

**BRING/KEEP THE KIDS HOME**  
**WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SUB-COMMITTEE**  
**November 2007 REPORT**

**Strategy 6: Workforce development Build the capacity and core competencies of in-state providers to deliver services that meet the needs of kids with severe behavioral health disorders.**

- General recruitment, retention, education and training activities have been incorporated into the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority's new focus area on workforce development. Several sub-committee members were actively involved on the various sub-committees, which developed the following goals and objectives, which are currently being implemented:

**Goal #1: Develop strategies so that Alaska has 1,000 new qualified employees that work with Trust beneficiaries by 2015.**

1. Develop a comprehensive "grow your own" recruitment strategy for youth (\$175,000)

The Alaska Health Education Center is encouraging youth (14-29 years) to participate in career exploratory activities, including career awareness and exploration that are tied to classroom learning and work-based experiences, to increase the long-term availability of professionals in developmental disabilities, long-term care and behavioral health. Project implementation includes partnerships with organizations having specific expertise or access to youth appropriate career exploratory experiences and career preparatory activities.

2. Develop comprehensive in-state and out-of-state marketing strategies, including activities to recruit Alaska Natives and other minorities and non-traditional populations such as seniors and persons with disabilities (\$175,000)

Emphasis this year is being placed on youth and Alaska Natives. A presentation was made during AFN's Elder and Youth Conference.

3. Conduct a comprehensive media campaign (\$100,000)

Northwest Strategies was awarded the contract to conduct a comprehensive media campaign.

4. Develop a partnership with the Department of Labor & Workforce Development to enhance the collaborative process of recruiting a workforce to support Trust beneficiaries

Trust staff presented information about the workforce development needs of agencies serving Trust beneficiaries to the Alaska Workforce Investment Board.

**Goal #2: Develop and implement strategies to retain qualified employees, including incentives for the development of a qualified, compassionate workforce.**

1. Provide loan forgiveness, scholarships and other incentives for recruitment, training and education (\$200,000)

Committee members are working closely with the Alaska Postsecondary Commission to work out specific details of a loan forgiveness program. Options for providing housing in rural areas are also being explored.

2. Maintain ongoing activities of the Alaska Alliance for Direct Service Careers including support for website, supervisor training, *Full Lives* Conference and technical assistance to help provider agencies develop individualized recruitment and retention plans (\$100,000)

The front line supervisor training, which is coordinated by the Center for Human Development, is scheduled for this month. The *Full Lives* Conference, which is targeted toward entry-level staff serving Trust beneficiaries, is scheduled for April 17-18, 2008. Technical assistance is being provided to help 8 agencies develop individualized recruitment and retention plans; several of these agencies serve youth with severe behavioral health disorders.

3. Develop strategies to increase the wages and benefits of staff working with Trust beneficiaries

The wages and benefits sub-committee is developing a 1-page fact sheet and talking points for use in legislative advocacy. Particular emphasis is being placed on the impact of low wages and inadequate benefits on the lives of trust beneficiaries

**Goal #3: Develop education and training programs to meet the needs of the current and future workforce.**

1. Establish training cooperatives (i.e. providers, universities, post-secondary programs, state agencies, family members and consumers) that provide and coordinate training and career development when and where the need arises (\$570,000)
2. Provide support for the Geriatric Education and Training Program (\$125,000)
3. Support and enhance existing effective education and training programs (\$300,000)

Planning for the training cooperatives is well underway. A needs and resource assessment has been conducted and is being used to drive implementation activities.

- **Children's Residential Services Certificate Program:** The Center for Human Development at the University of Alaska Anchorage is coordinating this program. The first quarter of this fiscal year has led to several promising developments. First, following several meetings with the Division Director, the Division of Juvenile Justice will be amending its hiring criteria to give preference to applicants with the CRS Occupational Endorsement. The other development has been a partnership with DHSS staff responsible for a new Medicaid Waiver project that creates an alternative to residential psychiatric treatment centers. This partnership creates a career pathway for direct service professionals working with the target population.

Two courses were offered during this reporting period: DLS A101, Intro to Children's Res. Svcs.; DLS A205, Teaching Social Skills to Youth in Res. Care. Seminars for these courses were offered in Anchorage, Fairbanks, and Kenai. The Kenai seminar was cancelled due to low enrollments. The following courses will be offered during the second quarter of this year: DLS A201, Skills Basics in Children's Res. Svcs; DLS A206, Positive Behavioral Supports in Residential Care; and DLS A385, Working with Traumatized Children. The blended format will be adapted, reducing the seminar from two days to one and increase both the frequency and duration of the on-line components. Making this shift better meets employer needs and offers students additional support in managing course requirements. Additionally, students in the program will participate in a pilot of an on-line learning readiness assessment. Data from these assessments, available to both the student and program staff, will be used to identify learning styles, proactively address potential challenges, and guide student support.

Enrollment targets were not reached for the first two courses this year. Employers have reported difficulties with releasing staff to participate in program activities and this has hindered enrollments. Most agencies report that they are understaffed and do not have either the manpower or financial resources to have staff participate in the seminar portion of the courses. To address that challenge, each of the five courses will offer a fully on-line section during the Spring semester. Sections in the blended format (face-to-face seminar followed by on-line sessions) will continue as planned, giving students and employers flexibility in how they access the program.

Currently, there are 58 students participating in the program from Anchorage, Big Lake, Wasilla, Kodiak, Sitka, Ketchikan, Emmonak, Bethel, Nome, Kiana, Kotzebue, Buckland, Fairbanks, Eagle River, Palmer, and Chitna. This semester students are completing practica at McCann Treatment Center; Maniilaq Association; Salvation Army Cares for Kids; Covenant House; North Star (Residential); Booth Memorial Home; Division of Juvenile Justice (Ketchikan); Alaska Family Services; Hope Community Resources.

- **FASD Waiver Training:** Training on the Mentoring, Modeling and Monitoring Model for youth age 14-21 with severe emotional disturbances and fetal alcohol syndrome disorders was provided October 8-12, 2007. The training was specific to the first 7 youth who will be served in the program this year. Training targeted toward a broader audience is scheduled for April 29 – May 2.
- **University of Alaska:** The Trust agreed to fund the University's proposal to increase its capacity to provide interdisciplinary training and education on children's mental and behavioral issues. During FY09, several faculty members will participate in the University of Southern Florida's certificate program in children's mental health.
- **Person-Centered Planning Training:** The Department of Health & Social Services received a grant from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services to provide training on person-centered planning for youth with severe emotional disturbances. The Center for Human Development will be responsible for developing the curriculum and providing training.