



"65% of Working-Age Alaskans with a Postsecondary Credential by 2025"

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – July 9, 2020

Subject: Standing in solidarity to support racial justice

Fellow Alaskans,

As we witness the historical rallies across our nation and share in the anger and grief of the many lives and minds lost to systemic racism, we stand in solidarity with all Black and racialized people with resolve. The pain and current responses stem from hundreds of years and generations of racial violence and systemic oppression. We recognize the truth that many of us work at organizations and live in communities that are rooted in systems of forced assimilation, theft of indigenous lands, discrimination, and exploitation of people of color.

Racial injustice and oppression are evident in our local and national systems of society, and they have continued impacts in our educational systems. We know that it's not by chance that our Alaska Native students, for example, attain postsecondary credentials at rates of 39% compared to the statewide rate of 54% (Source: [Alaska Postsecondary Education Attainment Metrics](#)).

The theme of the 2020 Alaska CAN Conference was Educational Equity, with the focus to unite cross-sector professionals in addressing the burning issue of educational equity as it pertains to Alaska's attainment goal of 65% by 2025. During the conference, attendees explored skills to overcome equity challenges, developed new and strengthened existing partnerships, shared lessons from stories of hardship and success, and discussed opportunities for program alignment.

As members on the Board of the Postsecondary Access and Completion Network, we are committed to not only helping our communities hold space for conversation about these issues but also to demonstrating action that proactively supports racial justice. We must replace systemic and institutional racism with equity for all in higher education and workforce development in order to thrive as the state of Alaska.



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As we navigate these turbulent times, we must be mindful of educating and advancing the pursuit of knowledge. Nelson Mandela famously stated that, "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world." This sentiment is supported by data that suggests that postsecondary degree and credential attainment is directly linked to better job opportunities, higher wages, and a greater likelihood of advancement within a career field. As you look forward to the future, know that while receiving a postsecondary degree or credential is essential, it is the pursuit and achievement of that accomplishment that leads to self-betterment and professional growth. The members on the Board of the Postsecondary Access and Completion Network are committed to making that future a reality.

Sincerely,

The Network Board

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