

NCSL Opportunities for Working Families Meeting State Action Plans

Alaska

Years of Participation: 2010

Previous Attendees:

State Legislators

Legislative Staff

Representative Carl Gatto (2010)

Senator Johnny Ellis (2010)

Katrina Matheny (2010)

Senator Gary Stevens (2010)

2010 ACTION PLAN

Team Members:

Representative Carl Gatto

Senator Johnny Ellis

Senator Gary Stevens

Katrina Matheny

NCSL Facilitator: Melissa Savage/Angela Andrews

Priority Issue(s): Convene a meeting of task forces – July 2010 to January 2011

- **Task force will examine:**
 - **Higher education and career readiness**
 - **Scholarships (need for merit based)**

Next Steps

1. Bring in experts to testify and provide expertise to task forces, specifically Brenda Bautsch (NCSL) and experts from WICHE (Western Interstate Compact for Higher Education)

Responsibilities

- Senator Ellis, Senator Stevens, and Representative Gatto will join task forces and reach out to various stakeholders (college students, post secondary education, local school boards)
- Katrina will help facilitate the task force meetings

Information and Services

- Brenda Bautsch (NCSL) will be providing information and technical assistance to the task forces
- Also need data/stats on students success and information about students that have obtained scholarships – Where are they now?
- Will need 50-state data and state specific from NCSL
- AK private, public and vo-tech institutions

NCSL Contacts

- Katrina Matheny, Aide to Senator Stevens

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Additional Notes:

Priority Issues

- Making ends meeting: 2, 3 or more jobs just to get by
 - Low wages, minimum wage is not enough – AK minimum wage is 50 cents higher than fed
- Education: getting into college
 - Year round schools to improve performance
 - Access to meals for school children
 - Increase number of instruction days
 - Needs based assistance vs. merit based → how to fund
 - Even middle income struggle
- Child Care: lack of safe and quality childcare
 - Risk of falling back to welfare without childcare
- Rural vs. Urban
 - Lack of jobs push people to cities, economic dislocation
- Energy: high costs difficult for working families, need for more affordable choices
- Investments: infrastructure
 - Buildings, railroads – job creation 70%-80% imported workers
- Health Care
 - Shortage of qualified health workers, no medical school

Action Plans

- Education and job training
 - Scholarship task force: need based and merit based (adequate funding)
 - Meet at the end of July (Brenda and WICHE, possible TA, other NCSL documents)
 - Task force will make recommendations → legislation will be generated from task force
 - Educating legislative peers on current state of affairs
 - Higher Education and career readiness
 - Educating other legislators
 - funding issues – the structure is in place, but there is no funding, define “need”