	ACPE (Julia, Dominica) FNSBSD, YKSD, CTC	Ryan
Increase participation from Interior region in conferences: CTE, Alaska CAN	ACPE, Network	Dawn
Communicate availability of "legacy" jobs in infrastructure and utilities	Fairbanks Pipeline Training Center	Dan
Participate in expanding apprenticeship funding and opportunities	FNSBSD	Dan
Communicate dangers/risks of substance abuse related to job opportunities	Doyon, FNA, City opioids task force Alaska Works	Dawn Dan
Education Infrastructure		
Set up meetings between school district, CTC, Doyon and TCC re: connectivity in rural areas	Doyon	TBD
Communicate availability of UA housing to potential users (internships, OJT, etc.)	CTC & Interior Aleutians campus (Evon Peter)	Ryan
Find/create list of support resources for online tutoring	BEST, Home School Support Network	Dan/Ryan
Create rural partnerships to improve connectivity including connecting unions and military to rural partners	CTC, Doyon, YKSD	Michelle/Ryan
Preparation for Postsecondary Education		
Increase on-the-job training, job-shadowing, internship, externship opportunities for districts	Alaska Workforce Investment Board; FNSBSD	Dan
Communicate to School Boards the need to make study skills, financial literacy and college/career readiness classes more available to middle and high school classes	CTC; Alaska Association of School Boards	Dan, Jennifer
Increase awareness of GED preparation resources; advocate for increased GED resources especially in villages	Literacy Council/Others	Jennifer
Develop and promote "multiple graduation pathways" to Alaska high school diplomas and postsecondary certification or degrees i.e. online high school programs from Lower 48	DEED; State Board of Ed; Superintendents Assn; School districts can post links	Ryan, Dan
Arrange for current UAF students to give workshops in home villages re: FAFSA and scholarship applications	Tribal organizations School Districts, UAF	Patty, Ryan
Advocate for fighting high teacher turnover in villages	Educators Rising (Steve Atwater)	Ryan

Action Items	Organizations/Contacts	Committee Point Person
Culturally-Relevant Education		
Establish monthly meetings to discuss resources for rural students	YKSD, Doyon, FNA, Ahtna TCC (Ed Alexander)	Patty Mindy
Identify and promote culturally relevant resources for educators and students	Alaska Native Knowledge Network	Ernie
Increase awareness of resources Inform teachers and administrators about availability of Cross Cultural Studies curriculum at UAF	Alaska Teacher Placement	Ryan Patty Ernie
Replicate Lower Kuskokwim SD teacher training funding program elsewhere in region	Tribal organizations	Patty
Increase assistance with job applications to help first-generation, culturally diverse, differently abled applicants	Job Center	Dawn
Advocate for more local teacher training and hire	UA	TBD
Postsecondary Completion and Enhancement		
Adjust course timing to align with industry needs	CTC (Evon Peter) Ahtna CTEAC	Tracy Dawn Dan
Offer class times and support services for adult/returning students	UAF, CTC	Jennifer
Increase student and employer understanding of process for getting work/life experience credit	UAF, CTC	TBD
Develop a pathway to recognize and accept appropriate work experience as educational experience for returning adults to regional trainings and other postsecondary programs	UA	Mindy Jennifer
Encourage former prisoner "re-enter with dignity" using Bridge Program, workshops, orientations	AKDOL CTC	Jennifer
Education Benefit/Cost		
Communicate the value of certificates, endorsements, credentials, etc.	UA, School districts, DOLWD	All members